

Volume 1, Number 1

The Ramik Report:
Another Verdict

Wallowing in
the Gulley of
Indecision

Interview with
WALTER MARTIN

Edson's Cornfield
"Vision:"
Frisson or
Figment?

Questions on
Doctrine: A
Theological Sting?



AN UNAUTHORIZED, FREE PRESS SUPPLEMENT TO OFFICIAL SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST PUBLICATIONS

adventist currents

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FROM THE PUBLISHER:

The publisher and editorial staff of *Adventist Currents* are committed to the belief that Christian freedom is enhanced by information that makes judicious choice a possibility.

Adventist Currents represents an effort to put before Seventh-day Adventists, in a careful, creative, and lively way, information and ideas not usually discussed in official, denominational publications.

Readers should find *Adventist Currents* stimulating and accurate at all times, even when they disagree with its editorial posture. Also, it must not be assumed that the publisher of *Adventist Currents* subscribes to the opinions of its contributors.

It is expected that readers will understand the humor sprinkled throughout the magazine as a useful relief to the curse of protracted seriousness. Amen.

CURRENT CURRENTS

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DIRECT CURRENTS (editorial):

page 3

"The Cross of Christ Is Too Heavy"

CURRENT FEATURE:

page 4

"The Ramik Report: Another Verdict"

An SDA attorney challenges the accuracy of his church's hired patent and trademark lawyer's opinion of Mrs. White's innocence before nineteenth-century copyright law.

OF CURRENT INTEREST (news):

page 7

- Affidavit Claims: Bradford Breaks Agreement
- "A Prophet, If You Please," At Loma Linda
- Davenport No Easy Chair
- Keeping Up With the Davenports
- Daniel Committee Doesn't Dare
- Mid-America Union Outlook Charged With "Deception"
- Georgia-Cumberland Shows G.C. How
- Delegates Frown at General Conference
- Sabbath School Quarterly Kindled

CURRENT ANALYSIS:

page 13

"Wallowing in the Gulley of Indecision"

Dennis Hokama referees a bout between two Sabbath School quarterlies.

CURRENTS INTERVIEW: WALTER MARTIN

page 15

Christianity's cultwatcher discusses Adventism.

(*Questions on Doctrine: A Theological Sting?*)

ROOTS REVISITED:

page 25

"Edson's Cornfield 'Vision:' Frisson or Figment?"

Professor Fernand Fisel looks for evidence of the "vision's" impact on post-disappointment Millerites.

"PRINTED MATTER" (book review):

page 28

"The White Truth Dissected"

ON TAPE (tape review):

page 30

"Desmond Ford and Walter Rea on the John Ankerberg TV Show"

ALTERNATING CURRENTS (guest editorial):

page 31

"Our Sense of Shock" by Gordon Thompson

CURRENTS NEEDS

PEOPLE

Adventist Currents needs people in a variety of geographical locations who will report to the magazine local matters that are of interest to the general readership.

Particularly needed are individuals in or around church administrative offices who can help *Currents* to better understand the minds and actions of conference, union, and General Conference officers.

Also needed are reporters from Seventh-day Adventist college campuses — continuing sources of information and news.

Friends of *Currents* who can assist in its distribution and/or the acquiring of mailing lists are essential.

INFORMATION

Adventist Currents welcomes carefully written articles about Adventism's past, present, and future — articles about issues, events or individuals (maximum length, 5,500 words).

Currents needs brief, specific, and documented news items that provide information that is generally not available through the "General Organ of the Seventh-day Adventist Church" (maximum length, 1,800 words).

Guest editorials are welcome, so long as they do not address the characters of individuals or employ language that is untoward (maximum length, 1,200).

Letters to the editor are encouraged. Those that are not published will be polled.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Adventist Currents needs contributions to promote the growth in size, quality, and readership of the magazine.

Currents needs friends with stamina who will send tax-free contributions on a regular basis — what is elsewhere termed "systematic benevolence."

Adventist Currents' publisher, Mars Hill Publications, Inc., intends to publish books that address various issues of interest to *Currents'* subscribers. Suggestions for topics and potential authors are welcome.

The Cross of Christ is too heavy

by Douglas Hackleman

Before a major earthquake there are often swarms of minor tremors.

Such a period was experienced by the Seventh-day Adventist church throughout the 1970s. Arriving with the "Age of Aquarius," *Spectrum* magazine alarmed readers by revealing errors in Ellen White's favorite book, *The Great Controversy*.

Here and there in the early seventies, windows were rattled and nerves were

Daniel and John's Apocalypse).

Far more damaging to the integrity of the Adventist movement, however, was the fact that *none* of the disconcerting, adjustment requiring revelations came from official Adventist publications. Otherwise trusting people come to wonder just when they are being told the truth, once they discover that there have been coverups—be they cynical calculations or spontaneous fingers in the

leaves us "this treasure in earthen vessels."

It is also the Fall that causes all of us to see "this treasure" "through a glass darkly." And it is the Fall as well that causes some to rage dogmatically about the "men walking as trees" that other men must also view out of focus to be fellowshipped.

The purpose of Adventist *Currents* is not to pull down the pillars—it is neither as strong as Samson nor as blind. The purpose is to know reality as it is, realizing, as one weary traveler put it, that "truth is a suffering that may not be had for less;" a fact which brings Christians to the very heart of truth and suffering—the cross, a rough and splintered burden that even our Lord, on His final journey, could not manage alone.

The cross of Christ is too heavy. But He never asked us to lift it by ourselves. He said, "Bear ye one another's burdens."

The present "cross" of Adventists is the burden of courageously facing information that is superficially damaging to faith and to self-esteem. It is a burden that we, as Christians, must not allow a few brave souls to bear unassisted. And that admonition of Christ's is one reason for the existence of Adventist *Currents*.

Is it necessary for those lacking in courage to gossip about the spirituality of those who dare to sail beyond the horizon or count the number of teeth in a horse's mouth?

jangled by pirated copies of Don McAdams' painstaking, 244-page study that demonstrated Mrs. White's total dependence on 19th-century historian James A. Wylie for her treatment of the life of John Huss.

A more widely felt temblor followed the 1976 publication of Ron Numbers' *Prophecy of Health*, which deprived Adventists of their certainty that, in matters of health, Ellen White was a hundred years ahead of her time.

But these portentous rumblings hardly prepared the church for the heavy quakes that arrived with the egregious eighties in the persons of Desmond Ford and Walter Rea. Fresh fault lines appeared on the Adventist landscape; some churches collapsed.

These frightening dislocations were caused by shifts in Adventist self-understandings that brought with them a loss of certainty—a loss of certainty that all Adventist teachings were entirely consistent with Scripture; a loss of certainty that God was speaking directly through the writings published over Ellen White's byline; a loss of certainty that Adventist leaders could be trusted, or that they were necessarily "called" to the positions they had come to occupy.

These losses of certainty, combined with viable alternatives, raised unwanted but unavoidable questions regarding the long-held belief that the Seventh-day Adventist church was elected "before the foundation of the world" (as evidenced by certain verses selected and combined from the book of

dike. Coverups rarely stay in place; and once they are blown, trust is difficult to retrieve. (There is a practical basis to the ethic that recommends honesty and candor in all things.)

For those who have had the courage to face the enlightenment of the past decade, and to assimilate its meaning, there has been added a cruel and unnecessary burden—revilement by their Adventist leaders and fellow members. Intellectually honest individuals who attempt to grapple with the loss of dearly held but inadequate preconceptions often must bear a simultaneous loss of community.

This is an iniquitous state of affairs. Is it necessary for those lacking in courage to gossip about the spirituality of those who dare to sail beyond the horizon or count the number of teeth in a horse's mouth? And no wonder doubt about one aspect or another of our faith often marks the beginning of "the downward march to perdition." Doubters are often either shunned or hounded out of fellowship.

The findings of the past decade have not raised doubts about anything so crucial to Christianity as the resurrection of Christ. Yet Jesus' response to Thomas is the response that Adventist Thomases desire. Christ offered evidence. And if it is necessary to believe certain teachings in a particular way to maintain membership in the denomination, church leaders, to show Christ-like integrity, should provide compelling evidence for those mandatory beliefs.

It is the Fall that leaves us a world in which the church fathers (and mother) do not hand us pristine truth. It is the Fall that



About the Cover:

This model of the Trinity Lutheran Church of Santa Ana, California was photographed on a sand bar in the Santa Ana River.

Douglas Hackleman is a freelance writer in Southern California.

The Ramik Report: A Different Verdict

by James L. Wagner

Six months after the General Conference legal department contracted a Washington, D.C.-based lawyer to respond to Walter Rea's public charge that Ellen White was a plagiarist, the *Adventist Review* splashed attorney Vincent Ramik's opinion across seven full pages, claiming "there simply is no case."

Ramik based much of his opinion on quotes and citations from an 1845 landmark copyright infringement case decision written by the much-respected Supreme Court and Massachusetts Circuit Court Justice Joseph Story. The case was *Emerson vs Davies*.

When *Adventist Currents* asked Ramik about his quoting *Emerson vs Davies* without any hint of how Justice Story ruled in the case, Ramik said he hadn't mentioned the outcome of any of the cases he cited.

Ramik was then asked whether readers who knew the nature and outcome of *Emerson vs Davies* wouldn't have good reason to believe that if Ellen White had been brought before Justice Story with the relevant documentation, she would have been found guilty of infringement. His response was: "That's the wonderful thing about the courts. Anybody can go to court and win anything."

The tip that enabled *Currents* to ask Ramik those questions came from James J. Wagner, a young, Seventh-day Adventist attorney who is intimately acquainted with Ellen White's use of sources. The following is Wagner's evaluation of the Ramik report and its use in *Adventist publications*. —Ed.

When a reporter asks a minister about plagiarism, he is not asking for a legal opinion.

Neal Wilson clearly echoed a criticism of Walter Rea that he and other leaders have made both privately and publicly when he stated: "While it seems clear from the counsel we have that courts and attorneys are needed in our world, they were never ordained to settle matters arising within the church."¹

The irony of the church's turning to a legal opinion to counter the charge that Mrs. White was a plagiarist should not be missed.

It should surprise no one that an attorney who has represented Walter Rea would argue for different conclusions than an attorney retained by the church. But the key exceptions taken herein are made against the use of Mr. Vincent Ramik's (the church's attorney) opinion by church apologists. The church's objective should be to move the debate concerning Ellen White's borrowing from the arena of secular law to a spiritual discussion of the nature of inspiration, revelation and authority. One way of helping the church in this direction is to demonstrate the invalidity—and thereby the impracticality—of a legal defense.

A DIFFERENT LEGAL CONCLUSION

Said then *Review* editor Kenneth Wood: *Even those who are laymen, so far as the legal profession is concerned, by comparing legal standards with the way Ellen White used sources are virtually certain to arrive at identical conclusions with those of Attorney Ramik.*²

Lost in the rhetoric over whether she was or was not legally a plagiarist is the fact that plagiarism is not a legal concept. Nonlawyers do not focus enough on the limitations of law. Law, at best, is merely a subpart of ethics. It is that part of morality for which society can provide a "remedy."

The fact that ethics, art and the law take

Jim Wagner practices law in Cypress, California.

divergent views of borrowing has done much to confuse appraisals of plagiarism.

Ethics asks: Has the borrower acted fairly and honorably in taking and using the material involved?

Art asks: What has been done with it? Has he debased it? Or has he refashioned and improved it?

*The law asks: Has he copied an essential or substantial portion of copyrighted and copyrightable matter?*³

Law asks a narrower question than ethics.

*Plagiarism and infringement are not the same thing, though they overlap. Plagiarism covers a wider field; infringement involves more serious consequences. . . . The essence of the wrong in either case is the appropriation of the fruits of another person's mental labor and skill.*⁴

The facts of the cases cited in his summary are conspicuously absent.

And the essence of the wrong in Mrs. White's time was exactly that of today. Note the language of an 1845 case generally accepted to be a leading precedent:

*. . . the true test of piracy or not is to ascertain whether the defendant has, in fact, used the plan, arrangements, and illustrations of the plaintiff, as the model of his own book, with colorable alterations and variations only to disguise the use thereof; or whether his work is the result of his own labor, skill, and use of common materials and common sources of knowledge, open to all men, and the resemblances are either accidental or arising from the nature of the subject. In other words, whether the defendant's book is, quoad hoc, a servile or evasive imitation of the plaintiff's work, or a bona fide original compilation from other common or independent sources.*⁵

Then and now, to constitute infringement (and plagiarism), there must be copying,

willful or unintentional, made possible by access.

Then and now, the law would provide a remedy only for actual damage. That which is borrowed must be substantial or material. *One has to do with quantity, the other with quality. It is infringement to copy the major portion of a copyrighted work. It is also infringement to extract the essence of it, even though the essence, when measured quantitatively, does not bulk large.*⁶ Damages are found where the value of that copied is sensibly diminished by fair use. But if the use is not fair then an author is due a remedy. Only those who obtain a formal copyright are granted the right to a remedy. The copyright puts subsequent readers on notice that the author claims a monopoly on the use of his work.

As a summary of legally significant concepts, Mr. Ramik's seventeen-page opinion is comprehensive. But his statement in an *Adventist Review* interview, "There simply is no case," is merely the advocate's position within the adversary system. The facts of the cases cited in his summary are conspicuously absent.

It is the facts which reveal the similar understanding, then and now, of fair use, fruit of mental skill and labor, substantial or material similarity, and sensibly diminished value. And applying these legal concepts to the evidence of Mrs. White's borrowing very probably directs the conclusion that she appropriated the fruits of other persons' mental labor and skill. Her use, both in quantity and quality, transcended fair use. She breached a well established standard of conduct. She can responsibly be called a plagiarist.

EMERSON vs DAVIES

Perhaps Elder Wood would not have quoted from the case of *Emerson vs Davies* so extensively if he had known its outcome. The church's attorney gave a very disingenuous summation:

In the middle of the nineteenth century—just when Ellen White was beginning to

write for print, 1845—in the legal case of *Emerson v. Davies*, *Massachusetts Circuit Justice Story* in effect exonerates a writer who has used other men's words and ideas and woven them into his own composition.⁷

The fact of the matter is that defendant, Davies, was found guilty of infringement. And the facts are very instructive.

But another irony from the church's sally into the legal community should be noted. By proudly announcing that the legal opinion obtained was based on 300 hours researching 1,000 cases, the argument that "nineteenth-century writers simply drew the line between plagiarism and legitimate borrowing at a different point than many would today" is debunked,⁸ but the assertion is still blithely propogated by those oblivious to its invalidity. This obliviousness was not for want of notice. Evidence that Mrs. White and those around her were cognizant of the social standards her "borrowing" affronted

was given to the 18-member select committee appointed to review Walter Rea's research in January, 1980 at Glendale, California.⁹

The judge in *Emerson vs Davies* was called by the church's attorney the most influential judge of his time in the area of copyright.¹⁰ And he characterized that 1845 case as best reflecting the test of copyright infringement.¹¹

Emerson was the author of a first-level, elementary arithmetic lessons book which was copyrighted. Davies and others published a book that similarly contained first-level lessons in addition and subtraction.

Justice Story applies the legally significant concepts. Was the subject matter copyrightable? Davies contended that the arrangement of tables and the arranging of combinations involved were in common use. (To be copyrightable is a distinct concept from formal copyright. To be copyrightable,

a work must contain definable fruit from the mental labor and skill of a plaintiff, which could be appropriated.) Since the essence of infringement and plagiarism are the same (appropriation of another's published efforts), plagiarism is proved if the material borrowed was copyrightable.

Math books are like books that text other areas of knowledge. The writer is confronted with the obstacle of saying anything new in a format other than the obvious. Justice Story analyzed *Emerson*, fully emphasizing the fact that arithmetic books aimed at the same age level would have to be similar. At issue was not whether Davies had wholly copied Emerson. At issue was principally the addition section of the book. Justice Story cited language that clearly shows that to copy an important aspect of another's work is to transcend fair use:

*As to the hard consequences which would follow from granting an injunction, when a very large proportion of the work is unquestionably original, I can only say, that, if the parts which have been copied cannot be separated from those which are original, without destroying the use and value of the original matter, he who had made an improper use of that which did not belong to him, must suffer the consequences of so doing.*¹²

The church's attorney cites *Emerson* about half a dozen times. But he doesn't discuss the facts. And, most importantly, he doesn't tell the reader that Emerson won. The test Emerson had to meet to prove that his arithmetic book was plagiarized by Davies has easily been met by available research on Ellen White's "borrowings."

The proofs are classic. Her strings of Bible citations exactly follow her source, even when the verses chosen are for homiletic purposes and therefore not predictable. Where her source erred, she erred. The evidence laid out in *The White Lie* is basically that which was presented at Glendale to the 18-member select committee in January 1980. Mrs. White's language and message were often borrowed from various sources. For instance, Edersheim became the organizational structure for most of *Patriarchs and Prophets* and *Desire of Ages*. The actual language used is often merely chunks from her abridgements of other authors cut and pasted into the appropriate chapter. The message of a chapter is that of her source unless the material covers a peculiarly Adventist subject—then she splices in an Adventist source. After seeing such evidence, a committee of ministers in 1889 from the town of Healdsburg, California, concluded:

Now we ask. Would not any literate critic judging from the quotations adduced and a comparison of the passages indicated, conclude that Mrs. White in writing her "Great Controversy" Vol. IV had before her the open books and from them took both ideas and words. We ask the candid reader if we have sustained our position. Does she not

WAS RAMIK A HIRED GUN?

Questions regarding attorney Vincent Ramik were raised by invitees to the four-day International Prophetic Guidance Workshop hosted by the Ellen G. White Estate April 11-15, 1982. General Conference attorney Warren L. Johns fielded inquiries about Ramik's objectivity, whether he wasn't a "hired gun," and what he was paid for his services.

