

# The

Life  
Domain  
Kingdom  
Phylum  
Class  
Order

# Family Legacy

Genus  
Species



# of George McCready Price

By James L. Hayward

**A**s I scanned the books in my dad's office, *Genesis Vindicated*, a blue-bound volume by George McCready Price, caught my attention. As an adolescent fundamentalist, I was passionate about the natural world and eager to understand how it began. The title sounded intriguing, so I brought the book home. As I read, I underscored passages with neat, red-ruled lines.

Soon I learned that Price was a prominent figure both inside and outside Adventism. His two dozen books and hundreds of periodical articles on anti-evolution dominated creationist literature during the first half of the twentieth century. Moreover, he built the infrastructure for the emergence of "scientific creationism" during latter part of the century. Today, scholars continue to highlight his name and writings in historical treatments of that era.<sup>1</sup>

Price was a devotee of Ellen G. White whose writings steered him away from the lure of evolutionism.<sup>2</sup> Inspired by White's visions of the past, he invented modern "flood geology," the view that the deluge described in Genesis 6-9 accounts for most of the geologic column. According to Price, flood geology nullified traditional geology's claims of deep time, a prerequisite, he believed, for biological evolution to

be able to happen. Although Price was a nonscientist whose arguments were readily falsified by field data, his intelligence, lawyerly logic, bold assertions, and vibrant prose charmed his readers and convinced them that scientific fact supported his views.<sup>3</sup>

Although considered a hero among fundamentalists, Price endured the barbs of many detractors. During the 1925 “Scopes Monkey Trial,” for example, the acerbic defense attorney, Clarence Darrow, referred to Price as “a mountebank and a pretender and not a geologist at all,”<sup>4</sup> and Yale Geologist Charles Schuchert called Price “a fundamentalist harboring a geological nightmare.”<sup>5</sup> Even Price’s critics, however, recognized the force of his work. Baptist theologian Bernard Ramm noted that “the influence of Price is staggering,”<sup>6</sup> and the popular mathematics and science writer Martin Gardner referred to Price as “the greatest of modern opponents of evolution.”<sup>7</sup>

Nineteen sixty-three, however, served as the terminus of Price’s 60-year campaign against deep-time geology and biological evolution, for in that year the 92-year-old Price breathed his last. Four days before he died his physician asked how he was getting along. Price reportedly quipped, “Doctor, I am going to quote you an old Chinese proverb. ‘I expect to eat an egg laid by a hen that scratches over your grave.’”<sup>8</sup> Adventism’s “crusader for creation” was indomitable to the end.

By the time of his death, Price had firmly secured his personal legacy. But what do we know about his family legacy? Until now, very little. With help from Price’s descendants, however, I’ve pieced together a lively family history, one that includes Hollywood glamour, Sri Lankan intrigue, Scooby-Doo cartoons, rock’n’roll celebrity, the Bahá’í faith, musical acclaim, and much more. Here I provide a brief sketch of the colorful legacy of one of Seventh-day Adventism’s most iconic historical characters, George McCready Price.

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*OPPOSITE PAGE: George Edward Price and his family, ca. 1900. Left to right: Amelia, Beatrice, Ernest, Portia, George. On his first book, Outlines of Modern Christianity and Modern Science (1902), George listed his name as “Geo. E. McCready Price,” “McCready” being his mother’s maiden name. Thereafter, he dropped the “E” and went by “George McCready Price” (Courtesy of George Littlefield Price).*

*CURRENT PAGE: Ernest Edward Price, son of George McCready Price. Ernest Edward left home at age 15 and had little to do with his parents until later in life. He was a prolific letter writer, politically conservative, loved money, and worked as an insurance administrator (<https://www.geni.com/people/Ernest-Price/6000000011555505593>).*

Darwin Price, great-grandson of the redoubtable creationist, appears on my laptop screen. He has graciously agreed to serve as my initial guide to the Price family. Moreover, he’s promised to share the story behind his ironic, amalgamative name. Meanwhile, separated by half of the world, our first real-time meeting occurs via Zoom.

Immediately I’m set at ease by his gentle greeting and honest, inviting face. He conveys an aura of peace, goodwill, and acceptance. I detect a faint Australian accent. His roots are American, but he’s lived Down Under for most his life.

I describe my intent to write about his famous ancestor. Although I’m a biologist by profession, I tell him, history intrigues me. Now retired after teaching for 30 years in Andrews University’s George McCready Price Hall, I want to understand more about its namesake. Though I admit that I’m no longer a fan of his great-grandfather’s views, I’m fascinated by the intellect, commitments, and history behind those perspectives.



His great-grandfather was talented and well-read, I note, and his fame spread far and wide.

Darwin was born two years after George McCready Price died, so he has no recollection of his famous progenitor, but he is keen to introduce me to family members who do. During the next few months, I meet Darwin's two older sisters, Melanie and Charmaine, his brother, Tom, his distant cousins Portia Dill Sherrard and George Littlechild Price, and the creationist's grandnephew, Bernhardt Marshall Huedepohl, and grandnieces, Marilyn Topper and Joan Foulston. All provide information, stories, and photos of George McCready Price and his accomplished descendants and relatives.