Johns' answers actually tend to call Ramik's objectivity into question:

He is completely objective. He has a close feeling about the Christian faith; he grew up in a Roman Catholic brotherhood. And he knew a lot about our church because of the work that he had done for us in the past.

The General Conference attorney's response to the "hired gun" query was indirect and again left doubt about Ramik's objectivity, since he was, according to Johns, "duty bound ethically" to believe in the cause of his client (in this case, Ellen White's innocence):

In a civil matter a lawyer is duty bound ethically not to remotely represent a client unless he believes in the cause of that client. . . . In this particular case, every conceivable protection was made—written and oral instructions to whatever you do, Mr. Ramik, just tell us what the law is. And any lawyer that did not tell what the law is, and he goes on writing, his whole profession is in jeopardy.

Johns on Ramik's fee: *As to what he was paid, he only charged us a fraction of what his actual time was. He put in hundreds of hours of research, partly because of his personal interest in what was happening.*

Johns had ducked the question, and White Estate associate secretary Ron Graybill said, "You didn't answer the cost question."

JOHNS: *I can't answer that because that's personal to Mr. Ramik. It's a confidential thing. [It] is between his office and my office. And if he wants to answer, you're welcome to write and ask him; I'm sure he'd tell you. But I can't tell you ethically. . . . I hope you understand why I can't quote you the figure.*

It is hard to understand why Johns felt he couldn't quote the figure, because the ethics of confidentiality and the law regarding attorney-client privilege exist for the protection of the client, not the attorney. When *Currents*, quoting Johns, asked Ramik about his fee, he also cited attorney-client privilege but said it did not matter to him if the figure was known—adding, "the ball is in his [Johns'] court."

Unwittingly, Graybill asked Johns a portentous question:

Have there been any lawyers who have challenged any portions of Ramik's decision or his opinion? Or objected to, questioned, any portion of it?

JOHNS: *I would be surprised if somewhere down the line some lawyer doesn't come back and try to give another viewpoint. But in order to match what Vince Ramik did, he's gonna have a big job because he's gonna have to review about a thousand legal cases; he's gonna have to look up the statutory law going back to 1794 of the federal government on copyright. And it's going to take that person many hundreds of hours, and he probably won't have that objectivity that Mr. Ramik has. . . .*

What he [Ramik] was really saying [was] that, first of all, that she did not violate the laws of copyright during the time she lived. That was very absolutely clear.

Until now.

stand convicted of “introducing passages from another man’s writings and putting them off as her own.” If so, we have proved the point in issue, and, according to Webster, *Mrs. White is a plagiarist, a literary thief.*¹³

Of course this group of ministers have had their work casually passed over by Adventist apologists because they “were hardly unbiased judges.” But it is a verdict from a jury of her time, a verdict substantiated by the work of Donald McAdams and Ronald Graybill in the 1970s.

Emerson vs Davies is an example of how the law weighed the issues. And with the even more substantial evidence of her copious dependence on sources for structure, language, and theme, it is a clear overstatement to claim no case can be made against her. And statements such as, “It is fairly easy to demonstrate that Mrs. White’s borrowing was within the bounds of acceptable practice of her time,” are made by leadership in bad faith. First, because it cannot be demonstrated and secondly, and more importantly, because it is a strawman.¹⁴ The real difficulty is that her use of sources conflicts with teachings about her experience and the nature of inspiration and revelation.

The thesis of Walter Rea’s *The White Lie* is that leadership, past and present, bought the Adventist message wholesale but insists upon selling retail. Their supersalesmen “puff” makes claims their product cannot meet.

It is an appropriate criticism. Factual admissions are only now being made. And even so, the significance of these facts is euphemized. Those who try to discuss the real issues are confronted by attacks on their motivations, intelligence, and integrity. An analysis of the use being made of the Ramik opinion by *Ministry* magazine associate editor Warren Johns reveals question-begging and spurious thinking:

From my own analysis of the 27 page report, I find that the legal definition of plagiarism or literary piracy is composed of

five essentials:

1. *Motive: Was there any intent to deceive?*

2. *Extent or scope: Did the author rely heavily upon a single source?*

3. *Style: Did the author make only “colorable alterations”?*

4. *Content: Has the theme, framework or structure of a prior work been taken over?*

5. *Infringement: Have the profits resulting from the sale of the older book been diminished by the sale of the new?*¹⁵

First note an insignificant but symptomatic example of puffery. Throughout the Adventist press, the seventeen-page attorney’s opinion is described as a twenty-seven page report by people claiming personal analysis of its contents. None of them have looked carefully enough to notice this ten-page departure from reality.

More importantly, the analysis doesn’t muster. It is at best poor legal exegesis ex-

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cerbated by ignorance of the facts.

This is particularly apparent in the discussion of motive or intent. Deceit is not an issue in law. Attorney Ramik’s opinion so stated: “However the intention of the appropriator is of no moment relative to the legal issue of piracy/infringement.”¹⁶

One cannot concede appropriation on the one hand, and then quibble about intent to appropriate. Once appropriation is conceded, the issue is whether the appropriation was within fair use or illicit.

Again, Ramik presented legal concepts without discussing the facts which provide the context in the case of *Farmer vs Elstner*.

In *Farmer vs Elstner* a Detroit advertiser had “made numerous, but not very lengthy, excerpts from plaintiff’s book.”¹⁷ But the work “was not intended as a competing work in any sense of the term; it is doubtful in my mind whether its circulation would prevent the sale of a single copy of plaintiff’s book.”¹⁸

The defendant’s work was a pamphlet that intended to advertise the industries of Detroit. It was 274 pages, beginning with 70 pages entitled, “Detroit’s Early History” and followed by 200 pages of advertisements. It sold for 40¢ and was basically sold to other advertisers for gratuitous circulation.

The plaintiff’s work—an exhaustive history of Detroit—exceeded 1,000 pages and sold for \$10.00 a copy.

The court made a distinction between fair use (such as legitimate cuttings for criticism) and the presentation of the product of another’s mind as one’s own.

The court acknowledged that the advertiser made no pretense of authorship and that economic impact was unprovable and doubtful. But the plaintiff had a copyright on copyrightable information. His labor was the sole source of information that appeared in the defendant’s pamphlet. The defendant was prohibited from publishing. “Had [defendant] extended to this book the common courtesy of an acknowledgement, we should have looked upon his appropriation with much more favor than we are disposed to at present. As the case stands, the animus furandi [intent to steal] is entirely clear.”¹⁹

One other thing is entirely clear, as well. The editors of the *Adventist Review* have done their readers a double disservice by spending nearly one third of an issue of the church paper promoting a legal opinion regarding Mrs. White’s use of sources.

It was bad enough that readers were misled by an attorney’s opinion of Mrs. White’s 19th century legal standing. Worse, however, is the fact that the *Review*,
(Concluded on Page 28)

GRAYBILL LEAKS RAMIK REPORT

Three months before it appeared in the *Adventist Review*, Ron Graybill, without knowing better, leaked to an amused Chattanooga First Seventh-day Adventist Church audience the fact that the General Conference had “retained a non-Adventist attorney to look into this plagiarism business.” Graybill was at the lectern; and his boss, Robert Olson, sat helplessly in the audience.

GRAYBILL: I discovered to my surprise just last week . . . that—Did you know this, Bob, that the General Conference has retained a non-Adventist attorney downtown to look into this plagiarism business? Did you know it? You did know it? You didn’t tell me about it.

OLSON (from the audience): There . . . there are . . . I don’t know how you found out.

GRAYBILL: Well, he came to me.

OLSON: Oh. Okay. Well, uh . . .

GRAYBILL: Am I not supposed to be telling?

OLSON: It was supposed to be quite confidential.

GRAYBILL: Oh, well I won’t tell. [laughter] I won’t tell then. Nobody warned me, see. The, the attorney came to me. I thought, well, isn’t this interesting.

OLSON: Well, as long as you . . . [laughter]

GRAYBILL: As long as I’ve spilled the beans . . .

OLSON (reaches a mike): Is this working? As long as Ron has brought it up, I’ll tell you how this thing developed. One of the attorneys from the General Conference—Warren Johns, actually—came over to see me the other day, and we shut all of our doors. I have not talked to a soul about it—not even my wife. [he laughs]

GRAYBILL: See, we couldn’t keep a secret at the White Estate if we had to.

OLSON: And . . . I have been waiting to get some kind of an opinion—that was about six, eight weeks ago; and apparently he’s still working on it from what I hear you say tonight.

GRAYBILL: Well, uh, I, all I, uh [laughter] . . . Nobody told me about it, and I didn’t know it was supposed to be a secret. So, uh, all I can say is that . . .

OLSON: Ron, I don’t keep many things from you.

GRAYBILL: Yeah, I know. [laughter] I’ll have to visit you more often. I will tell you one thing he said. He said, “You know, when I was approached with this, I thought it would be simple.” And he said, “The deeper I get into it the more I wonder.” His son, who is a law student, has gotten interested in it, too. So I gave him what I had, you know. Well, we’ll wait and see; but if word begins to circulate, we’ll know who spread it, right?

OF CURRENT INTEREST

AFFIDAVIT CLAIMS:

Bradford breaks agreement with Mich. Attorney General

A cease and desist order filed in the summer of 1981 by Michigan Attorney General Frank Kelley against the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and several of its publishing associations for violations of the Michigan Trusts, Monopolies and Combinations Act was settled on 24 August 1982 out of court.

The church agreed among other things not to:

... Reduce, suspend, terminate or threaten to reduce, suspend or terminate sales or shipment of trade and subscription books and/or printed material to any independent reseller, or penalize or threaten to penalize in any other way, any such reseller...

The integrity of that agreement is called into question by the following affidavit given in Chicago on 10 April 1983:

My name is Skip Baker and I live at 300 Rolling Oaks Drive, Thousand Oaks, California. I am a free lance photographer. On April 7, 1983, at or about 5:00 p.m. I was in the office of Charles Bradford, President of the North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and Vice President of the General Conference at 6840 Eastern Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C., for the purpose of photographing Charles Bradford for the First Annual Report of the Adventist Health Systems U.S. After I had set up electronic lights and entered Bradford's office while I was taking light meter readings, Annette Stephens, Charles Bradford's secretary, entered Bradford's office and stated that Clyde Kinder was on the telephone line. Charles Bradford picked up the telephone and greeted Clyde Kinder by name. During the telephone conversation with Clyde Kinder, Bradford stated that "Proctor is taking the food out of the mouths of our LEs [Literature Evangelists]". He then told Kinder to do what he could to interrupt Proctor's supply and sales of denominational books. He further stated that Kinder should get on an airplane and go somewhere to carry out these instructions with regard to Proctor. During this same conversation Charles Bradford further stated that if Kinder met any resistance he should inform those who might question his actions that he had "full authority" from Charles Bradford. At this point I began taking pictures of Charles Bradford while he was still on the telephone. He then interrupted his telephone conversation and said to me, "You're not going to take my picture now, are you?". I replied that I was just going to finish the roll in the

camera so that I could use a new roll on his portrait. He then continued his conversation with Clyde Kinder while I was reloading the camera with a new roll of film. During the course of the Bradford-Kinder telephone conversation I was taking light readings with a flash meter held approximately 2 inches from Charles Bradford's face. I have read the above statement and it is true and correct.

[Signed, Skip Baker]

Look for an expanded story on this case in *Currents'* next issue.

"A prophet" at Loma Linda

When Seventh-day Adventists enumerate their accomplishments in such categories as education, publishing, and medicine, they often recall the phrase, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

When other denominations achieve successes—such as the Mormon's laudable divorce statistics and longevity rates equivalent to those of Adventists—their "fruits" are often labeled "counterfeits."

Resistance by conservative Adventists to an invitation given television evangelist Oral Roberts to address the Loma Linda University School of Medicine Alumni Postgraduate Convention (8 March 1983) in the University Church sanctuary was, for better or worse, predictable. Objectors handed out flyers quoting passages from Scripture and Ellen White. Manuscript 30 (1902) was especially clear:

The world is full of men and women who cherish deceptive theories, and it is dangerous to listen to them.

The *Great Controversy* page 588 seemed tailored just to fit the faith healer who recently had a vision of a 900-foot Christ:

Through the agency of spiritualism, mir-



Oral Roberts

acles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and many undeniable wonders will be performed. And as the spirits profess faith in the Bible and manifest respect for the institutions of the church, their work will be accepted as a manifestation of divine power.

The demonstrators' fears came closest to realization when Loma Linda School of Medicine's former dean, David Hinshaw—now dean of Oral Roberts University's medical school—introduced the faith healer to the Loma Linda audience, with a not so subtle analogy between Roberts and Ellen White:

I just wanted to point out a couple of parallels between the institution there and the one here, that I recognize immediately [and] that all of you would.

This institution—the College of Medical Evangelists, Loma Linda University School of Medicine, whichever title you choose—was born in vision, as you all know—those of you who know the old history. It came to being in the mind's eye of Ellen G. White, who envisioned this particular place, and indicated that—prophetically, I believe—there would be a great medical center here. Now I think that's happened.

Now, something similar has happened in Tulsa, Oklahoma. There is already a great medical center there. It has certain maturing things to do yet, but these are rapidly being accomplished. The only way one can view what's happened there is, indeed, that it likewise was a produce of vision seen in the mind's eye of a prophet, if you please.

With less than a dozen protesters handing out their leaflets in front of the University Church, the media themselves were the news as a Los Angeles ABC Channel 7 mini-cam crew waited for something interesting to shoot.

Roberts' speech was anticlimactic. It amounted to an autobiographical sketch that he concluded by describing his strenuous efforts to wed the prayer of faith with the faithful practice of scientific medicine.

Audio-cassettes of the Oral Roberts address may be obtained by sending \$5.00 to: School of Medicine Alumni Association, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, CA 92350.

Davenport no easy chair

General Conference President Neal Wilson and his associates have been receiving frank but respectful, informed, and thoughtful letters from well-educated Seventh-day Adventist lay-members, questioning the way in which the General Conference has handled the Davenport debacle.

Many of the letters offer concrete alternatives to the vacillating methodology presently in operation. Here is a digest of what some Adventist members are saying to the

men on Eastern Avenue:

This attorney and Wilson have worked closely together on the boards of major church institutions, and there could be no misunderstanding the lawyer's closing plea:

In closing, on behalf of hundreds, and I suspect thousands, of laymen, I urge you to act to restore our confidence in the church. Neal, you simply can't have it both ways. It simply cannot be true, as we have said so repeatedly in public forums, that the church is governed hierarchically and that the General Conference has no power. We all know that if the General Conference leadership steps forward to state that certain individuals should not serve, the chances of their being reelected by their constituency once the facts are told are extremely remote. Even if that reelection were to occur, you at least then could lay the responsibility at the feet of the laity, whereas now the responsibility for the sickness in our structure lies with the leadership, for the laity can't help without the facts.

An Adventist systems analyst wrote Wilson in response to his March 24 report in the *Adventist Review*.

You used the analogy of a 'grand jury' to describe the role of the commission. I am comfortable with that comparison. But the findings of a grand jury are generally made public in the form of an indictment. Will you make the four-page report of the commission available to church members?



Donald Davenport in better days.

What usually follows is a trial, held in public, where all available and applicable evidence is presented; where there is strong and articulate advocacy of all points of view; and where an independent authority (judge or jury) decides guilt or innocence. In contrast to such a public hearing, it appears your hearings are conducted in secret.

Another widely-held concern, the fear of coverup, was expressed to Wilson by the same correspondent:

You suggest that the approach you are

taking "will place names of people to be disciplined in an arena where they will be openly discussed by an official body and thus become a matter of public record." I fail to see how the deliberations of a union executive committee contributes to the "public record." Are they not generally kept secret? Did such secrecy not contribute to this problem in the first place?

An Adventist physician asked Wilson if the Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher report of the involvement of denominational individuals and entities with Davenport was "privately funded." If not, he felt entitled—as one Seventh-day Adventist who had helped to pay for its 624 pages—to the privilege of reading it.

Another letter addressed to Wilson by an attorney contained just two pithy paragraphs, both in response to Wilson's March 24 *Review* report:

I thought the editors of the Review provided a subtle editorial on your report of the handling of the Davenport matter by their placing Eric B. Hare's story "The Elephant That Cried" immediately following your report. Many of us are crying tears every bit as large as those cried by the elephants, for your chart on page 8 tells us how confused we have become. Once again we have confused the admonition about refraining from judging. That admonition speaks to our inability to judge the fitness of someone for the kingdom because we do not know to what extent Christ's character has been substituted for that of the one in question. We do have the responsibility, however, for judging fitness for continued leadership, and that responsibility seems to have been abandoned.

Perhaps it is that our church is not hierarchical at all, but merely a collection of feudal barons who combine to keep a weak king in office. We are appalled and saddened to discover that personal profiteering, self-aggrandizement, and major conflicts of interest causing the loss of millions of dollars of tithe funds result in no significant changes. Power does corrupt doesn't it?

The most radical letters that have come to hand promise the General Conference leaders a cessation of tithe and offering giving until the "chaise lounge" affair is conclusively laid to rest.

Daniel Committee doesn't dare

Following the contested outcome of the Glacier View doctrinal discussions in August 1980, the General Conference kept its promise that the church would continue to study issues in the book of Daniel. To this purpose, a Daniel and Revelation Committee (DARCOM) was established in January 1981.

At first meeting in May 1981, approximately 30 topical paper writing assignments

KEEPING UP WITH THE DAVENPORTS

Keeping up with the Joneses is one thing, but keeping pace with the Davenports—even in bankruptcy—is no mean feat. Lists of at least some of the jewelry owned by the Davenports at the time of bankruptcy were assembled by the bankruptcy trustee from correspondence with an insurance firm. Here are a few of the nicer pieces from the collection, priced according to insurance coverage:

DESCRIPTION	INSURED VALUE
One lady's ring, 18 kt. yellow gold and 6-row diamond, containing: 156 round diamonds, estimated weight 7.35 cts.	\$13,000.00
One pair lady's earclips, 18 kt. yellow gold, diamond, and cabochon sapphire, containing: 14 sapphire beads weighing 21.00 cts., 278 round diamonds weighing 9.25 cts.	\$15,500.00
One pair lady's earclips, 18 kt. yellow gold, platinum, and diamond, containing: 114 round diamonds weighing 4.13 cts.	\$8,000.00
One bracelet, yellow gold and pave diamond hinged bangle, containing: 288 round diamonds, estimated weight 20.00 cts.	\$37,500.00
One necklace, 18 kt. yellow gold and diamond, 674 round diamonds weighing 14.47 cts.	\$34,000.00
Diamond ring	\$185,000.00
One necklace, 18 kt. yellow gold and white gold, peridot, and diamond in a rope twist design, containing: 1 emerald cut peridot measuring 20 x 18.8 x 12.6 mm.; 40 round diamonds, estimated weight 1.20 cts.	\$17,000.00
One necklace, 18 kt. yellow gold link with octagonal pendant plaque in yellow gold, diamond, blue and yellow sapphires, containing: 4 oval blue sapphires, estimated weight 4.00 cts.; 4 oval yellow sapphires, estimated weight 4.00 cts.; 60 round diamonds, estimated weight 1.80 cts.	\$11,500.00

The insured value of the remaining twenty-eight jewelry items brings the total insured value of the collection to \$424,050. According to the bankruptcy trustee, no physical inventory of the jewelry had been made because its location was unknown.

DANIEL AND REVELATION COMMITTEE

W.R. Leshner, Chairman
 Frank Holbrook, Secretary
 Niels-Erik Andreassen
 Dalton Baldwin
 Ivan T. Blazen
 Raoul F. Dederen
 W. Duncan Eva
 Madelyn Haldeman
 Gerhard F. Hasel
 William G. Johnsson
 Hans K. LaRondelle
 C. Mervyn Maxwell
 James Melancon
 Beatrice Neall
 Enoch Oliviera
 Robert W. Olson
 Jan Paulsen
 Elbio Pereyra
 W. Larry Richards
 William Shea
 Kenneth A. Strand
 Edward E. Zinke

dealing with Daniel, Revelation, Leviticus, and Hebrews were distributed among the 21 DARCOM participants.

Four months later (September 28-29, 1981), DARCOM reviewed approximately 50 manuscripts produced by the nine-man Committee on Problems in the Book of Daniel (1962-1966), authorized by R.R. Figuhr 20 years ago.

Two more meetings of DARCOM took place in April (21-25) and October (24-27) of 1982, during which time the committee reviewed the topical papers initially assigned. Following the October session in Washington, D.C., DARCOM secretary Frank B. Holbrook authorized a yet unpublished "interim report" stating that "agreement was expressed by those present on the following points." The four points, so disingenuously formulated, are reproduced below, followed, in each case, by brief, editorial commentary:

1) *The year-day principle may be established through reasonable interpretations of the Scriptures.*

It may be. But does the Bible—as its own expositor—demand the application of a year-day principle in Daniel 8:14? It was agreed in the Glacier View Consensus Statement that "The year-day relationship can be Biblically supported, although it is not explicitly identified as a principle of prophetic interpretation."

2) *The biblical evidence rules out Antiochus IV as the fulfillment of the little horn of Daniel 8.*

Evidence may rule out "Antiochus IV as the fulfillment of the little horn of Daniel 8," but does it exclude Antiochus as a fulfillment or even the contextually primary fulfillment? Antiochus must have been ruled out on the assumption that Daniel was not writing about 2300 literal evenings-mornings, because the Consensus Statement describes the "little horn" as "this wicked power [which] casts down the place of the

sanctuary (Dan. 8:11) and thus occasions the need for its restoration or purification." That is a rather good description of the person and work of Antiochus IV.

3) *The biblical evidence supports the view that the judgment/sanctuary scene in Daniel 7-8 involves (among other things) an examination of the professed people of God.*

The logic of this subtly worded statement implies that biblical evidence supports the view that the little horn power of Daniel 8 includes (among other things) the professed people of God. The subtlety is in the word "professed." Roman Catholics have long professed themselves to be God's church. And Seventh-day Adventists, professing the same thing, believe the Papacy to be the little horn. Do Adventists come under judgment as part of the little horn?

4) *The biblical evidence supports the view that the 2300 evenings-mornings represent 2300 symbolic days rather than 1150*

literal days.

It seems astonishing that point "4" argues for something so vague as 2300 "symbolic" days, when it is questions regarding the precise, intended length of the 2300 evenings-mornings period—not to mention their exact starting point—that has aroused so much indignation.

Unfortunately, the composition of a committee and its political dynamics say a lot about what it can be expected to produce (see box). Perhaps six or seven of the scholars on this 22-member committee—in safer times—might have dared to clearly express their reservations about the pre-suppositions, exegesis, and interpretative methods being used to support a sanctuary doctrine that is quite different from the doctrine of the sanctuary taught by Ellen White and the Adventist pioneers so long ago. It is hard, however, to imagine safer times—given human sociology and the recurring popularity of fiery furnaces.

Outlook charged with deception

According to *Limboline* (16 October 1982):

This photograph and announcement appearing in the Mid-America Union publication Outlook, turned out to be outright deception. Suspicious church members who contacted and quizzed Union officers found that they reluctantly but candidly admitted that the \$265,000 had nothing to do with a Davenport settlement of outstanding loans.

Adventist Currents' attempts to establish the relative accuracy of the pictorialized Outlook announcement and the charge of deception by Limboline have been revealing. The facts collected on the case raise intriguing questions that Outlook editor

Halle Crowson seems unwilling to face. He responded (22 February 1983) with some pique to a polite query asking how a Davenport loan could be settled while the physician-developer's assets were confiscated under Chapter 11 bankruptcy status:

First of all, I don't see how the caption can be misleading. It is written in very clear language, and the fact that the "rag" [Limboline] claims that the statement is patently false, doesn't bother me one little bit. Nor is it of any concern to my organization.

You ask that I send a statement "for the record" that explains what the caption should have said, and "how the erroneous

FIRST SETTLEMENT RECEIVED ON DAVENPORT LOANS



Pictured left to right are Mid-America Union Treasurer, Lee Allen, Mid-America Union President, E. S. Reile and Darrel J. Huenergardt of Kimball, Nebraska. Allen is shown receiving a check in the amount of \$265,000 from Huenergardt, Mid-America Union Attorney. The check represents the first settlement from the Davenport loans. The check was received for the total settlement from a loan on one property. The transaction took place at the Union Executive Committee meeting in Lincoln on June 28, 1982.

claim about the check came to be made." Well, you don't tell me for whose record this is intended, which I think is unfortunate. And I don't know that we have any desire to make any change in what the caption said, because it said what we wanted it to say in the first place. There was no erroneous claim made about the check, we just stated the facts. I don't see how the claim can be erroneous whether Davenport was in or out of chapter 11 at the time of the June transaction.

This organization received \$265,000 which was the first settlement from the Davenport loans on a particular property. This is the truth of the matter.

The parts of the *Outlook* picture caption relating to the \$265,000 check that seem to be most misleading are the following two sentences: "The check represents the first settlement from the Davenport loans. The check was received for the total settlement from a loan on one property."

The impression readers have gotten is that Davenport's assets have been attached, his estate is being liquidated, and some of the proceeds have "trickled down" to the Mid-America Union as payoff for an outstanding Davenport debt. The caption—however it was intended—misleads readers, by either subtle or careless wording, in the same way that readers not knowing better could be expected to infer that an individual was an attorney if that person were to say, "I am not an Adventist lawyer."

Another way that the *Outlook* picture caption leads to misimpression is by the ambiguous phrase "the total settlement from a loan on one property." Many readers misunderstood this to mean that the loan being "settled" was paid back totally.

Mid-America Union attorney Darrel Huenergardt responded (15 February 1983) to the same query in a different manner:

The Central Union, now merged with the Northern Union to form the Mid-America Union, loaned a sum of money to Davenport, secured by a first mortgage on certain real estate. That real estate was later sold by Davenport. Some time after the sale, in order to remove the lien from the title, a settlement on the Davenport loan was made. The Union received the sum of \$265,000 in return for releasing its first mortgage. Since the first mortgage was security for a loan made to Davenport and the payment was on that loan, in my opinion the check represents the first settlement from the Davenport loans received by the Mid-America Union.

If you disagree with this assessment, I would be glad to hear from you. If you do not disagree, I would certainly appreciate your assisting me in setting the record straight.

Recently, a friend anonymously sent *Currents* the 6 May 1982 General Conference Auditing Service letter from Wayne R. Vail, one of their auditors, along with "Notes to the Financial Statement" Vail had addressed to the Mid-America Union for the period

MID-AMERICA UNION CONFERENCE OF S.D.A.

Notes to the Financial Statement — Continued

December 31, 1981

Note 5 — Notes Receivable — D.J. Davenport — Continued:

2. Seaside, Oregon — Pacific Northwest Bell facility. This note is collateralized. The original principal loaned was \$350,000.00, interest is at 10%. The original principal was approximately 195% of appraised value, at time of construction.

	Principal Due 12-31-81	Interest Due* 12-31-81	Principal Due 12-31-80	Interest Due 12-31-80
Kansas-Nebraska Conference of Seventh-day Adventists— Specific Purposes Fund	98,333	27,880	98,333	22,376
Seventh-day Adventist Association of Colorado— Pooled Investment Fund	198,334	56,228	198,334	45,127
Mid-America Union Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists (Formerly Central Union Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists) Current Fund	33,333	9,449	33,333	7,583
TOTAL	330,000	93,557	330,000	75,086

Subsequent to December 31, 1981, the Mid-America Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, on behalf of the other organizations indicated above, accepted \$265,000.00 as a complete out-of-court settlement of this balance due. The settlement was received from the Lawyers Title Insurance Company which failed to disclose the secured mortgage which had been recorded on this property.

* Because of the bankruptcy petition not all of the interest due at December 31, 1981 has actually been accrued to the records while awaiting the distribution of assets in bankruptcy.

ending 31 December 1981. Although they raise additional questions, the following comment and notes from the General Conference auditor may begin to help the Mid-America Union, its *Outlook*, and counsel, "in setting the record straight."

Auditor Vail elaborated on the information contained in Note 5 from the financial statement:

As discussed in Note 5, an individual from whom the Mid-America Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has notes receivable in the amount of \$1,053,251, principal only, for each of the years ended December 31, 1981 and 1980, filed a petition for reorganization in bankruptcy under Chapter 11 of the Federal Bankruptcy Act. Management and legal counsel are unable to estimate what amounts, if any, of the notes receivable will ultimately be collected. The above notes receivable are not in harmony with investment policies of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

More complete information regarding the \$265,000 check reported in the *Outlook* picture story can be deduced from the General Conference auditor's Mid-America Financial Statement, Note 5, item 2 (see box):

1) The Central Union (later to join the Northern Union as the Mid-America Union) loaned Davenport \$350,000—

probably in 1978.

2) The note was in some sense collateralized by a Pacific Northwest Bell property in Seaside, Oregon.

3) The original loan was approximately 195% of the Seaside property's appraised value—before construction.

4) The loan did not conform to the investment policies of the General Conference.

5) Interest was at 10%.

6) Collateral was in question.

7) The approximate amount Davenport owed Mid-America on this note as of 31 December 1981 was \$440,000 (principal and interest).

8) The \$265,000 check was the result of an out-of-court settlement between the Mid-America Union and a title insurance company that had failed to properly disclose the security recorded on the Seaside, Oregon, property.

9) The Mid-America Union will probably never collect approximately \$175,000 still owed on this particular loan.

Given the facts that are known, the *Outlook* would have reported more accurately had it said that the Mid-America Union managed to salvage \$265,000 of approximately \$440,000 that Davenport owed the union on just one of his unpaid loans, by selling its position on property once owned by the bankrupt investor.

Georgia-Cumberland shows G.C. how

The Georgia-Cumberland Conference Executive Committee and the Georgia Conference Association Board have shown the General Conference and the North American Division how maturely and forthrightly the Davenport scandal could have been resolved and might yet be concluded.

Throughout 1982, a Davenport Bankruptcy Study Commission established by the joint action of the Conference Executive Committee and Association Board investigated the Georgia-Cumberland trust funds invested with Davenport, beginning in 1965, and the simultaneous involvement of Georgia-Cumberland officials with the Southern California developer.

The findings of this local Conference Commission were consistent—where they overlapped—with the findings of Neal Wilson's President's Review Commission. The significant difference between the two reports, however, is that the Georgia-Cumberland Conference made the results of its inquiry public on 5 April 1983, by distributing a three-page summary to all of its members.

Headlined as a "Special Report," it lists names, describes involvement, and specifies the action taken on each name. Here is an abridgement of that report:

—It was requested by Elder Wilson that the release of the report of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference study be held until the General Conference made its report in the *Adventist Review* dated March 24, 1983.

DESMOND CUMMINGS, SR.: President and chairman of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference Committee and the Georgia Conference Association Board from June 1964 to July 1980.

—It was found that Cummings received a higher rate of interest on some of his investments with Davenport than that which the conference was receiving, and that he was in partnership with Davenport on some business transactions.

—It was found that Cummings received finder's fees on monies loaned to Davenport by various entities . . . for the years of 1976 and 1977 in the amount of \$103,809.32. In addition . . . finder's fees for 1978, 1979 and 1980 of \$149,273.88.

—Further, the Georgia Conference Association advanced \$600,000.00 for the construction of a Southwestern Bell Telephone Company building in Temple, Texas for which the Deed of Trust was never received. After construction was completed Cummings purchased the building from Davenport and received a clear title for the property.

—The Conference Executive Committee voted that the Georgia-Cumberland Conference constituency be informed of this problem; that Desmond Cummings, Sr., should not be eligible for employment by any

unit of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; that he not function as a Seventh-day Adventist minister; that he should possibly receive additional church discipline; that the association pursue any and all sources of remedy available and to do whatever is necessary to recover the losses sustained as a result of the Davenport bankruptcy.

JACK PRICE: Board member of the Georgia Conference Association from June 1966 to May 1981. During this time period he also served at various intervals on the Georgia-Cumberland Conference Executive Committee.

—Jack Price apparently received finder's fees from Davenport in 1977 of \$10,968.22. There is also correspondence from Price to Davenport which indicates that Price received a 50 percent rate of interest on an investment of \$25,000.00.

—Jack Price may have had a conflict of interest . . . in that he apparently sought to secure financial opportunities for himself . . . The committee . . . voted that he not be eligible for employment of any unit of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

FRED MINNER: Secretary and treasurer of the Georgia Conference Association from May 1963 to December 1975. Assistant secretary and treasurer of the Georgia Conference Association from December 1975 to present.

His integrity is not questioned . . . however . . . because he did not fully execute his fiduciary responsibility, it is requested that the conference administration arrange for a change in his service to the church and bring in a new association treasurer.

E.E. CUMBO: Conference secretary and board member of the Georgia Conference Association and the Georgia-Cumberland Conference Executive Committee from March 1969 to June 1978.

It appears that there was involvement of his personal funds with Davenport. It was voted that any information concerning the involvement of E.E. Cumbo be passed on to the General Conference Study Commission.

RICHARD CENTER: Vice president of Georgia Conference Association and treasurer of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference from April 1977 to present.

—The commission does not recommend disciplinary actions.

HOYT HENDERSHOT: Field representative and board member of the Georgia Conference Association from June 1964 to January 1980. Secretary of Georgia Conference Association Board, December 1975 to January 1980.

—The committee accepted the report of the commission clearing Hoyt Hendershot of any misdealing.

DON AALBORG: Secretary of Georgia-Cumberland Conference, board member of the Georgia Conference Association and the Georgia-Cumberland Conference Executive Committee from August 1978 to present.

No disciplinary action was recom-

mended.

JERRY WIGGLE: General Conference auditor.

—As auditor for the General Conference, in the 1978 audit of the Georgia Conference Association, Jerry Wiggle presented his official auditor's opinion letter to the conference. (Concluded on Page 27)

Delegates frown at General Conference

The 650 combined regular delegates and delegates-at-large of the Southeastern California Conference in Triennial Session (17 April 1983) voted on the following resolution:

That the Southeastern California Conference in Triennial Session expresses deep concern with the handling of the Davenport financial affair by the General Conference, and that in order to reestablish confidence in administration and the credibility of those involved, the President's Commission on Davenport be reconvened for the purpose of completing a full investigation of this matter, and that they be given all of the information available to the General Conference officers, and that they be allowed to conduct personal interviews of any individuals necessary to prepare a complete report and make final recommendations, and that their final report be made available to the appropriate administrative units and others who may desire it. In addition, this should be sent by Southeastern California Conference to the executive officers of each conference of the North American Division and the General Conference.

Following a twenty-minute floor discussion, question was called and the motion passed easily. But the resolution was subsequently referred to the Conference Executive Committee for evaluation of its wording, particularly the phrase "and others who may desire it." Some delegates feared the church would be "opening up its books" to enemies.

A thorough reading indicates that the resolution relates only to the President's Review Commission report on the Davenport affair. And insiders say the disposition of the Executive Committee will be to ratify the resolution as it reads.

One other significant resolution voted by the delegates had two parts:

Be it resolved for study:

a. That the Union structure in the North American Division, as a regional administrative device, outlived its usefulness for the relatively homogeneous North American Division.

b. That the Union structure in the North American Division should be removed, the local conferences and the North American Division reorganized, and their functions redefined.