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In 1887, 17-year-old George Edward Price—later known as “George McCready Price”—wed fellow “literature evangelist” Amelia Nason, 12 years his senior. The following year, George and Amelia gave birth to Ernest Edward Price, the first of three children.<sup>9</sup>

The relationship of Ernest Edward with his parents must have been a rocky one, because at age 15 he left home and had little to do with them until later in life.<sup>10</sup> Unlike his fundamentalist father and mother, Ernest had no time for religion. He worked as a fire insurance administrator in southern California, loved money, and was politically conservative.<sup>11</sup>

Ernest was a “funny character,” says his granddaughter Melanie Price, who remembers him well. He often repeated the same puns and corny jokes. One of his favorites was, “It’s amazing there are people dying who have never died before.” A prolific letter writer, his missives were loaded with economic theory. He was a fan of Milton Friedman, the prominent advocate of free market economics.<sup>12</sup> Tom Price, Ernest’s grandson, says his grandfather “had a habit of cutting out articles in newspapers and magazines and circling the part he was interested in and writing his comments in the margin . . . His mind was very active right until the end.” Tom received a letter from him, postmarked the day before he died.<sup>13</sup>

An avid hunter and supporter of the National Rifle Association, each year Ernest brought back a deer or elk he’d killed. Then he froze the meat which lasted until the next hunting season. “He had a strict dietary regimen,” Tom says, “and preached it to me every chance he got—although not a vegetarian, he was careful not to combine certain foods, and only ate at certain times.” Ernest had “all kinds of rules.” One was that “You must eat one apple and drink two glasses [of] water when you wake up, and then walk at least three miles before

breakfast.” Also, he grew fruits and vegetables on his property in Malibu, which he paid Tom twenty dollars one day each week to tend. The garden, like Ernest’s daily schedule, was meticulously groomed.

When school was not in session, Ernest took Tom to a Swedish smorgasbord each Thursday for lunch where, as Tom notes,

the whole time I had to listen to his lessons about life, of which he had hundreds of sayings that I have heard a thousand times, and I could hear them coming a mile away. In everything we did, farming, beach club, restaurant, he was very regimented, and we always did exactly the same things in the same order. He was very disciplined and had lots of rules about life.

In 1915 Ernest and his first wife, Madge Sheppard, bore their only child, Edward Sheppard Price. When Edward was 8, Ernest and Madge divorced, and Edward and his mother moved to a large house on Walnut Avenue in Venice, California. Meanwhile, Ernest married Edna Leona Benedict. Edna’s father, Pierce Edson Benedict, became mayor of Beverly Hills. The Benedicts were the namesakes of Benedict Canyon in west Los Angeles.<sup>14</sup>

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Ernest and Madge’s son and George McCready Price’s grandson, Edward Sheppard Price, later changed his name to John Shelton Price, or simply John Shelton. As a kid, he was a handful. In a parental bid to reform his ways, they sent him at age 14 to a Seventh-day Adventist boarding school in southern California. The

*OPPOSITE PAGE*

*TOP: Lobby card for the MGM movie, “Blond Inspiration” (1941), starring John Shelton. Left to right: Virginia Grey, Albert Dekker, John Shelton, Charles Butterworth, Marion Martin (<https://www.moviemem.com/wpcontent/uploads/2020/07/BLONDEINSPIRATIONLC2-1024x800.jpg>).*

*LEFT: Eighty-six-year-old George McCready Price in 1956 with his son, Ernest Edward Price, and his great-grandson Tom Price. As a young boy and adolescent, Tom spent considerable time with his grandfather, Ernest, a highly regimented insurance administrator (Courtesy of Tom Price).*

*MIDDLE RIGHT: John Shelton Price (far right), grandson of George McCready Price, was a Hollywood actor who knew many prominent figures of his day. Here he joins hands with the young John F. Kennedy, the actress Ann Rutherford, and an unidentified individual (Courtesy of Darwin Price).*

*BOTTOM RIGHT: Christmastime, 1970, for John Shelton Price and his family, just months before the family’s disastrous move to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). Left to right, Lorraine Ludwig, John Shelton, Charmaine, Darwin, Tom, and Melanie (Courtesy of Darwin Price).*



"I've lived on coffee for 24 hours! One more cup...and I'll drown!"



*BELOW: The members of the musical group Lake Street Dive visiting the White House during Barack Obama's administration. The band, which formed in 2004 at the New England Conservatory of Music, is based in New York and tours internationally. Lead vocalist for the group, Rachel Price (fourth from the left), is the daughter of Tom Price and the great-great-granddaughter of George McCreedy Price (Courtesy of Rachel Price).*

attempt, however, was short-lived—John was expelled for roasting on a school radiator a deer that he'd killed.<sup>15</sup>

When John was 17, he eloped with his girlfriend. Marriage without parental permission at his age was against California law at the time, and Madge had the marriage annulled.<sup>16</sup>

At six-foot-one, with an easy smile and ample sex-appeal, 21-year-old John Shelton became a Hollywood actor. Father Ernest, ever concerned with finances, disapproved of his son's thespian ambitions, recognizing as he did the difficulty of making a living on the silver screen. But John persisted, landing roles with RKO Pictures, and later MGM Studios.<sup>17</sup>