It remains to be seen what will be the impact of the successful resolution regarding the President's Review Commission. The

Southeastern California Conference, with 40,000 members, is the largest in the North American Division. With an almost imperceptible increase in tithe for 1982 (the conference usually shows an increase of about 6% per year), many speculate that a very clear signal demanding candor and accountability has been sent to the General Conference.

Sabbath School quarterly kindled

The title alone of the first adult Sabbath School quarterly for 1983, "Christ's All-atoning Sacrifice," elicited the doctrinal pyromania within Adventism.

Neal Wilson told a gathering of the Loma Linda University Division of Religion faculty on January 16 that there had been a public burning of the quarterly while he was in North Carolina to participate in the dedication of a new church. *Currents* conversations with church workers in the area revealed that the burning had only been threatened. However, *Currents* did confirm that some members of the North Fork, California, church congregation did ignite their quarterlies.

Mike Baugher, pastor of the Bonners Ferry and Clark Fork, Idaho, churches collected the quarterlies from his members and returned them to the General Conference Sabbath School Department with a note requesting either a refund or a credit. Baugher said that the letter he received in reply, disallowing refunds or credits, did not acknowledge receipt of the returned quarterlies. For his action, Baugher says, he was "called very smartly onto the carpet at the local conference."

Although the first lesson in Southern College religion professor Norman Gulley's quarterly was for December 26, 1982, by January 5, 1983, North American Division president C.E. Bradford and Thomas M. Ashlock, Sabbath School executive for North America, had cosigned a letter addressed to "Sabbath School Directors, North American Division." The letter was a plea for "Christian maturity," with "regret that unnecessary controversy should arise over a subject so central to the Christian faith."

According to Bradford and Ashlock, they were writing because "misleading and divisive charges and rumors are being made regarding the denominationally published Sabbath School quarterly study, 'Christ's All-atoning Sacrifice' (1st quarter, 1983) and its accompanying book, *Christ Our Substitute* . . ."

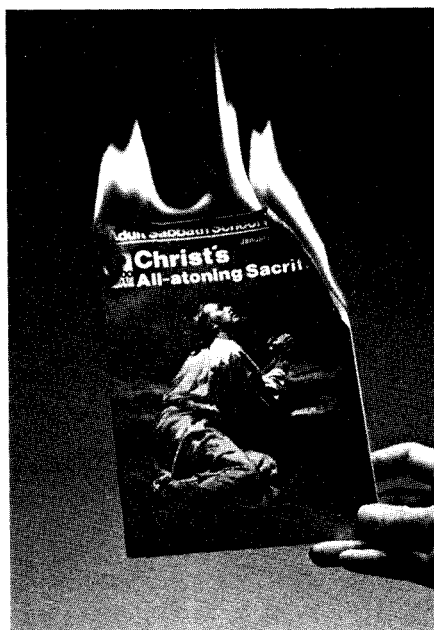
At least three publications reacted with alarm by pointing out approaches to the atonement, the nature of Christ, and the use of Ellen White's quotations in Gulley's quarterly that troubled them.

The fear of many that the quarterly title, "Christ's All-atoning Sacrifice," implied

that the atonement might have been completed at the cross, was only the beginning of sorrows. Vance Ferrell reacted with horror in a "special emergency issue" (Dec. 1, 1982) of *Pilgrims' Waymarks*. Ferrell reminded readers that the same heresies had appeared in *Questions on Doctrine* (see "Was *Questions on Doctrine* a Theological Sting?"), and concluded his four-page complaint with a warning:

The error of a Christ that did not become like us, linked with the error of an Atonement totally finished 2,000 years ago—is the heart of modern apostate Protestant theology. It is now being brought into our beloved Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In the January 1983 issue of *Layworker*, publisher-editor George Harvey Rue wondered "why did the General Conference Sabbath School Department okay this Quarterly for publication . . . ?" Rue expressed dismay that so much "error" and "new theology" could circumnavigate the red pencils of editors Gordon Hyde and Leo Van Dolson, saying, "We have had confidence in both of these men." Referring to Gulley's quarterly companion book, *Christ Our Substitute*, Rue added that "publication of a book with so much 'new theology' error implicates the Review and Herald Publishing Association."



William Grotheer complained in his "Watchman, What of the Night?" that Gulley's quarterly presented "a very serious problem" because "different references are cited from the writings of Ellen G. White, thus suggesting contradiction."

Rue, Ferrell, and Grotheer were all deeply troubled because in Lesson 3 of "Christ's All-atoning Sacrifice," the major thrust of Herbert Douglass' highly controversial, 1977 "Jesus the Model Man" quarterly is rejected. Douglass, with 223 Ellen White quotations, drove home his contention that since Christ took human nature with generations

of moral and physical degeneration, His sinless life proved that human beings today can attain sinless living; and that the accumulation of a sizeable group of these achievers (in one generation) would compel the return of our Lord.

Gulley's quarterly argues, instead, that Christ—as the second Adam—proved "that the first Adam need not have sinned" (p. 21). He then goes on to demonstrate what concerned Grotheer most: That it is possible to find Ellen White quotations supporting both views, using these examples:

FALLEN CHILD OF ADAM

It was in the order of God that Christ should take upon himself the form and nature of fallen man.—Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 2, p. 39.

Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity.—The Desire of Ages, p. 49.

ADAM BEFORE HIS FALL

Not possessing the passions of our human, fallen nature, but compassed with like infirmities, tempted in all points even as we are.—Testimonies, vol. 2, p. 509.

Be careful, exceedingly careful, as to how you dwell upon the human nature of Christ. Do not set Him before the people as a man with the propensities of sin. He is the second Adam.—Ellen G. White Comments, S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 1128.

This last quote suggests that Ellen White had been reading Henry Melvill's sermon "The Humiliation of the Man Christ Jesus":

Examine, with all care, expressions which refer to the humanity of the Saviour . . . He took humanity with all those innocent infirmities, but without any of those sinful propensities, which the fall entailed.—Sermons, vol. 1, pp. 101, 114.

But it was the contradiction, not source usage, that was at issue; and Gulley was gracious enough to ignore an even more obvious example. Two pages earlier (p. 20), in his introduction to Lesson 3, "The Incarnation," Gulley quoted from Mrs. White's February 13, 1893, *Signs of the Times* article, explaining when the plan of salvation was conceived:

From eternal ages the covenant of grace (unmerited favor) existed in the mind of God. It is called the everlasting covenant, for the plan of salvation was not conceived after the fall of man . . .

Four years earlier Mrs. White wrote in *The Great Controversy*, page 347:

The Kingdom of grace was instituted immediately after the fall of man, when a plan was devised for the redemption of the guilty race.

One happy note: Thanks to the vicissitudes of human history, it is the Sabbath School quarterly rather than its author, Norman Gulley, that was so recently thrown on the pyre.

WALLOWING IN THE GULLEY OF INDECISION

Christ's All-atoning Sacrifice versus Jesus the Model Man: An Analysis

by Dennis Hokama

For some faithful Adventists, the first quarter of 1983 was a time for weeping, gnashing of teeth, and even burning Sabbath School quarterlies. In order to feel this way, a member would have to have received a great blessing from Herbert Douglass' 1977 quarterly, *Jesus the Model Man*; studied Norman Gulley's 1983 quarterly, *Christ's All-atoning Sacrifice*; and have a memory that goes back at least six years. Fortunately for the church, relatively few members qualify on either account—let alone all three.

Both quarterlies deal extensively with a theological issue dear to the heart of traditional Adventism: perfectionism. Both quarterlies make extensive use of quotes from Ellen White (223 times in *Jesus the Model Man*, 131 times in *Christ's All-atoning Sacrifice*); but alas, they come to incompatible conclusions.

Historically, the belief that the sinner can have Christ's character perfectly reproduced in his own life is as Adventist as the great controversy motif; as Adventist even as the belief that Ellen White was a latter-day prophet. The Advent movement was founded on the notion that Jesus had ceased to forgive the sins of "sinners" after October 22, 1844, and would shortly thereafter cease interceding for the saints (those who accepted and maintained the belief that Jesus had "come" in some mysterious way in 1844) as soon as they were "sealed." When it became evident that this was erroneous, Adventists reasoned that, although they were wrong about the timing of the "closing of probation," they were right about the nature of the event; therefore, they projected it into the future.

Thus, a traditional Adventist believes that there will be a "closing of probation" before the second coming of Christ. "In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor" (Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, p. 614). It follows logically that those who will be saved must stop sinning completely prior to the time when Christ's intercession ends. The struggle to attain this degree of righteousness before the close of probation has long been a driving force within Adventism.

The achievement of sinlessness by the saints in earth's final generation is believed to have great cosmic significance, quite apart from the fact that it ensures the translation of the saints. It finally settles "the great contro-

versy between Christ and Satan"—namely, whether or not God's law can be kept perfectly by fallen man. With the justice of God thus established by the saints, earth's history is then rapidly concluded. This is Adventism's "harvest theology." It is expressed most clearly in Ellen White's *Christ Object Lessons*, p. 69:

Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. (Quoted by Douglass on p. 107 of Jesus the Model Man, in the lesson entitled, "The Model Waiting to Be Reproduced.")

Norman Gulley's cavalier quarterly caveat to perfectionists comes as quite a shock.

In the quest for perfection of character, it is obvious that only Jesus could serve as the "model man." In order for Jesus' character to be an attainable goal (on this view), Jesus Christ must have no "commandment keeping" advantage over modern man. Thus the nature of Christ is an issue tightly interwoven with that of Christian perfectibility.

Douglass' 77 quarterly affirmed the classic Adventist understanding of "victory life." It was not without its critics, however. Some called it hagiocentric (believer-centered) rather than Christo-centric. Some called it blasphemous because of its contention that man literally could become "Christ-like." Douglass offered no apologies or qualifications:

Adventists . . . believe that God will bring an end to the sin problem at the second coming of Jesus, and that this momentous event has been delayed not because God has changed His plan but because His followers have not yet fulfilled His plan . . .

The evidence that vindicates God will not be a matter of mere reason. It rests in the living demonstration of men and women who prove that God's way is best . . .

For this demonstration God waits. The world has been in a holding pattern, a suspended countdown, for a century . . . The primary concern of Seventh-day Adventists is that men and women everywhere become aware of the urgency of the time, that God is ready to complete His plan for man's redemption in our day . . . (Jesus the Model Man, p. 105)

With that as a background, Norman Gulley's cavalier quarterly caveat to perfectionists comes as quite a shock. Perhaps the first clue that he is taking a different tack can be found in his use of the term "Jesus, the Godman" (page 35, teachers' edition). This phrase implies a superiority in Jesus' nature, and is a favorite term of antiperfectionist theologians within the church, such as Edward Heppenstall. The first clear departure from *Jesus the Model Man* theology is found in Lesson 3, "The Incarnation."

On page 39 (teacher's edition), the author discusses the question "Did Christ come in the nature of Adam before the Fall or after the Fall?" Douglass made it clear that all Adventists had no choice but to opt for the latter. The point is that unless a post-Fall spiritual nature is attributed to Christ, He would have had a nature inherently superior to modern man, and thus could not truly be our Example. Gulley, however, informs readers that it is a debatable question and that there is merit in both answers. Teachers are then cautioned against attempts to resolve the issue or to debate it in Sabbath School class.

Thereafter, Gulley is careful to create breathing room for antiperfectionists by providing Spirit of Prophecy statements that can be interpreted in a way that will tolerate their existence. Perhaps one of the best statements he marshals is the one he refers to and paraphrases on page 79 (teacher's edition) of Lesson 5, "Tempted As We Are." Quoting here:

No one, looking upon the childlike countenance, shining with animation, could say that Christ was just like other children. He was God in human flesh. When urged by His companions to do wrong, divinity flashed through humanity, and He refused decidedly. ("E.W. Comments," S.D.A. Commentary, vol. 5, p. 1117)

This is a clear statement that Douglass would probably have little use for, since it appears that Jesus had help from his divinity in resisting temptation.

Another quote that undoubtedly raised a few eyebrows was an Ellen White statement from *The Review and Herald*, Feb. 5, 1895: "We can never equal the pattern." The majority of Gulley's quotations dealing with the issue, however, are ambiguous. Altogether, he does manage to produce 13 quotes which are reasonably antiperfectionist. Twelve are perfectionistic, and 34 are ambiguous enough to allow for interpretation. Douglass, by contrast, quoted 54 perfectionistic statements (some of the best

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were quoted repeatedly), 35 ambiguous statements, and no (zero) antiperfectionistic statements.

The latter figure may be seen either as an indication of how hard Gulley had to look to find his 13 statements or as the degree of intensity with which Douglass holds to his perfectionism; probably some of both. The quantity of statements counts less than the quality, of course. In this respect, it is hardly a contest. Douglass produces at least 14 statements that are so thematically clear that, taken at face value, they discourage argument. Gulley's 13 statements, while superficially antiperfectionistic, are generally not very convincing when read in context.

Perhaps Gulley's greatest coup on behalf of antiperfectionism lies in his rewording of the issue behind the "great controversy". Douglass' understanding of the issues behind the "great controversy" can be found on page 16, Lesson 2, "God With Us," and represents most Adventists' understanding:

Why? [referring to the necessity of Christ's becoming fully human] The answer to that question uncovers the great issues in the cosmic controversy between God and Satan. He came to prove Satan wrong—God was not asking too much of men and women, when He asked for their obedience; He proved also that God does not ask more from men and women than He will do for them.

Gulley, on the other hand, matter of factly states:

Satan's charge against God's law was that it was unjust and could not be obeyed. As far as the human family is concerned, Satan argued that Adam could not keep the law. Christ came in the same nature as Adam to expose this falsehood and demonstrate that the first Adam need not have sinned (page 45, Lesson 3, "The Incarnation").

In Lesson 11, p. 172, "It Is Finished", Gulley again restates without qualification his understanding of the "great controversy":

Christ's victory had several facets: 1. It answered the great controversy issue. It was the end of a perfect law-keeping life which exposed the utter falsehood of Satan's charge that, as God created them, humans could not keep the law. (emphasis mine)

It appears that sometime between 1977 and 1983, Satan, perhaps mellowing with age, modified his accusations against God's law. Whereas previously he demanded proof that men and women in general could keep God's law, he will now settle for proof that a perfect Adam in the perfect Garden of Eden could have kept God's law.

These two examples make it clear that Gulley is not merely tolerant of antiperfectionists within the camp, as he often appears to be; in reality, he sides with those who would contend that "we can never equal the pattern."

It is difficult to deny that Ellen White made statements supporting both sides of the nature of Christ and perfectibility question.

In fact this would only seem logical since she appropriated material from authors who held varying views. Henry Melvill, an English cleric whose works Ellen White often appropriated, believed that Christ's nature was neither that of the pre-Fall nor post-Fall Adam. He believed Christ's nature to be a unique God-man synthesis:

[Christ's nature] was not the Adamic, because it had the innocent infirmities of the fallen. It was not the fallen, because it had never descended into moral impurity. It was, therefore, most literally our humanity, but without sin. (Henry Melvill, Sermons vol. 1, p. 116)

between 1977 and 1983, Satan . . . modified his accusations against God's law.

Does it follow, then, that Ellen White did not really have a consistent viewpoint concerning the nature of Christ and the issue of perfection? Probably not, because her entire theology was perfection oriented. The Sabbath and health reform, two of her great concerns, have their rationale in perfectionism in preparation for translation. Final generation perfectionism is the logical outgrowth of shut-door theology projected into the future. As such, it is quintessentially Adventist. Using some of Ellen White's statements to prove that perfection is unattainable would seem as futile as using some of her statements to establish that she repudiated the significance of 1844. (Such Ellen White statements can be found, but they are numerically and theologically anachronistic.)

Another quarrel between the Douglass and Gulley quarterlies is in the very notion of Christ's all-atoning sacrifice. Final-generation overcomers insist that the plan of salvation was less than complete at the cross. There is something more to be proved and accomplished, by man as well as Christ before the end can come. The atonement is not a finished act, but an ongoing process:

The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven . . .

We are now living in the great day of atonement. (The Great Controversy p. 489 emphasis mine)

In Lesson 11, Gulley addresses the controversy over whether SDA's believe in a completed atonement. He dismisses it as a semantic problem in which Adventists use the term "atonement" more inclusively than most Christians. Christ's work subsequent to the cross, says Gulley, cannot and does not add anything to the value of Calvary, but applies the benefits of Calvary in an ongoing process for the salvation of humanity. Given Gulley's position on perfection, this would

be true.

Given Douglass' position, however, man is in the position of having to provide the universe with "evidence that vindicates God". Man does this by replicating Christ's perfection of character to prove that His humanity was not a sham.

Summary and Conclusion

There is considerable theological tension between Herbert Douglass' 1977, second quarter, *Jesus the Model Man* quarterly, and the just-completed first quarter, 1983 quarterly entitled Christ's *All-atoning Sacrifice*, by Norman Gulley. Whereas Douglass represented the Adventist church as being totally committed to the doctrine of final generation perfectionism, Gulley teaches that we may be for it or against it, depending on whether we wish to emphasize the exemplary or substitutionary aspects of Christ's work; provided that we do not debate it in Sabbath School class.

Whereas Douglass made it clear that Jesus took on the nature of fallen man, Gulley shows a clear preference for the view that Christ took on Adam's unfallen moral and spiritual nature. By acknowledging this crucial difference between Christ's nature and our fallen natures, he is in effect conceding that perfection (final generation or otherwise) is impossible. He summons seldom-used Ellen White quotes to demonstrate that there are indications that Jesus had some advantages that we cannot have, and that we are not expected to do what He did.

Whereas Douglass phrased the great controversy issue in terms of whether fallen man could keep God's law, Gulley rephrases it such that the issue is whether unfallen Adam could have kept the law. By restating the great controversy issue in this manner, Gulley makes Jesus the final answer, whereas Douglass' view requires that the saints in the final generation be the final answer and vindication of God's law.