At 23 he married a second time, this time legally, but it lasted only a couple years. Then in 1941 he fell in love with singer and actress Kathryn Grayson, who's good looks and coloratura soprano voice caught his fancy. "Dad always loved Kathryn," Charmaine Price, John's younger daughter, told me. But in 1946, Kathryn divorced John, and between 1946 and 1953, John married three other women. Melanie, however, believes he "was not a playboy" but a moral person who married each time because he believed it was the right thing to do.<sup>18</sup>

John Shelton rubbed shoulders with Howard Hughes, Ronald Reagan, and John F. Kennedy, and acted with some of the biggest names in Hollywood—Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, Bud Abbott, Lou Costello, Stan Laurel, Oliver Hardy, Lionel Barrymore, Ann Rutherford, and Lana Turner, among others. By the 1950s, however, acting opportunities for John on the big screen began to dry up, and he went on to play a few TV gigs, dabble in politics, and experiment with business. In 1953 he married his last wife, Lorraine Ludwig, a woman of Ukrainian Jewish heritage. Lorraine hailed from a prominent Hollywood family and had trained as a classical pianist. She and John produced four children: Melanie Rose, Thomas Shelton, Charmaine Lily, and Darwin Ludwig.<sup>19</sup>



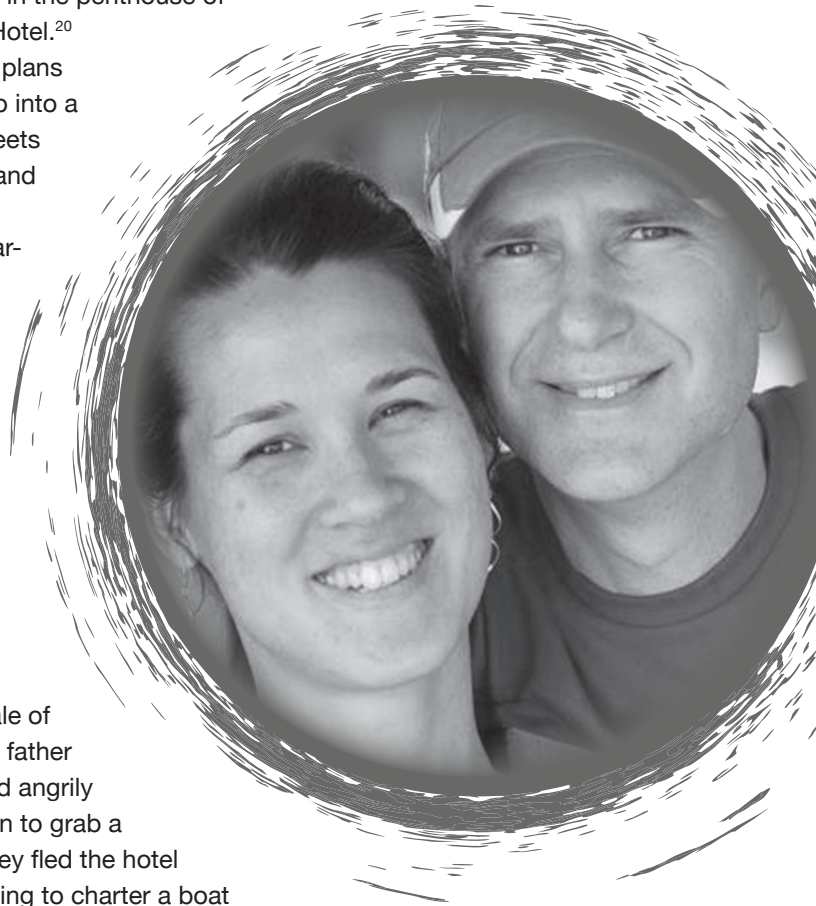


John seemed to settle into a more stable life with Lorraine and his growing family. But he was drinking heavily and, as later discovered, became involved in some dubious financial dealings. In mid-March 1971, desperate for financial security, he sold the family heirlooms and moved Lorraine and the four kids to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) to produce a movie. Betting on a fortune, he lodged the family in the penthouse of Colombo's luxurious and storied Mount Lavinia Hotel.<sup>20</sup>

On April 5, 1971, however, John's hopes and plans shattered. A Marxist insurrection turned Colombo into a war zone. Government tanks rolled down the streets by the hotel, police stations came under attack, and people were killed. Lorraine and three of the kids went to Sydney, Australia, while John and 15-year-old Tom stayed behind in hopes that the political situation would right itself and John could get on with his work. Only four guests remained in the Mount Lavinia Hotel, all the others having left the country.<sup>21</sup>

For a time, John and Tom remained at the Mount Lavinia, albeit under curfew. During this period, they witnessed the comings and goings of people who met with the hotel manager, a wealthy Muslim by the name of Farouk Salih. Salih, it turned out, was sending money illegally to his brother who lived out of the country. The authorities assumed Salih obtained it from the sale of gems on the black market. One day Tom saw his father talking on the phone, slam down the receiver, and angrily declare, "Farouk has screwed us!" He told his son to grab a few belongings, because they had to escape. They fled the hotel and boarded a train for the northern coast, planning to charter a boat to India. But on the way police arrested them and took them back to Colombo. The authorities threw John in prison, but released his son. For a time, Tom stayed with a Disney film director he knew and was allowed to attend his dad's trial, which ostensibly was for absconding from the hotel without paying the bill.

After the trial, Tom received an airline ticket to Australia, but on the way to the airport police arrested him under the suspicion that he was trying to smuggle gems out of the country. They stripped, probed, and x-rayed him but found nothing, and he spent the next several weeks enduring unspeakable conditions in the same prison that held his father. The authorities interrogated and verbally abused both of them. Once the authorities discovered that he could offer little information, they



*ABOVE RIGHT: Darwin Price, great-grandson of George McCready Price, with his wife, Mei-Ling (Leong) Price. Darwin surmises that his great-grandfather Price would disapprove of their marriage given the elder Price's bigoted views on ethnic diversity. Darwin works as an information technologist in Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia (Courtesy of Darwin Price).*

eventually released him and told Tom that his father would soon join him. Flying to Australia, Tom reunited with his mother and siblings. But seven months later, John Shelton Price, still imprisoned, died of a stroke one day shy of his fifty-seventh birthday. The Ceylonese government deposited his body at the U.S. embassy in Colombo.

Melanie, George McCready Price's great granddaughter and the first child of John and Lorraine, was born in 1954 in Manhattan. Tom, her brother, was born in 1956, and Charmaine the following year. The family eventually moved to California, where the children attended school. Late in 1964, John took Melanie and Tom to Cairo, Egypt, to produce a musical film tentatively entitled "Only the Poor Have Rich Dreams." The children attended grade school at the Cairo American College.

Lorraine and Charmaine, meanwhile, remained in California where Lorraine was pregnant with Darwin. In response to the influence of a friend, Lorraine began attending Bahá'í Firesides and soon announced her intent to join the Bahá'í community. Melanie, too, upon her return from Egypt, became interested in the Bahá'í Faith, feeling "that something 'spiritual' was missing from my life." She and Lorraine joined the Bahá'í community of Malibu in 1969. Once Darwin reached 15, the Bahá'í "age of spiritual maturity," he joined as well. Charmaine does not consider herself a Bahá'í but has always maintained a spiritual outlook on life.

For Tom, however, it was a different story. As Melanie



*BELOW LEFT: Sisters Melanie and Charmaine Price, great granddaughters of George McCready Price and daughters of John Shelton Price. Melanie is a university-trained educator who teaches the Bahá'í faith, and Charmaine worked as a cartoonist bringing to life Scooby-Doo, Yogi Bear, Huckleberry Hound, and other Hanna-Barbera cartoons (Courtesy of Charmaine Price).*

*OPPOSITE PAGE TOP RIGHT: Tom Price, great-grandson of George McCready Price, is a prominent musician and speaker in the Bahá'í Faith community. As a young adolescent Tom ridiculed any form of religion, but soon after his harrowing experience in Ceylon he converted to the Bahá'í Faith (<https://bahaiculture.blogspot.com/2014/12/tom-price-collection.html>).*

*OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM RIGHT: George McCready Price with his wife, Amelia Price, their daughter Portia Price Dill, Portia's son, Douglas Gordon Dill, and baby Douglas Gordon Dill, Jr. in Amelia's lap, during the 1950s. As a teen during the late 1930s, Douglas Gordon Dill lived for a time with his grandparents in Berrien Springs, Michigan, where George taught at Emmanuel Missionary College (now Andrews University) (Courtesy of Portia Dill Sherrard).*

recalls, "Tom ridiculed and teased myself and my mother with full teenage fervor relentlessly whenever the subject of Bahá'í (or any religion) was mentioned." And although John Shelton felt attracted to the teachings of Bahá'í and attended some of the meetings with his family, Melanie notes that he "was not the 'joining' kind of man" and never united with any faith tradition.<sup>22</sup>

Following their harrowing experience in Ceylon, Lorraine, Melanie, Charmaine, and Darwin were destitute, and upon their arrival in Sydney they received help from the kindly members of the local Bahá'í community. Then, to the total surprise of the rest of the family and within a week of his arrival, Tom, emotionally shattered following his horrific Ceylonese arrests and imprisonment, made a sudden about face and joined his mother and sister in the Bahá'í Faith.<sup>23</sup>

When I met her, Melanie was teaching the Bahá'í Faith in her local Sydney community. Given George McCready Price's extensive writings against evolution, I asked her what Bahá'í people believed about the topic. In a notable divergence from her great-grandfather's perspectives, she replied that members of the Bahá'í Faith had no problem accepting evolution as a process occurring over long ages. But, she said, "humans were always humans, even though God might have started them out as fish or other animals."<sup>24</sup>

In 1974, Tom enrolled in the University of Sydney with a major in music composition, and the following year he began conducting the Bahá'í Temple Choir in Sydney. He became involved with a Bahá'í musical group, "1844," which presented teachings of the faith, concerts, firesides, and produced an LP recording entitled "Dreams of Tomorrow." After he married a troupe member, Elizabeth Sounness, the couple had four children, all musically gifted.