The Douglass view of final generation perfection is more consistent with traditional Adventism. It is, in effect, shut-door doctrine logically projected into the future. To repudiate it would be to repudiate the very nature of Adventism. The emphasis on the Seventh-day Sabbath and health reform are largely explained by Adventism's quest toward final generation perfection.

Whether Gulley's departure from tradition represents a deliberate shift or is merely a trial (or lead) balloon remains to be seen. Historically, the church has always made its theological changes unannounced (witness *Questions on Doctrine*), preferring to maintain many years after the fact that it had always taught what by then is the "new" view. This is a time-proven practice which accomplishes change with limited opposition and minimal debate in Sabbath School classes. In the meantime, we are evidently free to wallow in the "gulley" of indecision regarding perfectionism. To be or not to be perfect, which is our quest?

CURRENTS INTERVIEW: WALTER MARTIN

Christianity's cult-watcher discusses Adventism in trouble — including his fear that SDA leaders “are on Masada and they don’t know it.”

In the mid 1950s, a theologian and cult-watcher named Walter L. Martin began an investigation into Seventh-day Adventism which led the church to publish the book *QUESTIONS ON DOCTRINE* and which led Martin to write *THE TRUTH ABOUT SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM*. In his book and the articles that preceded it, Martin holds that Adventists are not a cult, subscribing to extrabiblical authority, but are in fact biblical—and thus genuine Christian brethren, worthy of respect and unreserved fellowship. During an interview in February 1983, Martin told *CURRENTS* his feelings regarding the fate of *QUESTIONS ON DOCTRINE* and gave his evaluation of SDA theological developments subsequent to 1955.

Because nearly three decades have passed since Martin spent hundreds of hours in dialogue with General Conference officers, we expected to interview an unsteady octogenarian. But Martin is barely into his fifties.

He was a mere boy when he confronted

FREDA, an acronym given by some on Eastern Avenue to Froom, Read, and Anderson. L.E. Froom, whom Martin had asked to meet, was Adventism's reigning historian-apologist. W.E. Read, General Conference field-secretary, entered the discussions at Froom's suggestion. And Roy Allan Anderson, also included at Froom's request, was Ministerial Association secretary and *MINISTRY* Magazine editor.

Martin was already a contributing editor for *ETERNITY* Magazine and had published a book exposing the cults (his life's cynosure) when he persuaded his mentor-boss, *ETERNITY* editor Donald Grey Barnhouse, to join him in conversation with his new friends from the General Conference.

General Conference president R.R. Figuhr gave his blessing to the meetings in the summer of 1955 and more than once after his retirement told R.A. Anderson that the book *SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS ANSWER QUESTIONS ON DOCTRINE*, which resulted directly from the discussions with Martin and Barnhouse, was the most

meaningful accomplishment of his administration. Not everyone agreed, however; and evidence of the sound and fury that followed publication of *QUESTIONS ON DOCTRINE* is illustrated in a box on page 22.

Dr. Martin was interviewed at his Christian Research Institute offices in El Toro, California, where he employs an engaging staff of research assistants.

Martin has invested much of himself in Seventh-day Adventism, and his reputation with the evangelical Christian community is on the line as he maintains that Adventists are Christian brethren rather than a cult. Consequently, he remains intensely interested in the status of our internal doctrinal debates.

When discussing his interaction with Seventh-day Adventist leaders past and present, Martin becomes very much involved. Interview becomes monologue. And, given the continuing vicissitudes in Adventist doctrine and policy, Adventists can expect to hear more from this self-appointed monitor of cults.

CURRENTS: I understand that you have recently solicited from the General Conference President, Neal Wilson, a statement affirming the validity of Adventist doctrine as presented in the 1957 publication, *Sev-*

enth-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine. Could you tell us why you are looking for such a statement at this time from the General Conference president? Have you received any response?

MARTIN: The request has been sent to Mr. Wilson. The reason for it is because increasingly, over the last few years, I have met Adventist pastors, teachers, and evangelists around the country who felt that the de-



“They were to take my book and get it into all the Adventist bookstores and publishing houses . . . They reneged on that. The General Conference reneged on that, and [R.A.] Anderson was very upset.”



“I believe Ellen White had an extremely complex personality, and I think she plagiarized materials because she believed that the Lord had shown her that what the sources said was the truth . . .”



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID S. BAKER

“They are on Masada and they don’t know it. If Ellen White is an infallible interpreter of Scripture, then what they’ve railed against all these years has finally come to pass . . . They have a pope.”

nomination had taken such a powerful stand in *Questions on Doctrine*, with such good scholarship behind them—amassing some of the best brains they had at the time—and really trying to come to grips with the issues which were facing their denomination and separating them from fellowship with other evangelicals. And they could not understand why there was a muffling of the book, why it was taken out of circulation; many felt that I was being misled. The men who dealt with me dealt with me in integrity and in honor, and I believe that. But afterwards, a “Pharaoh arose who knew not Joseph.” And as a result of that, the “old guard”—some of whom followed the school of Uriah Smith on Christology, M.L. Andreason on sanctuary doctrine, and some of Mrs. White’s earlier unfortunate statements (which need not be defended as infallible)—were in a position



T.E. UNRUH

to influence the publication of the book and the continued dialogue with evangelicals on which it was based. After 150,000 copies, *Questions on Doctrine* was permitted to go out of print. That was a bad mistake. It was a very popular book.

CURRENTS: “Permitted” as euphemism here?

MARTIN: I am being kind. I believe it was deliberately removed by people who felt that it was a thorn in their theological flesh.

CURRENTS: Maybe we ought to flash back about 30 years to the time when, as a young graduate student studying the history of American religions at New York University, you first initiated contact with the General Conference brethren. T.E. Unruh, one of the men you met, said, “This first meeting can be described as a confrontation.” You had already written about Adventists, perhaps negatively, in a book called *The Rise of the Cults*. What occasion did you have to contact the Adventist leadership, and how do you remember the initial confrontation?

MARTIN: Well, I received literature critical of the position I had taken in *The Rise of the Cults*, where I listed Adventism as a cult.

T.E. Unruh contacted me in Reading, Pennsylvania, where I believe he was a Conference president or had some official position there. He was a very winsome and loving man. But he was quite upset by the fact that I had taken this very strong position, that so many people read my material, and that Adventism would suffer as a result—unjustly, he felt. We had a confrontation, which was the best thing. I said to him that I had a considerable amount of evidence from Adventist publications which are heretical. I said, “It does not have anything to do with like or dislike of Adventists as people, or their accomplishments, or their zeal—the cults are very accomplished; they are very zealous. I can introduce you to marvelous Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses who are moral, ethical, tithe-giving people who imitate Christian ethics and Christian morality. The fact that you do these things doesn’t make you a Christian. What makes you a Christian is whether or not you really are in accord with biblical theology and whether you know Jesus Christ as your Saviour.”

“Well, I do,” said Unruh.

Then I said, “I am not challenging you, but your literature is a hodge-podge of contradictions. I am a logician. I am a student of comparative religions, and I intend to make it my life work. I collect data. I am a documentary research man.”

“Well,” Unruh said, “I propose we have some dialogue in this matter and talk about this.”

And I said, “All right. I will talk with Dr. Barnhouse of *Eternity Magazine* (I was contributing editor at the time); and if he is interested, we could make this a joint project with the General Conference and the Evangelical Foundation. We will discuss, we will go into dialogue, and I’ll be happy to represent the Foundation. And if my position is in error, I’ll be happy to correct it. If it is not in error, then you will sustain that what I have said is true.”

CURRENTS: Were you under contract by Zondervan at that time to write another book?

MARTIN: No. In fact, the General Conference was not really too warm to the entire project initially. Anderson, Froom, Read and Unruh paid some of the expenses from their own pockets. And we, out of our own pockets, did the same thing, because I came to the realization that there was a real area of conflict that had to be resolved. After all, if Seventh-day Adventists were in essence Christians, then to classify them as a cult would be a great sin. If they were really cultists, and didn’t even know that they were, then we could do them a great service by pointing it out to them. And if we could deal with all of the issues that had been raised from the Adventists’ controversies of Can-right, all the way through to that particular day, then perhaps we could set the record straight once and for all. Just exactly what did they believe?

You have to understand that 30 years ago

there was great confusion. As a matter of fact, today there still is in many areas of



R.R. FIGUHR

Adventism. They had strains of Arian Christology; there were men in positions of authority who denied the deity of Christ and the Trinity. For all I know, some of them may still be there today. There were people who were absolute legalists, who believed that any person who kept Sunday—even in good conscience before God—right at that moment had the mark of the beast. And they were printing and distributing it under official Adventist logos.

CURRENTS: Can you put a handle on the copiousness of that discussion and how long it went on?

MARTIN: What you really have to understand is that when we first decided we would explore this, Barnhouse wouldn’t buy it. He and the General Conference had a complete agreement: they were anathema. Barnhouse, you see, had come out against Adventism so strongly in the past and had such a vast ministry of influence that it was unthinkable for him to even consider these people from Mountain View, California, who had stamped him with the mark of the beast. He ran into some of the Adventist “lunatic fringe.” And, of course, that turned him off, as it would turn off any normal person. So, Barnhouse said, “No. We won’t go into it.”

The General Conference would say (I learned later), “This Martin, how can we really trust him? Look what he has done to the Jehovah’s Witnesses and to the Mormons. He’ll come after us. If we let him in, if we open anything up to him, who knows what he will say?”

So, Roy Anderson said to them and the others, “He is a man of integrity, and we believe he will tell the truth. If we tell him the truth, and we don’t hold anything back, he will tell the truth. We will break down the walls that separate fellowship between evangelicals and Adventists all over the world. We will begin something that will go on and

on in the denomination, that will help people understand that we are brothers and sisters in Christ. We can perform such a great service if we are willing to take the risk."

To his eternal credit, Reuben Figuhr said, "We will take the risk." So they financed the conferences in Washington, and Barnhouse financed our part of whatever we had to do in Philadelphia or wherever we went.

CURRENTS: You are talking about hundreds of hours of contact.

MARTIN: Ha! You are talking thousands of hours of research. What I did was, I went and collected every bit of information from Adventist publishing houses in the basic areas of doctrine covered in the book, *Questions on Doctrine*. Do you have any idea how much time that took? Do you have any idea how much time it took to read the material? I didn't have a research staff (I have 20 people now). It was George Cannon and I, with some of the other people I could trust, who had good theological orientation to check out the material.

After I started doing the research, I saw definite division in Adventist theology. There were the people who really were believers and held to the foundations of the Gospel. Then there were those who were downright legalists—worshippers of Ellen White—who had exalted her beyond the role that she ever claimed for herself, and, in effect, were the loud voice that the evangelical world was always hearing. They were hardly ever hearing the conservative Adventists. They were hearing these people who were stamping [them] with the mark of the beast and telling them that the atonement wasn't finished and all kinds of other things.

So I distilled all this information over a period of months. I mean months and months and months of just checking it. I had carte blanche to go ahead as soon as Barnhouse was convinced. And I convinced Barnhouse by sitting down with him and saying, "You taught me that the unity of the body of Christ was the primary task of Christians and that we were to maintain that unity."

He said, "Correct."

I said, "Now, if these people are members of the body of Christ and we treat them as enemies, God can't bless us."

And he said, "That's true."

And I said, "Let's find out (let me find out). Do you trust me?"

"Absolutely," he said. I said, "Then let me find out." He said, "Do it."

Well that was Barnhouse and Figuhr. They had both agreed, having never met.

So, we started. I collected all the material and I noticed the division in Adventist theology. A lot of what Canright said was right. He had it absolutely accurate in the early days. A lot of other people—Herbert, Bird—had some good criticisms, which came out after my material. Then there were others down the line, E.B. Jones and others, who had made observations from their own experiences within Adventism—a lot of

which were valid. But times had changed in certain areas, and they had not caught up with this. So I met with E.B. Jones, and he told me the Adventists would deceive me and I shouldn't listen to them—that they were experts at manipulation. Then, anybody I talked to who was an ex-Adventist of the Jones type—you see, they were very sincere—was apparently badly burned by some experiences in Adventism. It wasn't all their fault, but they were really hostile.

So I ran into this hostility and I decided what I had to do was evaluate the primary sources. I couldn't become involved in what ex-Adventists thought about Adventism. I had to get into what the primary sources said, unless what the ex-Adventists said was backed by primary sources. That's a different thing. So I proceeded to collect the material.

We met in Washington and it was a confrontation. Froom thought he was an apologist—though he was a great church historian, he was not an apologist. And Froom was convinced that he wasn't going to give me one inch. Obviously, I was a young man and he was a great historian—and he was. I would controvert him in specific dialogue, he would shout at me, and we would really get going. I would shout back, too. We had a couple of sessions there that were really something. Poor Roy Anderson sat there and would say, "Now brethren, we must be calm here." He is a



W.E. READ

dear, dear soul. He was editor of *Ministry* then. And he'd calm Froom down.

W.E. Read, great old servant of God, said, "We've got to get back to the basic issue here, Froom. Never mind the differences. We can argue about 'soul sleep' forever. This has nothing to do with the basic issue. That's not going to separate our fellowship. We've got to get back to these basic things. These are real concerns." And, we would get back.

Unruh didn't quite know what to make of either Cannon or myself. I brought Cannon

along because he was working on his doctorate in Greek. He is brilliant, as history has now shown us; he is one of the best Greek scholars the Church has. And he was convinced, as I was in the beginning, that Adventism was a cult because we had materials which were just flagrantly disobedient to exegesis, to Scripture; and we knew it was wrong, and we could point it out very simply. I mean, a first-year Greek student could point it out. So we thought, "Hey, you know, we really ought to put our heads together on this." George was a Christian Missionary Alliance professor and I was a teacher. "OK, let's go at it; you take the Greek and I'll take the apologetics. We'll put them together and see what we can come up with." So, that is how we approached it.

Back to the meeting in Washington. George and I started pointing out that there were differences in Adventist publications. Well, the men who were there were largely unaware of how really bad the publications had become. Froom was vigorously denying some of the things I was quoting. I had brought a large suitcase, and I opened it on the conference table and spread out the papers before them. I'll never forget this! "Read it," I said; and they read it and were appalled!

Anderson said, "I've never believed that!"

Froom said, "I certainly never have."

Unruh said, "Never."

And Read said, "Certainly not!"

So I said, "Fine. Here are four Adventists, the best brains around, in this committee—the editor of the *Ministry Magazine*, the head of your Hebrew Research Department, your best historian, and one of the most prominent conference presidents—and you are sitting here with how many total years in Adventism? And you didn't know?"

CURRENTS: I don't know how Froom could not have been aware of all that?

MARTIN: Well, you have to understand Froom's mind. He was selective in his work. He was really a great historian. He spent most of his time in history archives digging out material. He would seldom ever get involved in basic theological issues. Read was aware of some of it because of some of the material that crossed his desk. Anderson was too busy running the ministers and ministerial associations throughout the world; he had work for ten men. He didn't have time to go through what I did. And then, men underneath him apparently were never assigned any projects of that nature.

I think perhaps what I was able to do was focus their attention for the first time on the fact: "Hey! You guys are talking out of both sides of your mouth and you don't even know it." That is when I think they woke up. They weren't just denying it to impress me; they honestly were in shock! Then they started reading the mark of the beast material, the incompleteness of atonement with all kinds of stuff in there, and some of the early things in Mrs. White. I said, "We just simply have to get to the place where we recognize that Ellen



LEROEY E. FROOM

White may very well have exercised the gift of prophecy, as in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. She may very well have had words of wisdom and knowledge from the Lord. This has been going on down through the centuries; it's nothing new. But you have to be extremely careful when you talk about these things that you do not place them in the area of canonicity; and secondly, you have to be careful that you don't end up with a female pope who is going to tell you what the text says, when that's the work of the Holy Spirit."

"You are right," they said.

And I said, "Well, what we have to do is try to get to the real Ellen White and what she thought of herself. Then, even if she made mistakes in judgment about herself, let's assume it's on the side of the angels. That she wasn't a ravenous wolf or false prophet who set out to deceive the church and that she was not manipulating the people around her and that she did not have phony visions. Let's assume that she had a genuine manifestation of spiritual gifts. With that also goes fallibility. With that goes the fact that one can misinterpret, that one can make mistakes." Well, that was the first major breakthrough we got.

At that juncture, I ran into F.D. Nichol. Nichol was an absolute worshipper of Ellen White. If he were here now (F.D. was a friend of mine), I would say it to his face. And we got to that place in our dialogues (just a couple I had with Nichol, independent of these men). I met with Nichol over in Illinois when we were covering a conference and we spent a day together.

It was before 1960, of historical value. Nichol said that he was very glad he did not have to defend the writers of the Scripture but only Mrs. White. And I said, "Brother Nichol, have you lost your reason? I wasn't as tactful as I am today. 'Have you lost your reason?'" Do you realize what you have just said? Do you realize you have elevated Mrs.

White over Scripture without even thinking about it? You said you are glad you only have to defend her and not the Scriptures, as if the Scriptures were more fallible than Ellen White.

He just paused and looked at me.

I told him, "You can't say that. You say something like that publicly and Adventism is a cult." They have exalted the leaders' interpretation capabilities and gifts over those of the Church, the Holy Spirit, the ministry of the Word. You can't do that." Well, the General Conference wisely separated Nichol and myself. He was prohibited from making contact with me.

CURRENTS: He had already written *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*.

MARTIN: *Answers to Objections* and *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, which I read.

CURRENTS: So he had to know its difficulties.

MARTIN: Well, I went through his arguments. I didn't just ignore F.D. Nichol. He had a good mind. He made a lot of points in favor of Mrs. White in areas that were, let's say, questionable. OK, I could see his position. But there were areas where there just wasn't any way any human mind, rationally operating, was going to be able to get out. "God showed me, 'Build the Health Institute'." James White comes home, tears it down! I don't care who you are and what kind of machinations you go through, Papa [James White] made the decision, not God. And I said to the guys at the table, "There is no way out of this."

"Well, let's not really get into it," they said.

"All right, let's not really get into it," I replied. "But you understand from an evangelistic perspective, there's no way out of this."

CURRENTS: Nichol would have been better off if he had said it was a sexist generation and let it go at that.

MARTIN: He would have been better off to have just ignored the thing or said, "There are areas in which, perhaps, we cannot understand why Mrs. White did this . . ." or whatever, but to defend it!

CURRENTS: You may not be aware how much Arthur White helped him with that book.

MARTIN: All right. Now, we had a problem there. I met Arthur White, who was very gracious but extremely determined not to give me any information other than what he absolutely had to give. I said to the committee, "I do not want to do business with Arthur White or the White Estate. Are you going to represent the Adventist denomination to me or is Mr. White going to?"

They replied, "The General Conference represents the denomination."

"Good," I said, "You are the representatives, a committee appointed by the president of the General Conference."

"Yes."

"Then," I replied, "we are going to do the Lord's business together, not Mr. White.

You just get me the information I want from Mr. White because I am not going back again." And they gave me whatever I asked for. I asked for a lot of material—they were fair; they gave it to me. As we progressed they came to trust me.

Cannon and I came to have great respect for their integrity and great trust in them.

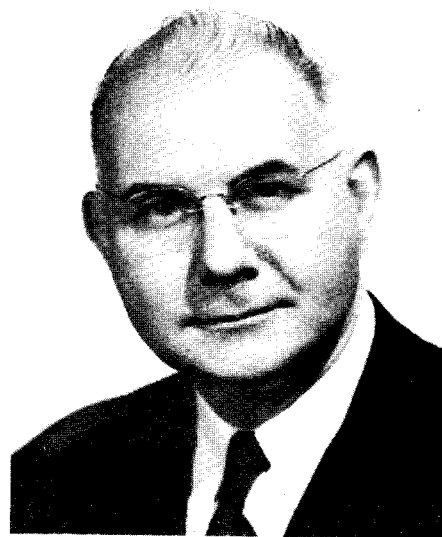
To this day I don't think I have met four finer men of Christian integrity than R.A. Anderson, T.E. Unruh, L.E. Froom and W.E. Read or, for that matter, Ted Heppenstall—men of God who really worked earnestly trying to find answers. They realized that separation between members of the body of Christ on peripheral theology is sin and this sin had to be cleared away. The debris had to be cleaned up. And, if there was a real basis then, there should be fellowship.

So, I went back to Barnhouse and presented the evidence I had. He said, "Are you absolutely certain?"

"Yes," I said, "I am absolutely certain. Now the question is the denomination itself. It is a mixed bag of people. If the General Conference takes a strong stand with the book, *Questions on Doctrine*, and really puts it in all their publishing houses, and if the General Conference puts my book, which I am now going to write, into the publishing houses so that they get both aspects of our discussion, then we have a fighting chance to influence the denomination towards evangelical fellowship; we can have rapport and there is a chance that we can start binding up some of the wounds in the body of Christ."

CURRENTS: Now *Questions on Doctrine* was the written answers to the questions you and Barnhouse submitted

MARTIN: I submitted them and I worked with Froom on some of them too because Froom wanted them placed in such a way that Adventists would understand exactly what we were saying.



R. ALLAN ANDERSON

CURRENTS: And the manuscript of that book went to 250 Adventist leaders around the world and had apparently unanimous support before publication.

MARTIN: Almost complete.

I wrote my book in 1960, three years after *Questions and Answers*. I had already done the articles for *Eternity Magazine*. They read the articles. We went over them together. Not that they were going to censure what I had said (they wouldn't even suggest that). They wanted to be certain what I said was such that Adventists who read *Eternity*, and read the reprints of the articles, would understand where we were coming from because we had two different vocabularies. And—this was a terribly important point historically—we were actually at that juncture synchronizing vocabulary structure between Adventism and evangelical Christianity, which had never been done before. That was a major semantic breakthrough. You have no idea how much time went into making sure we used terms that were mutually understandable.

CURRENTS: Give one or two examples just for fun, of terms that both sides could use but use differently.

MARTIN: Well, in early Adventist theology "Remnant Church" meant that the Seventh-day Adventist denomination—the General Conference when in session—was the highest governing body on earth, that they were a special people called out by God with the Third Angel's Message, and that the seal of this was the fact that they kept the seventh day Sabbath. And that set them apart as the "Remnant Church."

Alright, now. That view gradually had been altered and expanded through the years in the thinking of moderate Adventists so that they did not come out and say it in publications; it was sort of a tacit agreement. They weren't back in the 1870s and '80s anymore with, "We are the only church." They were recognizing other members of the body of Christ, even though they worshipped on Sunday rather than on Saturday. For the first time we got out in the open this new tolerance. I asked, "What do you mean by 'Remnant Church'?" To our people it means that you are the only Christians. To some of your people that is what it means, too. And to other members of your church it means, well, we are special people—God marked us out but we are not the only Christians. Now, how do we get these strings tied together?" So, we tried to deal with it in *Questions on Doctrine*, where we spelled out that there were other members of the body of Christ. The Adventists considered themselves unique because of what they believed were revelations from Mrs. White to the church. I didn't buy the basic argument, but we printed the argument, perhaps for the first time, where Adventists and non-Adventists could at least see where each of them was coming from.

CURRENTS: You were willing to learn that we were unique although you weren't sure

we were right?

MARTIN: Sure. I thought some of Mrs. White's material was prophetic. I felt some of her insights were extremely helpful and I regarded her as a sister in the Lord. I wasn't out to attack Ellen White's character. It took me a long time to get F.D. Nichol and others to believe that. I was out as a Christian brother and scholar to evaluate Mrs. White, as I thought she ought to be evaluated. And I thought she really believed what could have very well be religious reveries (we see it in charismatic circles today all the time)—"The Lord has shown me this." And it doesn't happen; now what are you going to do? Say that this person is a false prophet, an enemy of the gospel; somebody who is going to be pilloried and never listened to again, the way biblical false prophets were supposed to be treated? Or are you dealing with a Christian with spiritual gifts who misuses a gift or mistakes a gift? That's completely different from calling a person a false prophet. And some of Mrs. White's statements in the early days, as I pointed out to the General Conference representatives, were theologically off the wall. They just wouldn't stand up. These men were very tactful. They were true to their convictions, but they were not intransigent. They were willing to look at biblical evidence, exegesis, and facts. The resulting book, *Questions on Doctrine*, was a landmark because it said what so many Adventists had believed for so long but had never had in print as a reference.

CURRENTS: So two books came out of these discussions: one from the Adventists and one that you wrote in 1960?

MARTIN: Right. At this juncture something unique happened. Roy Anderson can confirm this for you; he knows the inner working of it. Somehow, when my book came out, they got an advance copy.

CURRENTS: Was there a prior agreement as to what would happen to your book when it came out?

MARTIN: Oh, yes. We would distribute their book and promote it through Christian bookstores, through *Eternity Magazine*, and anyplace else we could.

CURRENTS: Even though you had been doing that for a few years?

MARTIN: I have faithfully done that. And they were to take my book and get it into all the Adventist bookstores and publishing houses so that the Adventists could see the work I had done. They reneged on that. The General Conference reneged on that, and Anderson was very upset.

CURRENTS: Do you know who to define as General Conference in that case?

MARTIN: I don't, and I wouldn't make an accusation. But they did not keep their word. As a result, only *Questions on Doctrine* came out in Seventh-day Adventist bookstores. *The Truth About Seventh-day Adventism* did not. In addition to that, they wrote a book to answer my book without giving my book a hearing. That was wrong. The book is called *Seventh-day Adventists*

Answer Questions on Doctrine, I don't object to their answering my arguments in *The Truth About Seventh-day Adventism*; that's only fair. But at least let the people read [for themselves] what I said!

What they did was censure the Adventist people.

That's what they did.

CURRENTS: What explanation was given you for not meeting the agreement?

MARTIN: Hung heads and deep apologies from the four men I worked with, who felt that they, themselves, had not been treated fairly in that respect. I cannot say enough for the integrity of these men. They never backed down on their positions.

About my book, *The Truth About Seventh-day Adventism*—when I got ready to print, I went to Zondervan who said, "This is explosive stuff. Do you realize what you are saying?"

I said, "Yes. It's true; we should print it. I am an expert on cults; you printed my other books, right? I am the director of the division of cult apologetics for the largest Christian publishing company. Are you going to believe me or not?"



DONALD G. BARNHOUSE

The Zondervan brothers said, "We believe you."

"Fine," I said, "print it."

Well, about two months after that I received a call. "Walter, will you fly to Grand Rapids? We are having some problems."

I previously had problems with Louis Talbert, at the Theological Seminary. I met with Talbert and presented the evidence I had uncovered. He was very impressed by it and said he would wait and see what the outcome of the final research was before he said anything. Well, when we published the *Eternity Magazine* articles he blew his cork and attacked Barnhouse.

CURRENTS: You lost about 11,000 subscribers, right?

MARTIN: Yes, that's correct. But God gave us all those subscribers back again and more.

CURRENTS: What fraction was the 11,000

of the total?

MARTIN: We only had 33,000.

CURRENTS: Almost a third of your subscribers were lost?

MARTIN: I believe that was the figure. But to Barnhouse's credit, when we were faced with this, he said: "It doesn't make any difference how many we lose. If it's the truth, God will see us through." That's courage—more courage than the General Conference ever had. They didn't even have the backbone to face their own constituency.

Back to the problems at Zondervan. M.R. DeHaan, a popular Zondervan author, was

biblically.

Unfortunately, what you just said introduces the problem of ethical and moral integrity in her publications. Now, all of us, I have done it myself, quote sections of books. Usually I'll try to footnote them unless I paraphrase something and I am not even aware that I've paraphrased it; in which case, if it was brought to my attention, I'd change it. I can understand how it is possible. But not pages and pages and pages!

So, I feel that there is a compromise, revenue-wise. I think the General Conference leaders are compromising with the

of the things we are talking about now, plus more. A large amount of what I have to say is going to be conditioned by the response I get from the General Conference, and the answer to the important question, "Why did you let the most singularly influential book of the last 30 years in your denomination go out of print? Who was responsible for it going out of print? Why? Does the Adventist denomination, in fact, really hold to what it originally said, or is the Adventist denomination playing games with us? Have they changed their position or were they always playing games with us?" I believe these are fair questions.

CURRENTS: Can you expect a truthful answer after what happened 30 years ago?

MARTIN: I have ways of making sure that the answer is truthful . . . You see, 30 years ago I didn't have near the audience I have now. My tapes on the cults have reached a circulation of 15 million. Those are not my figures but the figures of the people who distribute them.

Secondly, *The Kingdom of the Cults* is in print as a standard textbook and is used all over the world. It is now in its 37th printing, coming up for revision and expansion; and in there is the chapter on Adventism, which I put in deliberately. The book will be a classic for years. The chapter has got to be in there spelling out that Adventists are not a cult, because they are already classified that way. What better place to deal with it than in a classic book? Anthony Hoekema came after me with hammer and tongs: he is a friend of mine. And M.R. De Haan came after me, among other people, because of the position I took. I haven't recanted my position, but if the Seventh-day Adventist denomination will not back up its answers with actions and put *Questions on Doctrine* back in print—and, in effect, take a strong stand against people in your denomination who are a very vocal and powerful group and who very well can bring the judgment of God on up—then they're in real trouble that I can't help them out of; and nobody else can either.

E. Schuyler English, I should tell you, was the first to print, along with *Eternity*, the material on Seventh-day Adventism. He agreed with me that it was something we should do, regardless of whatever flack we got. Others picked up the same thing. We pretty much split the evangelical world. But through the years, I can say this without hesitation, the position Barnhouse took and I took—and *Questions on Doctrine* took—prevailed in the evangelical world, so that a whole new climate exists. The General Conference is now jeopardizing that whole new climate. They will throw themselves back a half century if they do not clarify these issues.

CURRENTS: You wrote a review of *The White Lie*, Walter Rea's book about Ellen White. In it you stated, "... another defense put forth by the SDA hierarchy is that Ellen's writings were compiled in the same

The Father was not gleaning the ancient writings of religion in order to instruct His Son. This is absolute nonsense.

objecting to my book. I flew to Grand Rapids and met with him. De Haan chewed me out for 45 minutes as only De Haan could. He said I was betraying the church. I had been taken in by the Adventists and he didn't want me to get hurt. He didn't want to see my reputation hurt. Finally he said to Pat and Bernie Zondervan, "If you print this book, I'll take all my books out of here and I'll never give you another book."

He was their biggest seller. This was 1957. Pat and Bernie Zondervan said, "Well, M.R., we don't want to lose you; we love you and that means a great deal to us. But if Walter is telling the truth, this is a landmark issue. We want to get out there and tell the truth about it. It is really a breakthrough and we're going to print it." And they did. I think the book sold between 25,000 and 50,000 copies which, in those days, was a very good sale.

But if the General Conference had kept its promise, which it didn't, the book would have gone to all Adventist groups. Then a lot of the seeding that has taken place through the years would have been an instantaneous type of event, and Adventist laity would have seen that there were other legitimate doctrinal perspectives. But they didn't get that chance. The "old guard," apparently—whoever they are—have enough power, probably dominated largely by the interest of the White Estate. And I feel that the White Estate and the denomination itself have got themselves into a spiritually compromising position they're going to have to face. It's revenue versus repentance. And Mrs. White cannot be defended against the charges of plagiarism. She cannot be defended against certain specific theological errors. She can be retained, however, as a pastoral voice in manifesting spiritual gifts of value to the denomination in the past, of value now, and of value in the future.

CURRENTS: A moral influence?

MARTIN: We are talking moral in the sense that she very carefully hewed the line,

White Estate. I think they are trying to preserve the entire fabric and structure of the denomination historically. It can't be done. There are too many holes in everybody's denominational history and structure to try to preserve it in its entirety. Everybody has made mistakes. And they have got to come to a genuine repentance because they are trying to cover up facts. They are trying to cover up truth. If they will stand with *Questions on Doctrine*, and if they will answer my questions—and I have only asked three questions—directly and truthfully, then I am going to defend them as my brothers in Christ and try to work with them and pray with them towards a position that really will reflect the truth.

CURRENTS: What are the three questions? Will you articulate them?

MARTIN: I prefer not to articulate them now because I think the General Conference has a right to see them first and respond to them before I talk about them publicly. But the questions are very pointed and direct. There is no possibility of mistaking what I am saying. I am not trying to be an inquisitor. I did not come to the Adventists as an inquisitor 30 years ago. I am a brother. But if men will suppress truth and hold down the truth in unrighteousness, then the Scripture says, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against this." In other words, you cannot survive this. You will not receive the blessing of God.

CURRENTS: One of your research consultants recently wrote a letter [in the summer of 1982] to an Adventist, and I quote: "We do expect Professor Martin will be making some form of public statement concerning his findings and recent dialogue with the SDA leadership in the very near future." Have you made that statement somewhere or would you care to say something about it now for the readers of the *Adventist Currents*?

MARTIN: I am going to be printing, as I told Brother Wilson, a booklet discussing some

manner as that of the biblical writers. Rea presents a concise, thorough refutation of this premise." There is a whole lot behind that. I am not confident Rea did a good job of parsing the difference between the problems of source usage in Ellen White and the problems of source usage in Scripture.

MARTIN: I didn't write this review.

CURRENTS: Oh! I'm sorry.

MARTIN: This was done by Lynne Scheffer, a researcher I put on the project for five months, to sift all the materials. I have cartons of materials. The article was published in *Forward*. Walter Rea I know personally. I knew him in Washington. He was down there when I first went down to the Conference to meet with the brethren. He was working with the Conference at the time and I met him later on in northern California. He did a thorough, Herculean job of compiling data. The thing I told him at the time, lovingly, was that I thought if I were writing it, I would not become emotionally involved to the place where people might get turned off by my emotion and by my frustration and anger at what had gone on and what I had discovered, rather than listening to what I was saying. I think that Rea's position in terms of documentation is irrefutable, largely. I think the material I have compiled and others, independently of Rea, is very strong material and will stand up. But I think the denomination has to come to grips with the fact that if they don't face it, it will not go away; it will not be swept under the rug or die. It is going to keep generating more and more problems and foment difficulties.

CURRENTS: Walter feels that you sometimes need a two by four to get a donkey's attention, and he hasn't been able to be persuaded away from that.

MARTIN: I know. We talked about this in great detail. He drove over to see me and showed me the original manuscript of *The White Lie* before they ever published it. I got in touch immediately with Roy Allen Anderson and with a committee [Kenneth Vine, Robert Olson, Robert Spangler, Bert Beach, and R.A. Anderson] that met at Loma Linda in January of 1982. I asked the questions I am asking the General Conference and I specifically made clear-cut statements to them about the dangers involved. There was a consensus of opinion among the brethren that something very definite had to be done of a positive nature to offset a lot of the statements that were coming out. And I left it there until my recent letter, since I am getting ready to publish. I sent my letter to Wilson. This is not my review, but I am substantially in agreement with him. I would go one step further. As I told F.D. Nichol, "You are trying to defend Mrs. White at the expense of Scripture. You can't do that."

CURRENTS: If you are going to use source criticism on one though, it's legitimate to use source criticism on the other.

MARTIN: Sure, if you are going to assume that you can use a source criticism, fine. Writers of the Bible drew upon pagan

sources. Paul quoted from uninspired authors in Acts 17. Revelation has quotations from secular sources. Nobody is denying that, but that's not plagiarism.