Tom's considerable talent and eclectic musical tastes motivated him to express artistic sentiments ranging from the sublime to the edgy. In 1981, he and a friend, Billy Field, released a rock and roll hit, "Bad Habits":

*"I'm off the rails / My resistance fails / Temptations got a hold on me / And I can't refuse."*

The catchy tune and lyrics earned them a double platinum recording that spent two weeks at the top of the Australian music charts. Following their success, Tom and Billy traveled with the Bad Habits Band to the United States, Great Britain, and various Pacific nations to perform.<sup>25</sup>

In 1989, the Bahá'í House of Worship choir selected Tom to direct at the architecturally spectacular Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois. He became choral director of the Second Bahá'í World Congress in 1992, attended by 35,000 believers. Since then, he has conducted public concerts in more than forty countries, including with several of the world's great orchestras. Currently, he directs The Voices of Bahá Choir and is a regular speaker at Bahá'í gatherings.<sup>26</sup>

Tom and Elizabeth's oldest child, Joel Price, has served the Bahá'í community in Australia since returning there in 2016. Emily Price studied music at Northwestern University in Chicago and is a professional mezzo-soprano, featured in the troupe Chicago A Cappella as well as joining in many performances for the Lyric Opera Company of Chicago. Juliette Price, the third child, studied law at Northwestern University and then did post-graduate studies in public health. Currently she practices in Washington, DC. Rachael Price, youngest of the siblings, is a jazz and blues artist and lead singer for the American band Lake Street Dive. She and her fellow band members studied at the New England Conservatory of Music. All four of Tom Price's children, as well as Melanie Price's son, Elliot, and Darwin's daughters, Raina and Giaan, are adherents of the Bahá'í Faith.<sup>27</sup>



Charmaine Price, John and Lorraine's third child, possesses the good looks and friendly, open spirit of her parents and siblings. In 1977, after spending four years at Sydney Girls High School plus a year of secretarial training, she moved to Los Angeles. There she worked for Hanna-Barbera Productions, Inc., an Emmy Award-winning studio bringing Huckleberry Hound, Fred Flintstone, Yogi Bear, Scooby-Doo, and the Smurfs to life for Saturday morning cartoon shows. First, she worked as a cell painter, and later as an ink and cell painter. Other cartoon companies would employ her as well.<sup>28</sup>

Charmaine's Facebook page is populated with



pictures of horses, photos of family members, cartoon characters, and movie stills of her dad. Many of the latter images are romantic scenes of John with leading actresses. One of her Facebook photo sections features her great-grandfather Price: “Although I don’t agree with all of his ideas,” she says, “I [do] appreciate the dialogue of Evolution vs. Creationism.”

Charmaine now lives in Nashville, Tennessee, where she works as a security guard and continues to draw and paint cartoons, a hobby for which she has exceptional talent. She also repaints works by the masters—Picasso, Matisse, Van Gogh, Miro, Kandinsky, Munch, De Chirico—often with her own spin and gentle sense of humor. And like the rest of her family, she loves music, singing and playing the piano and ukulele.<sup>29</sup>

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Darwin is the youngest of John and Lorraine’s children. Although born in California, he has spent most of his life in Australia where he works as an information technologist. Having a great interest in his family’s ancestry, with Melanie he helps to curate the family records on a genealogical website.<sup>30</sup>

He surmises that his great-grandfather Price would have disapproved of his marriage to Mei-Ling Leong, daughter of a Chinese father and Caucasian mother. In 1924, George McCready Price opined that in the “post-diluvian world” God had segregated “the people of the world into self-contained groups, thus most effectually preventing them from ever again uniting,” and that “if human beings had always been as true to natural instincts as are the species among the higher animals, there never would have been amalgamation among these races which had thus been set apart from one another by a special intervention of Providence.” Moreover, Price suggested that following the great Flood, some branches of the human family may have degenerated by hybridization into “negroids,” “Mongolian types,” and “anthropoid apes.” Notwithstanding his great-granddad’s bigotry, Darwin and Mei-Ling are happy and well-matched.<sup>31</sup>

Despite divergent views on issues such as marriage and the history of life, Darwin remains intrigued by his great-grandfather. During one of our visits, he proudly displayed the Langhorne Orchard Prize Medal the elder Price won in 1924 from the Victoria Institute of London for his essay “Geology and Its Relation to Scripture Revelation.”<sup>32</sup>

So how did Darwin get his name? For a week or so after his birth, his family referred to him as simply “Boy Price.” During that week, the story goes, John Shelton

Price, Darwin’s father, and Ernest Price, his grandfather, imagined George McCready Price and Charles Darwin conversing in heaven. Having now reconciled in Paradise, they believed the two men had come to know the truth, a golden mean somewhere between the extremes associated with their respective names. To honor such a reconciliation, John and Ernest thought it would be fitting to join the surnames of both iconoclasts into the moniker Darwin Price. “It’s time to bring the Darwins and the Prices together!” John proclaimed.<sup>33</sup>