CURRENTS: The phenomenon is different in that culture or in that context, perhaps, than it was in the 19th century. Plus the readers knew that the writer knew that the readers knew.

MARTIN: But, there is a circular reasoning involved in defending Mrs. White. You have probably already detected it—"The writers of the Bible did the same thing as Mrs. White. Mrs. White is permitted to do it also." That holds if one assumes, circularly, that Mrs. White is to be considered as one of the writers of the Bible. And then you are right back to square one.

Let me read you something that's really of a cultic mentality and dangerous, that you may not be aware of. I'm quoting an Adventist official:

This is a statement I like very much. Speaking of Christ, the originator of all truth. This is found in Manuscript 25 that Ellen White wrote:

"In His discourse Christ did not bring many things before them at once lest He might confuse their minds. He made every point clear and distinct. He did not disdain a repetition of old and familiar truths and prophecies if they would serve His purpose to inculcate ideas. Christ was the originator of all the ancient gems of truth." Now I believe there are ancient gems of truth in Hindu writings, in Buddha's writings, and ancient gems of truth in Mohammed's writings, in the Islam world. I don't doubt this at all. Through the work of the enemy, these truths have been displaced; they have been disconnected from the true position, placed in the framework of error. Christ's work was to readjust and establish the precious gems in the framework of truth. The principles of truth which have been given by Himself to bless the world, had through Satan's agency been buried and had apparently become extinct."

The White Estate and the denomination itself have got themselves into a spiritually compromising position . . . It's revenue versus repentance.

Now you're really in trouble. You've got Christ drawing upon pagan religious sources as a means of restating truth—this is directly contradicted by Scripture. Actually, Jesus said "The words that I speak unto you my Father gave me, what I should say, what I should speak." The Father was not gleaning the ancient writings of religion in order to instruct His Son.

"Christ rescued them from the rubbish of error, gave them a new vital force and

commanded them to shine as precious jewels and stand fast forever."

I am convinced that if someone took the time, you could find every single parable in some ancient writing that Jesus used.

This is absolute nonsense. I am a professor of comparative religions; I find this absolute, utter nonsense.

CURRENTS: Who is the Adventist official who said that?

MARTIN: Let's keep going. I'll tell you. [Martin forgets to say he is quoting from *Ministry Magazine* editor and General Conference Ministerial Association secretary Robert Spangler]

He [Christ] gave it to begin with, He took it, changed it around and adapted it to what He wanted to teach the people. He was the originator of it to begin with, maybe a thousand years before. Who knows? First it shook me, like I told you before, but it no longer bothers me to understand that Ellen White borrowed passages, words, sentences, paragraphs from other writings, but she put it into a different framework than the original author who used it. Never forget that. And therefore, I am convinced that God is speaking to us through the Spirit of Prophecy. He speaks to us through the Word of God, and no matter where they may have gotten the words from or of some other language, the beautiful words, whatever, that does not bother me as long as I know it is the truth . . .

Walter Martin who is a good friend of R.A. Anderson met us in Loma Linda in the month of January and we spent about two and a half hours together discussing the relationship of Ellen White to the Scriptures in our church. He had gotten hold of some materials; he felt that we ought to come out with some kind of a statement. That's in brief what this whole meeting was all about. So I went back to the General Conference along with Brother Robert Olson, and also Bert Beach, who was on this committee along with Kenneth Vine who is the head of the theology department from

Loma Linda, four of us, and R.A. Anderson. We met with Martin for two and a half hours and he was concerned over all this talk about Ellen White being put above the Scriptures and so forth. So, as a result of that, I brought with me a tentative statement; the trouble is it's going to take some time to go through all this but let me give it to you quickly.

And he gives a statement which I think avoids it. But the gentleman [Spangler] said

he had seen so much good, in Seventh-day Adventism, come out of the movement, he didn't think there was anything that could be shown to him that would shake his faith in the inspiration of Mrs. White! Now, this is the perfect cultic mentality—circular, self-authenticating, experiential, no basis in objective fact. If that's going to be the party line, my brothers, kiss it goodbye with the evangelical world. They will descend on this.

CURRENTS: Dr. Martin, doesn't their behavior—in regard to your book and their own book, *Questions on Doctrine*, basically suppress it and make sure they distance themselves from it—prove it was not really representative of the church as they led you to believe?

MARTIN: I think, as I said before, that the men who spoke to me [in the 1950s] represented a conservative Adventism which wanted fellowship with the body of Christ. The acceptance of *Questions on Doctrine*, when it was published, by so many of the leadership of the church and by people all around the world who were Adventist, hailing it as a major landmark—a bridge to fellowship and so forth—indicates that a great body of Adventists, this amorphous body, are eager for fellowship with other members of the body of Christ and welcome something like this as a means of communication. I think there is now a group of powerful individuals in positions of authority in the denomination who, because the denomination is very authoritarian, are able to control large segments of the populace, simply by being their voice. And I don't think the average Seventh-day Adventist would deny *Questions on Doctrine*, if they went through it point by point. And I don't think they would be hostile to it. But I think people would who are conditioned by the mentality we are now seeing come out in leadership. Yes, definitely. But to say the whole denomination was misrepresented by Anderson and Froom and everyone else—I don't think the evidence would support that. Reuben Figuhr was about as conservative a president as the Adventists ever had. He has been questioned in this area, and is adamant that *Questions on Doctrine* had the major support of leadership in the denomination. After all, they sent the book out all over the world to their top people, prior to publication, and they only received minor flack.

CURRENTS: But perhaps the near unanimity with which it was hailed was the result of that authoritarian administration saying, "We want to publish this. . . . It is going to be good for us."

MARTIN: What you are saying is maybe the people didn't buy it.

CURRENTS: But they felt obligated to because of the authoritarian structure that came from the highest levels. Have you considered that possibility?

MARTIN: It's always a possibility. Who knows the minds of men and how they reason and what their methodology is? But I am not going to extrapolate from the General

Conference backing out on my book and make it a personal issue.

I am not saying we are categorizing Ellen White in the biblical context of a false prophet. I'm saying that's an ideal way to protect yourself. Joseph Smith said the same thing: "The time will come when they will challenge what I said; that only proves that I am telling the truth." That's logical madness.

CURRENTS: But really, do you think Adventists care if they are classified as a cult? Wouldn't they look at this as a good sign?

MARTIN: If the mentality has degenerated to the place where they are willing to say, "For our convictions we will be called a cult," without ever really considering the possibility that their convictions are erroneous, then what you are saying could happen.

CURRENTS: Cast out for Christ.

MARTIN: The mentality would dictate that kind of behavior pattern. Now, I don't know the mind of the General Conference. I don't know the mind of Neal Wilson. I haven't talked with him. I have received correspondence. Some of the material I have—there are boxes full of it here—I'm not supposed to have. It doesn't inspire much confidence in me regarding how they deal with their people. And when a minister asks for a hearing, and a committee comes together, the guy blows them away; then the committee walks away from that and blows him away. I have to believe things are not the way they ought to be biblically. What I think is happening in the echelons of leadership right now is that they have gotten to the place where they have elevated Ellen White to be the infallible interpreter of Scripture. By so doing they have painted themselves into a theological corner. They are on Masada and they don't know it. If Ellen White is an infallible interpreter of Scripture, then what they've preached against all these years has finally come to pass—the self-fulfilled prophecy; they have a pope. And if what she says infallibly interprets the Scriptures, might I ask the next logical question? How is it that we test her infallibility?

I never met D.M. Canright, but he was a personal friend of Mrs. White's. A lot of his personal reminiscences are very revealing about her personality. She was an ill-educated person; she was a person given to religious reveries, some of which her own husband didn't buy. She was a person who believed absolutely that she had received some messages from God; and in some instances I think maybe she did. That doesn't guarantee you are going to be an infallible prophet, and that whatever you say about Scripture and interpreting Scripture is going to guarantee it for other people.

CURRENTS: Have you read the material on the injury to her head and the hypothesis that she was just suffering from partial complex seizures?

MARTIN: I read the medical material on the possible diagnosis of her in this area. Although I have not read anyone's rebuttal of that. But I'll say something; it's very difficult

to diagnose certain mental or emotional disturbances with the patient in the room and the machines hooked up and all the sophistication of modern medicine. I am, therefore, a little bit suspicious of the smell of roses, the color purple, and these things being connected with specific mental disorders and to fix them to her, or any person, historically. It

Questions on

Loud and bitter reaction to *Questions on Doctrine* came from those who felt that in it "the truth" had been sold for a mess of pottage—favor with the evangelicals. Milian Lauritz Andreassen (1876-1962), long retired seminary professor, published his anguished "Letters to the Churches" and lost his credentials. According to R.A. Anderson, Andreassen phoned Donald Barnhouse long-distance for 58 minutes to tell him the General Conference had apostatized and that he, Andreassen, would have Figuhr impeached.

Although we cannot reproduce any of that conversation, the transcript of another long-distance call suffered by Barnhouse indicates that other Adventists shared Andreassen's sense of betrayal. The call from Al Hudson of Baker, Oregon, reached Barnhouse at his *Eternity Magazine* office in Philadelphia on the morning of May 16, 1958. Here are excerpts from their conversation, involving the nature of Christ and Ellen White's stature, that did not put Hudson at ease about *Questions on Doctrine*:

Hudson: They [G.C. brethren involved in discussion with Barnhouse and Martin] are taking the position, are they not, that Christ has the nature of Adam before he sinned? Isn't that true?

Barnhouse: I hope not!

Hudson: What is their position as you understand it?

Barnhouse: That Christ had, that He was the God-man. Adam was a created being subject to fall. Jesus Christ was the God-man, not subject to fall.

Hudson: And that's your understanding of the position of our leaders?

Barnhouse: Of course. They have taken it so strongly, and it is in their book [*Questions on Doctrine*]. We hold, they say, with the church of all the centuries that Jesus Christ was the eternal sinless Son of God, etc., etc.

. . . If you do not believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal, sinless Son of God, that He could not have sinned—and goodness, we have eighteen quotations from Mrs. White saying the same thing—eighteen quotations from Ellen G. White stating exactly this position, and denying what you are telling me . . .

Hudson: On the other hand I have quotations that state just the opposite.

might make a good case to chase down in a great detective story, but if you are talking about hard evidence, forget it.

I believe Ellen White had an extremely complex personality, and I think she plagiarized materials because she believed the Lord had shown her what the sources said was the truth. She simply appropriated

material and gave it out. I think she wanted the credit for it and that's why she didn't footnote. She was mortal; she was a sinner like anyone else.

CURRENTS: So she was a commandment breaker—which to her was one of the worst sins. If you were a commandment breaker, how terrible. Where does that leave us?

Doctrine: a Theological “Sting?”

Barnhouse: One quotation.

Hudson: We have more than that.

Barnhouse: No.

Hudson: You don't have them all.

Barnhouse: Oh yes we do. Look, Froom and the rest of them say that Walter Martin knows more about Seventh-day Adventists than any [seminary] professor in Takoma Park, Washington . . . He's read it all . . .

Hudson: You know she wrote about 25 million words. That's quite a lot for a man to read.

Barnhouse: That's too much, you know. She was running off at the mouth, and the Holy Spirit certainly was not doing it.

Hudson: Do you think that Anderson and Froom agree with you on that position?

Barnhouse: Look, I *know* that these men are intelligent enough to know that she was a fallible human being, and that she said so herself . . . Do you believe that she was in error ever?

Hudson: As a human being?

Barnhouse: In her writing. Do you believe that in some of her writing that you have to point to certain sentences and say, “Boy, she sure pulled a booper [sic]! That's for the birds! It is not true!”

Hudson: I haven't encountered any of those quotations, no.

Barnhouse: You haven't?

Hudson: No.

Barnhouse: Oh, brother, are you a dupe. You are not as honest as the people at Takoma Park, or Richards. Richards doesn't hold with you.

Hudson: You mean of the Voice of Prophecy?

Barnhouse: Yes.

Hudson: He feels, then, that she has written error?

Barnhouse: Of course he does. *Everyone* of these men have said this to me. Every man. *Every man*. They believe that she was raised up of God to be a great blessing, and that the Spirit of Prophecy was upon her, but they all agree that she wrote error in some places.

Hudson: You gather from your association with those men that they believe that she was a prophet though.

Barnhouse: They believe that God came upon her in a special way and for a message to His people at a special time.

Hudson: Would you gather the impression in your talking with them that they feel that

she was a prophet in the same sense that Isaiah and Jeremiah were?

Barnhouse: Of course not. Certainly not. They're intelligent men, and they are Christians . . . She was just a good woman who was greatly blessed and greatly mistaken, very frequently.

Hudson: And you don't think Elder[s] Froom and Richards and the others take my position that she was a true prophet?

Barnhouse: *Of course they don't.*

Hudson: I see.

Barnhouse: *None of them do.*

Hudson: Well, I appreciate your time.

Two decades later these same issues continue to imperil the unity of our fellowship. Dissent over *Christ's All-atoning Sacrifice*, the Sabbath School lesson quarterly for the first quarter of 1983, indicates that Adventists remain especially divided over the nature of Christ. (See news item this issue.)

The eruption of SDA doctrinal volcanoes fueled by Walter Rea and Desmond Ford and the inadequate responses of official Adventist publications to those challenges have not been lost on Walter Martin. Martin closed a presentation assessing the Adventist situation to a gathering of evangelicals in Napa, California, on February 22, 1983, sympathetically but emphatically:

“This is the conclusion of the whole matter. We dare not accept any authority—any authority—that in its role becomes the supreme interpreter and arbiter of Scripture. We dare not. If Adventism embraces this, they are no longer Protestant. They have accepted historic Catholic theology, and Mrs. White becomes the infallible female pope . . .

“What Christ calls us to is healing—not healing by ignoring the truth, but healing by acknowledging the truth . . . healing in the lives of regenerate Adventists. If this is done then I believe God will give them blessings they have never had in their entire history . . .

“Our role as non-Adventists is to be empathetic, prayerful, and insistent that Scripture and Scripture alone be the basis of our fellowship as well as our salvation . . . God give us the grace as Christians to care enough to labor for it and the Adventists who see it to know that because of Jesus Christ, we care.”

MARTIN: When I was once seated with a group of Seventh-day Adventist theologians and we got on the subject of commandment breaking, I said, “I am going to sound heretical to you, but we do know each other pretty well and therefore I am speaking as your brother.” And they all laughed. I continued, “None of us in this room is a commandment keeper. Because the Scripture says, ‘If we say we have not sinned, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Sin is the transgression of the law, and all unrighteousness is sin.’ Please tell me if anyone in this room considers himself, for a 24-hour period, totally righteous?”

No one said, “Boo.” “We are all commandment breakers,” I said.

Now, we don't begin our day saying, “Today I am going to make the effort to keep the Ten Commandments.” We begin our day saying, “Lord Jesus, give me the grace that I may walk with you.” Because if I am going to walk with Christ, I'll be obeying the will of God and the law of God. Now, I'm not going to make it all day. Maybe I might one day, but I miss the hours of 2, 4, 6 and 8 on Thursday, and 2, 5, 7 and 9 on Wednesday, whatever it may be. That's what the Pharisees were into—the idea of how they were going to keep the law perfectly. They missed the whole point of the law.

CURRENTS: But that's her point. She would make that point in a very stern way and then turn around and break the same commandment.

MARTIN: I know. D.M. Canright said she was whipped up in a lather about the slaughter house techniques and how the meat was bad to eat, etc. Of course this is a well-known fact of the time and she picked it up from Kellogg and others, not through divine revelation. It was a fact in the newspapers, but Mrs. White turns around and has a pork sandwich in Canright's presence. Canright almost choked. I believe Canright. I believe she ate a pork sandwich in his presence when she got through telling people they shouldn't eat pork, because she was a sinner.

CURRENTS: I can't corroborate the pork story but I can provide you with a letter in which she writes to her daughter-in-law, in the eighties, and orders some fresh snails.

MARTIN: And it's forbidden under Mosaic law. But anyway, we don't want to get into straining at the gnat and swallowing the camel. I am not an enemy of Adventism. I am a friend of Adventist people and a lover of truth. I did my level best at great risk—in 1956 and from then on—to take a strong position on the basis of *Questions on Doctrine*. If they are going to repudiate the book and turn back the pages, I have no other alternative but to rewrite the chapter in *The Kingdom of the Cults*. And I'll have no other alternative but to come out and do another tape or series of tapes. I mean, just lay the whole thing out. I don't want to do that. I'd much rather see them come around to a solid position.

CURRENTS: Haven't they repudiated it al-

ready in the *Review* during the last couple of years? Haven't they condemned *Questions on Doctrine* as a terrible heresy?

MARTIN: Well, now . . . this is an important point. Is that the General Conference's position or is that an editor of the *Review*? Are we talking about a person? People high in Adventism have told me that Wood was an unfortunate choice for the position and they are very happy he is not there. It is possible that Wood got away in the authoritarian structure with saying lots of things because no one could get to him or get at him. Well, the next editor of the *Review* might come along and do a complete about-face. I'm waiting to see what they're going to do. You see, one magazine knocking a book doesn't bother me. One prominent Adventist knocking it, or a group of them, doesn't bother me. What bothers me is the possibility that the governing body of the denomination has really taken it out of print because they don't want to believe it. Well, if they no longer want to believe, I want them to answer more questions.

CURRENTS: Is there any documentation from any General Conference leadership in the 1960s when they officially stopped publication of *Questions on Doctrine*?

MARTIN: I was told by a high authority it was scheduled for republication. They wanted to make a few minor changes, nothing really to do with answers; and I was to see it before they did it. He was enthusiastic about it going ahead.

CURRENTS: The 1960s?