Tom tells an alternate story, saying that he does not recall anything about a conversation between Ernest and John. Instead, he vividly recalls that he was in the kitchen when John told Lorraine that since George McCready Price and Charles Darwin were now together, it would be nice to unite their names. “But what I most remember,” Tom observes, “was the devious, cheeky smile my father had when he said this. It really pleased him. Of course, you probably could have united his last name with ‘Satan,’ and it wouldn’t have been any worse to George than to put Darwin in front of his surname . . . [T]his irony was not lost on my father.”<sup>34</sup>

But Tom recalls yet still another irony. A year or two before Darwin’s birth, Lorraine gave birth to a hypopituitary dwarf who was to be named “George McCready Price,” but the baby died soon afterward. Tom states that his great-grandfather “was on the losing side of a general conflict between science and religion.” But given the elder Price’s intellect and creativity, many observers viewed him as something of a rare intellectual mutation. Ironically, Tom notes, Price’s “namesake . . . [also] turned out to be a rare genetic mutation, itself a consideration in the theory of evolution.”<sup>35</sup>

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In 1891, George McCready and Amelia Price gave birth to their second child, Portia. Although she remained closer in contact with her parents than did her brother Ernest, by adulthood she and her sister Beatrice had joined their brother in rejecting Seventh-day Adventism. Both sisters’ branches of family, however, avoided the celebrity and drama that attended Ernest’s branch. George and Amelia’s great-granddaughter, Portia Dill Sherrard, thinks that the couple raised their children so strictly, that “when they got a taste of freedom . . . they never went back [to Adventism],” and never attached themselves to any religion. Notwithstanding, Portia and her family visited her parents frequently through the years. One photograph shows her standing beside the desk of

her aged father, appearing to work with him on his papers.<sup>36</sup>

Portia married Ivan Joshua Dill, a small businessman and rural mail carrier from an Adventist family in Loma Linda, California. After birthing two sons, Ivan J. Dill, Jr. and Douglas Gordon Dill, the couple divorced. Portia worked as a proofreader for various newspapers in southern California. After she retired, she moved to Eugene, Oregon, where she attended the University of Oregon.<sup>37</sup>

When he was about 15, Portia and Ivan's son, Douglas, lived with George McCready and Amelia Price in Berrien Springs, Michigan, where his grandfather taught philosophy and creationist geology at Emmanuel Missionary College (now Andrews University). As Douglas' daughter, Portia Dill Sherrard, tells it, "My father didn't follow the Adventist diet, so meals were awkward, to say the least."<sup>38</sup>

Eventually, Douglas enrolled at the California Institute of Technology, where he earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree. He worked at Douglas Aircraft (later to become McDonnell Douglas) as an aeronautical engineer. In the evenings he taught mathematics at the University of Southern California. Before his death in 1957, he became attracted to Roman Catholicism, although he never officially joined the church.<sup>39</sup>

Portia Dill Sherrard remembers "quite often" visiting her great-grandfather and great-grandmother in Loma

Linda, California. Great-grandfather Price, she says, "was not an affectionate person to us kids—he seemed aloof. Great Grandmother was more welcoming and was always showing us things she [had] collected—shells, rocks, and stuff like that." Following Amelia Price's death in 1954, George McCready Price remarried, and after that his great-granddaughter found him to be "much more amiable."<sup>40</sup>

Portia's younger sister, Beatrice, the youngest of George McCready and Amelia Price's children, was born in the mid-1890s. She became Beatrice Jones after marriage and bore four children. The couple divorced early on, leaving her as a single mom. She worked as a bookkeeper well into her seventies. According to Portia Dill Sherrard, her great-aunt Beatrice was a "technocrat, believing that we should be governed by scientists, not politicians . . . She was often the voice of reason when kids had issues with parents and [she] steered us in the right direction."<sup>41</sup>

Members of the Ernest and Portia Price family lines have lost track of Beatrice's more recent descendants.

All three of George McCready Price's children abandoned their father's faith early in life. Even so, Darwin Price believes that his great-grandfather set a "religious foundation for the Price family," and Tom Price sometimes wonders "if George McCready has been guiding us spiritually from beyond."<sup>42</sup>

George McCready Price's younger brother, Charles Luther Price, never officially joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church but lived the Adventist lifestyle and attended Adventist congregations all his life. Charles Luther became friends with Albion Ballenger, one of Adventism's well-known heretics, and Charles attempted to convince his brother that SDA theology



*LEFT: George McCready Price with his daughter, Portia Price Dill. Portia remained closer to her parents than her two siblings. Note the photos of geological formations and Stonehenge on the wall behind Price (Courtesy of Portia Dill Sherrard).*



*INSET: Portia Dill Sherrard, great-granddaughter of George McCready Price and granddaughter of Portia Price Dill. Portia Dill Sherrard vividly recalls visits with George McCready and Amelia Price in Loma Linda, California, during which her great-grandfather "seemed aloof," but her great-grandmother was "more welcoming" (Courtesy of Portia Dill Sherrard).*





*Charles Luther Price, two years younger than his brother, George McCready Price. Although Charles Luther never officially joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church, he lived an Adventist lifestyle. He was friends with Albion Ballenger, one of Adventism's early heretics. Along with Ballenger, Charles Luther objected to the "Sanctuary doctrine" of Adventists (<https://www.geni.com/people/Charles-Luther-Price/6000000011603116468>).*

and prophetic interpretation, particularly as related to 1844, the "sanctuary doctrine," and the "investigative judgment" were in error. Neither brother was willing to change their viewpoint, and eventually the conflict reached such an impasse that they ceased correspondence.<sup>43</sup>

Charles Luther Price had two children, Josephine (Huedepohl) and George Marshall Price, both lifelong Adventists. Josephine, notes her son Bernhardt (Bernie) Marshall Huedepohl, "had a profound influence on each of her children." She was physically and mentally tough, and she passed a love of learning on to her offspring. After her husband died in an auto accident, she earned a degree in education, taught school, helped on the family farm, cared for her aging father and in-laws, and raised five children: Anne Josephine became a teacher, Charles August a government agrologist, Bernhardt Marshall an English and music teacher, Linda Louise a business owner, and Lorna Mae an insurance adjuster. Three of the five remained Adventists, one is heavily involved in another denomination, and another claims no church affiliation.

Self-taught after third grade, Charles Luther was passionate about learning and passed that love on to his descendants. As grandson Bernie Huedepohl notes:

learning was seen as necessary as breathing. I grew up in a library. Everyone read and you were expected to discuss what you read. At our first family reunion, of the 72 descendants and spouses of my parents, there were 32 teachers, 18 of them music teachers.<sup>44</sup>

Charles Luther's son and Josephine's younger brother, George Marshall Price, graduated with an MD degree from Loma Linda University and became a much-loved physician in Tofield, Alberta, east of Edmonton. His daughter, Marilyn Price Topper, a Loma Linda graduate in occupational therapy, says she is "one of the Price relatives who is still a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church. My parents were Adventists," she states, "but [they] definitely were more liberal theologically. My own beliefs are also more liberal than SDA standard theology, but there is still much that I respect about Adventism." She comments that she "is privileged to be part of a very loving and supportive local congregation, and that is where my loyalties lie."<sup>45</sup>

Marilyn's sister, artist M. Joan (Jo) Price Foulston, is a graduate of Canadian Union College (now Burman University), but she, along with two brothers, Dave and Don, have left the SDA Church. "I eventually studied my way out of the Adventist cult-like religion," Jo reports. Nonetheless, she feels "fortunate for my upbringing and schooling and also for my parents having taught me to study and make my own mind up about things."<sup>46</sup>

Unlike his heterodox brother, orthodox George McCready Price failed to pass along his Adventist beliefs to any of his descendants. But he and Amelia did extend qualities of intelligence, creativity, and accomplishment to what are now five generations of heirs. The Price lineage contains talented businessmen, writers, actors, artists, musicians, public speakers, engineers, information technologists, and other gifted individuals. “Even the severest critics among his personal acquaintances never questioned his intelligence and integrity,” writes historian Ronald Numbers.<sup>47</sup> And the fact that Price either directly and indirectly convinced many to endorse his radical and often quirky interpretations of nature is an indication of his persuasive ability.<sup>48</sup>

For good or for ill, the influence of George McCready Price persists today among millions of young-age creationists, as well as among a capable cadre of relatives and descendants who proudly trace their lineage back to the iconoclastic writer.<sup>49</sup>

#### POSTSCRIPT

*If you have any personal anecdotes or memories about George McCready Price and his legacy, please share them with me. I am writing a biography of Price in which I may use them. I will credit you for any contribution that I include in the book. My email address is: hayward@andrews.edu. Thank you!*

#### ENDNOTES

1. For example, see Ronald L. Numbers, *The Creationists: From Scientific Creationism to Intelligent Design*. Expanded ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Adam Laats, *Fundamentalism and Education in the Scopes Era: God, Darwin, and the Roots of America’s Culture Wars* (New York:

Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Carl R. Weinberg, *Red Dynamite: Creationism, Culture Wars and Anticommunism in America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2021).

2. Numbers, *The Creationists*, 91, 92.
3. James L. Hayward, “Price, George McCready (1870–1963),” *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, accessed February 21, 2021, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=79ZW&highlight=Conference>.
4. Ronald L. Numbers, “‘Sciences of Satanic Origin’: Adventist Attitudes Toward Evolutionary Biology and Geology,” *Spectrum*, vol. 9 (no. 4, January 1979): 17–30.
5. Charles Schuchert, “The New Geology: A Text-book for Colleges, Normal Schools and Training Schools; and for the General Reader. By George McCready Price. Pacific Press Publishing Association, Mountain View, California.” *Science*, vol. 59 (no. 1535, May 30, 1924): 486, 487.
6. Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954), 125, 126.
7. Martin Gardner, *Fads & Fallacies in the Name of Science* (New York, NY: New American Library, 1957), 9.
8. Harold W. Clark, *Crusader for Creation: The Life and Writings of George McCready Price* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1966), 64.
9. “Ernest Edward Price (1888–1983),” Geni, accessed on October 19, 2021, <https://www.geni.com/people/Ernest-Price/6000000011555505593>.
10. Harold W. Clark, *Crusader for Creation*, 65.
11. Interview with Darwin Price, February 22, 2021; interview with Melanie Price, April 21, 2021.
12. Interview with Melanie Price, April 21, 2021; interview with Charmaine Price, May 2, 2021.
13. Information in this and the following three paragraphs from Tom Price to JLH, August 1, 2021.
14. Melanie Price, “Price Family Chronology from 1953 to 1994,” unpublished manuscript; interview with Melanie Price, April 21, 2021.



LEFT: George Marshall Price, son of Charles Luther Price and nephew of George McCready Price, with his new wife Margaret. George Marshall graduated with his MD degree from Loma Linda University and served as a physician in Tofield, Alberta, for more than forty years (Courtesy of M. Joan Foulston).

RIGHT: Four of George McCready Price’s grandnieces and grandnephews, the children of George Marshall Price: Left to right, Dave Price, Joan (Jo) Price Foulston, Margaret Price Topper, and Don Price (Courtesy of M. Joan Foulston).



15. Interview with Darwin Price, February 22, 2021; Melanie Price to JLH, July 4, 2021.
16. Melanie Price to JLH, July 4, 2021.
17. IMDb Movie database, accessed 25 October 2025, <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0791349/>; interview with Melanie Price, April 21, 2021; interview with Darwin Price, February 22, 2021; Tom Price to JLH, August 1, 2021.
18. Melanie Price to JLH, July 4, 2021; interview with Charmaine Price, May 2, 2021.
19. IMDb Movie database, accessed 25 October 2025, <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0791349/>; interview with Darwin Price, February 22, 2021; Tom Price to JLH, August 1, 2021.
20. Interview with Darwin Price, February 22, 2021; Tom Price to JLH, August 1, 2021.
21. This and the following two paragraphs from Tom Price to JLH, August 1, 2021.
22. This and the following two paragraphs from Melanie Price, "Price Family Chronology from 1953 to 1994"; Melanie Price to JLH, July 4, 2021; Melanie Price to JLH, July 25, 2021.
23. Melanie Price to JLH, July 1, 2021; Melanie Price to JLH, July 4, 2021.
24. Interview with Melanie Price, April 21, 2021.
25. Melanie Price, "Price Family Chronology from 1953 to 1994"; Genius, accessed October 26, 2021, <https://genius.com/Billy-field-bad-habits-lyrics>.
26. Melanie Price, "Price Family Chronology from 1953 to 1994"; "Tom Price (musician)," Wikipedia, accessed October 26, 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom\\_Price\\_\(musician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Price_(musician)).
27. Melanie Price to JLH, July 27, 2021.
28. Zoom interview with Charmaine Price, May 2, 2021; Charmaine Price to JLH, July 28, 2021.
29. "Charmaine Price," Facebook postings, accessed October 26, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/charmaine.price>.
30. Interview with Darwin Price, February 25, 2021.
31. George McCready Price, *The Phantom of Organic Evolution* (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell, 1924), 106.
32. George McCready Price, "Geology and Its Relation to Scripture Revelation," *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, vol. 61 (1924): 97–123.
33. Interview with Darwin Price, February 22, 2021.
34. Tom Price to JLH, August 1, 2021.
35. Tom Price to JLH, August 1, 2021.
36. Portia Dill Sherrard to JLH, July 19, 2021.
37. Portia Dill Sherrard to JLH, March 26 and July 19, 2021.
38. Portia Dill Sherrard to JLH, March 26, 2021.
39. Portia Dill Sherrard to JLH, July 19, 2021.
40. Portia Dill Sherrard to JLH, March 26, 2021.
41. Portia Dill Sherrard to JLH, July 19, 2021.
42. Darwin Price to JLH, February 22, 2021; Tom Price to JLH, August 1, 2021.
43. M. Joan Price Foulston to JLH, November 5, 2021; Marilyn Price Topper to JLH, December 31, 2021. "My grandfather would have loved Des Ford," opines Marilyn Price Topper. Desmond Ford was an Adventist biblical scholar who, like Albion Ballenger, lost his ministerial credentials over his opposition to the church's doctrine of the "investigative judgment."
44. Bernhardt Marshall Huedepohl to JLH, March 15, 2022.
45. Marilyn Price Topper to JLH, December 31, 2021 and March 3, 2022.
46. M. Joan Price Foulston to JLH, November 5, 2021.
47. Ronald L. Numbers, *The Creationists: From Scientific Creationism to Intelligent Design*. Expanded edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 103
48. Price was a well-known contributor to fundamentalist periodicals, but as Ronald Numbers observes, his views on flood geology did not convince large segments of the public until the appearance of *The Genesis Flood*, by John C. Whitcomb and Henry M. Morris (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1961). Whitcomb and Morris based their book directly on Price's views, although they barely acknowledged his influence (see Numbers, *The Creationists*, 114–119, 225–229). More than a half century after it first appeared, *The Genesis Flood* is still in print and remains popular among fundamentalists.
49. For a recent study of Price's influence, especially on American fundamentalist culture, see Weinberg, *Red Dynamite*. Weinberg borrowed the term, "Red Dynamite," from the title of chapter 12 in Price's *The Predicament of Evolution* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1925). See also, Carl R. Weinberg, "'Ye Shall know Them by Their Fruits': Evolution, Eschatology, and the Anticomunist Politics of George McCready Price," *Church History* 83, no. 3 (September 2014):684–696.



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