MARTIN: When it was going out of print. I don't know what the date was, but he knows. He said he okayed it and it was going to be done. Then the powers that be, dominating the publication committee, whoever they were at that time, decided just to simply let it go out of print because there was pressure being placed on them from other sources. I suspect the White Estate and other people, zealous of preserving the image of an Ellen White they had created, did not like *Questions on Doctrine*, because it was honest.

I don't know the inner workings of it. And I am not too impressed with the integrity of how they deal in-house with a lot of their problems. I have enough correspondence here from people—a lot of the palaver that goes out: "Now, Brothers, we've got to

Christ and trying, as a brother, to say, "Look, there are a lot of evangelicals out there with good will towards you. Do you want to throw everything overboard for a position that simply will not stand up?" I said that at the meeting in Loma Linda—which is detailed in the letter to Wilson. And I have yet to receive a response.

I have yet to receive a response to questions that went back to the General Conference—two representatives [Robert Olson and Robert Spangler] took them back. I have yet to receive a response.

CURRENTS: You have talked about what you perceive to be several of Ellen White's documentable shortcomings or sins, if you want to call them that, and plagiarism or what not. However, you have not brought up the perjury issue. I am not sure how much you are aware of the recent information coming out concerning her involvement with the Shut Door idea, which was subsequently obscured by her statements essentially denying any involvement with the spreading of that heresy, if you will.

MARTIN: I think she believed it.

CURRENTS: The White Estate has admitted she misunderstood her early visions which seemed to teach it.

MARTIN: We knew that a long time ago but they wouldn't admit it.

CURRENTS: But it involves her, essentially, perjuring herself in order to save her credibility.

I read your account of Jehovah's Witnesses in the *Kingdom of the Cults* and the part where you are detailing the perjury committed by Russell, which totally destroys his credibility and his worthiness as a Christian leader. How would you apply that same reasoning or argument to Ellen White?

MARTIN: I think she made a mistake. I think she committed a sin. I think she panicked and tried to cover it up. I think those around her aided and abetted her in this. Also, I think the White Estate had it in conspiracy for years. About that, I don't think there is any doubt at all.

The difference between her and the Jehovah's Witnesses is not the crime itself. That was wrong. Whether Russell did it or whether Mrs. White did it is irrelevant. It's the nature of the person we are talking about. Was Charles Russell a Christian? Did

be brought out and spelled out clearly so it will show that Christians do these things. You have to be very careful about what they say, and even more careful in the light of something like that. That doesn't mean everything Mrs. White ever said, or wrote, or did, automatically loses its credibility.

If you go back into Church history and look at some of the people who wrote—and some of the things that were done—you get the distinct feeling they were sinners saved by grace. And yet, you do not throw out some of the great minds of the Church—and people in Church history—and say they have no credibility because they committed a sin or made a mistake.

CURRENTS: Should a distinction be made between what are just sins and those acts committed under the guise of inspiration and absolute authority? Such as saying, "The angel has shown me . . ." or saying, "In the name of God, I swear, I never had those kind of visions," and publish that under the name of God? Is there a difference between that and, say, committing adultery in private?

MARTIN: Sin is transgression of the law. There are sins that are greater in magnitude and there are greater punishments for them. Christ taught that there were degrees of sin and there were degrees of punishment. It is an even greater sin when someone in a position of authority, who is looked to and respected, deliberately does something with full knowledge, and covers it up or perjures himself. Yes. Or plagiarizes or something like that. Yes. That is a great sin, and we cannot ignore that sin. But I've got to make a distinction here that may not make some people happy. I have been pressed and pressed by people to get me to say Ellen White is a false prophet.

The logic used is, "But she said God told her something and it didn't come to pass or it wasn't true, and, she claimed to be speaking prophetically; that makes her a false prophet."

Let me make an important distinction at this juncture. A biblical false prophet—that's what they are really getting at—was not a believer. A biblical false prophet was a servant of the devil attempting to lead people away from the truth. You will find that in Exodus and Deuteronomy: "He hath spoken for the purpose of turning you away from the Lord your God." It's a prime characteristic of a biblical false prophet in the Scripture. You don't have a believer on your hands, you've got an unbeliever. And this person is deceiving the church.

Mrs. White, in my opinion, made false statements. She misused what she claimed was the prophetic gift she had. I believe this, in certain instances. But if you're going to try to say that makes Ellen White the same as the false prophecy prohibited in Exodus and Deuteronomy, then you have to demonstrate that Ellen White was an unbeliever and that it was a deliberate and willful perversion of truth regarding salvation and revelation. That's a very fine line.

(Concluded on Page 28)

This is the perfect cultic mentality — circular, self-authenticating, experiential, no basis in objective fact.

resolve this issue," and "Brothers, we've got to sit down and talk." After the brothers sit down and talk and the Scripture speaks on the subject, they go right ahead and dis-fellowship him. I mean, this is not scriptural. So, I am not criticizing the denomination as a Baptist. I am criticizing the things that ought to be criticized as a member of the body of

Charles Russell hold to the foundations of the gospel? Did Charles Russell promulgate the things of Christianity and stand in their defense? No. Did Ellen White? Yes. Therefore, though she committed the same crime he did, I cannot judge her on the same basis I am going to judge Charles Russell. She is a Christian who committed a sin. That should

Edson's Cornfield "Vision:" Frisson or Figment?

by Fernand Fisel

Two recent works have cast some doubt on the reliability of Hiram Edson's autobiographical manuscript relating his experience of October 23, the morrow of the final (1844) Millerite disappointment.¹ The document was written decades after the disappointment and shortly before Edson's death in 1882 at 75 years of age.² It did not surface until long after its composition.³ The manuscript is casually handwritten on the half leaves of a lined yellow notebook, and is neither dated nor signed. Only five pages of the document are extant. The text is partially quoted in print for the first time in a 1921 *Review and Herald* article,⁴ 75 years after the supposed experience it related; however, correspondence about it was exchanged with A.W. Spalding in 1907.⁵ Although J.N. Loughborough alludes to Edson's cornfield experience in his two books⁶ and in a manuscript accompanying the second volume,⁷ he does not quote the Edson manuscript; and his version of the event differs substantially from Edson's.⁸

Historians tend to frown on the *argumentum ad silentio*—an historical deduction based on the absence of available evidence—and for legitimate reasons. Yet, in this case the ubiquitous silence of early publications of this alleged vision is deafening. It acquires particular weight if one takes into account the attitudes that were prevalent before and after the disappointment among the left-wing⁹ Millerites who later became Seventh-day Adventists. The abundance of supernatural experiences in that period, and the authority attributed to them for the legitimization of specific theological interpretations of contemporary events, has already been adequately documented.¹⁰ If Edson had really experienced what he later described, we would find evidence of it somewhere in contemporary or subsequent publications, at least among those for whom it had authenticating value. One needs only observe the use that has been made of it recently in SDA apologetics to realize that the early Sabbatarian Adventists would not have ignored it had they known of the experience. Edson's associates in western New York, O.R.L. Crosier and Dr. F.B. Hahn—whose joint efforts resulted in the publishing of the *Day Dawn*, their individual articles in the *Day Star* (directly related to the subject of the "vision"), and in

many other papers of the period¹¹ never alluded to Edson's cornfield revelation. Nor did the major figures of Sabbatarian Adventism, including Edson himself, ever refer to his experience in letters, articles, pamphlets or books published before 1892.

Professor P. Gerard Damsteegt, whose approach to writing history (*Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*) clearly betrays his loyalties, finds comfort in using Edson's late-life memory statement as a source because it "does not contradict 1845 source material."¹² Let us not forget that it benefits from nearly 50 years of hindsight. But a more careful study shows that Edson's lack of historical perspective led him to inconsistencies. Any evaluation of Damsteegt's work as a whole must keep in mind the method generally used in writing denominational history, in which retrospective statements are given equal weight with primary sources.¹³ And although this historical research is outstanding in its exhaustive analysis of all pertinent sources, it is marred by a definite apologetic

In writing denominational history . . . retrospective statements are given equal weight with primary sources.

bent. We noted at the beginning of this article that the Edson manuscript reflects later influences, and Damsteegt candidly concedes that possibility.¹⁴

The same historian cites only a few sources immediately following the disappointment as confirmations that Edson may have been the original contributor to the emerging "sanctuary" doctrine and other contemporary ideas, but an examination of these sources shows dependence on antecedent thinking stemming from other writers in 1845. Edson's letter to S.S. Snow (dated May 3, 1845, and published in the *Jubilee Standard*) is such a source. In this document, Edson portrays that time as "the dispensation of the fullness of times" and as the time of the "blotting out of sins." This item would be significant were it not for the fact that his remark followed by at least two weeks the first major article by his close friend and neighbor, O.R.L. Crosier, which related the conclusions of his recent study of atonement typology.¹⁵ Crosier attributed his new ideas to recent thinking; and he sent it to Brother Pearson, co-editor of the *Hope of Israel*, whom he credited with stimulating his mind to a new chain of evidence. He

nowhere suggested that Edson give him a lead. We can be fairly certain that Crosier's insights were developed between March 8 and April 4, since his article "Prophetic Day and Hour" (*Voice of Truth and Glad Tidings*, March 8, 1845)¹⁶ contained nothing but strange speculations on various "watches of the night" connected with the parable of the virgins; and was in no way oriented toward the study of seasonal types, or sacrificial symbolism, as subsequent articles overwhelmingly tended to be.

Moreover, there is no absolute certainty that at that time Edson understood the "blotting out of sins" in terms of sacrificial atonement, as did later Seventh-day Adventists. He merely may have been quoting the phrase from the book of Acts (3:19-20) where it is linked with the expected return of Christ. We have no way of assuming that Edson's understanding of the "dispensation of the fullness of times" differed in any form from that of J.D. Pickands on February 12, 1845;¹⁷ or from the editorial, "The Types," of October 11, 1844.¹⁸ The same expression was used by early Adventists to designate the period following the disappointment; but it was Crosier who identified it for the first time with the antitypical Day of Atonement in his article of February 1846 in the *Day Star Extra*. And he presented the discourse of Peter on Pentecost as a proof text for this association.¹⁹

There is no need to postulate Edson's "vision" as a necessary prelude to his letter to Snow. Its roots are perfectly identifiable in the writing of his immediate contemporaries. So are the roots of Crosier's thinking. It is not unlikely that he found the impetus for his revised conception of the atonement in William Miller's letter to Holmes (dated November 22, 1844), as was suggested by Merwin R. Thurber in a 1976 *Review and Herald* article.²⁰ But the immediate stimulus for this typology was already present in the *Advent Mirror*, the *Hope of Israel* and the *Hope Within the Veil*.²¹ Crosier's only originality consisted in his systematization of seasonal types, in his extension of the length of the antitypical Day of Atonement to more than one day or one year, in his highly controversial interpretation of the goat for Azazel, and finally in his veiled substantiation of the shut door doctrine through this typology. Nowhere does Crosier credit Edson for these ideas. When Crosier gave up his doctrine of the sanctuary, he easily could have made Edson his scapegoat had it been inspired by him. He did not.²² He did not

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even mention Edson in his major autobiographical article written in 1913, although he entered into some detail about the disappointment era.²³

The admitted contradictions between Edson's manuscript and Loughborough's recounting of the experience clearly show that Edson, late in life, wrote much into the original experience. This is typical of the growth of all pious records. Apocryphal elaborations are often added after the facts and may stem from very noble intentions. In Loughborough's report, Edson's experience is merely described as "an impression,"²⁴ and its content is limited to the notion that "the Sanctuary is in Heaven." But what need would there be for such a revelation to a generation of predisappointment Millerites who already assumed the existence of such a sanctuary in heaven, from which their heavenly high priest would emerge on the fateful day of October 22, 1844? The very choice of that date shows their prediction was tied to the completion of the atonement.²⁵ In the manuscript that accompanies Loughborough's book, the *impression* became the semblance of a "distinctly spoken audible voice;" and the added feature of "cleansing" the heavenly sanctuary was recorded.²⁶ Loughborough's letter to Spalding, 13 years later, combined that *impression* with the *almost distinct audible voice*, and recorded the *cleansing* to be done by Jesus' going into the sanctuary.

In Edson's own manuscript it had evolved into a full-fledged vision incorporating all previous human discovery as part of the total experience:

"Heaven seemed open to my view, and I saw distinctly and clearly that instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, He for the first time entered on that day the second apartment of that sanctuary; and that He had a work to perform in the most holy before coming to this earth. That He came to the marriage at that time; in other words, to the Ancient of days to receive a kingdom, dominion and glory; and we must wait for His return from the wedding; and my mind was directed to the tenth chapter of Revelation where I could see the vision had spoken and did not lie; the seventh angel had begun to sound; we had eaten the little book; it had been sweet in our mouth, and it had now become bitter in our belly, embittering our whole being. That we must prophesy again, etc., and that when the seventh angel began to sound, the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament, etc." (emphasis ours)²⁷

The abundance of conjunctions of coordination and subordination which have been underlined, together with elaborate interpretations of things seen, render this description of the "vision" highly suspect. It has all the earmarks of reasoned theology and the details of accumulated discussion. It reflects

retrospective elaborations of the ideas advanced. The early believers in the "Bridegroom come-Atonement made" theory did not force an extension of the heavenly Yom Kippur beyond one day, but extended it to one year when new time-settings failed. Not until April 1845 did anyone prolong the work of Atonement beyond a year.²⁸ It is

As long as Adventists maintained the prophetic character of this parable, they were perfectly consistent in advocating a shut door.

therefore unlikely that Edson propounded this idea as early as the 23rd of October 1844 without affecting contemporary thinking. The "Bridegroom theme," as it was developed by Hale and Turner, was an historicization of the parable of the ten virgins, somehow linked with the reception of the Kingdom portrayed in the judicial proceedings of Daniel 7. But these authors nowhere credit Edson with this bizarre theology. Edson wrote all this into his "vision" without much discrimination. The most unlikely element to be found in the vision of October 23 is that which enjoins the disappointed Millerites to "prophesy again before nations and kings and peoples." The application of Rev. 10:8-10 to the bitter experience of disappointment may well be original with Edson, but the branch of Adventists he associated with could not, at that time, possibly have considered a vision that implied an open door of salvation to the whole world as divinely inspired! There is a flagrant contradiction between the parable and an open door; and as long as Adventists maintained the prophetic character of this parable, they were perfectly consistent in advocating a shut door. If Miller's message was indeed the Midnight Cry, the door was irreversibly shut.

The content of Edson's autograph, far from being in harmony with the printed sources of the time, presents serious problems because it lacks a sense of historical development. It telescopes into one supernatural experience a succession of ideas which arose at various times and were sometimes the result of predicaments caused by earlier beliefs.

There is no doubt about Edson's tendency toward supernatural experiences. He had such before and after the disappointment.²⁹ Indeed, his reputation in this sphere was so well known by his contemporaries that slanderous reports by his enemies attributed to him contemptible forms of behavior incited by visions.³⁰ He is known to have carefully preserved in writing the very words of some early visions of E.G. White.³¹ He seriously took his dream experiences to be divine revelations.³² The embellishments he may have brought to his own supernatural experiences can well be understood as a form of piety redounding to the divine glory. More-

over, being the chosen instrument of heaven has always been something to be coveted, no matter what form of suffering may cling to that election.

Mrs. White herself has made some comments about a manuscript of Edson's which is not clearly identified. She did not seem to have a high regard for his literary efforts:

You know how it was with Bro. Edson. He wrote much, and he thought that what he wrote should be published. Then the Lord wrought upon his mind, and he gave up the idea, and burned up his manuscript. But he could not let it be, he reproduced his theories, and upon his death, he left money, and charged his wife that she should have his manuscript published. She did not think it essential that the matter should be published as he did, and after she had given the manuscript into the hands of the proper persons for publication, she withdrew it and gave up all the burden of its publication.

*Bro. Edson's production was never printed. He was a good man, beloved of all who knew him; but the matter which he had brought together was not the subject that should appear, not meat in due season for the flock of God. It was of a character that would start into life erroneous theories, that would be nourished by human agents, and would bear fruit in dissension and discord.*³³

In conclusion, it is evident that the "Vision in the Cornfield" is not in evidence in contemporary sources and affected no one at the time. This is not to say that Edson did not receive some sort of illumination on that day, but Edson's memory failed him in relating exactly what happened. In fact, he may have read into that experience ideas that were to arise much later. It would therefore be wise to approach Edson's manuscript with much circumspection. The best that can be said about it is that it has no more than midrashic value in explaining the links between Millerism and the origins of Seventh-day Adventism. It has no bearing on the accuracy of any theological conclusion, ancient or modern; and should be relegated to the level of apocryphal literature to which, without doubt, it belongs.

FOOTNOTES


- 1 Mervyn Maxwell, *Tell it to the World*. The Story of Seventh-day Adventists. Mountain View, Cal.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1976, pp. 51-52 and P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*, Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publ. Co. 1977, p. 117, note 93.
- 2 See obituary in *R & H*, Feb. 21, 1882, p. 126.
- 3 See H.M. Kelley "The Spirit of 1844," *R & H* June 23, 1921. According to a letter of Arthur L. White to Elder L.E. Froom dated April 8, 1937, the manuscript had just come into Elder Froom's hands shortly before March 7 of the same year. The same source reveals Brother Kelly's memory that the manuscript was turned down by the *Review and Herald* "about the time the Adventists were urged to leave Battle Creek," that is to say about 1902-1903, but even that was uncertain.
- 4 H.M. Kelley *op. cit.*
- 5 Letters of A.M. Lindsay to A.W. Spaulding, from Enosburg Falls, Vt., Feb. 24, 1907 and June 16, 1907; Cf also J.N. Loughborough to A.W. Spaulding, August 1921. *Sanitarium* Cal. pp. 1, 2 and A.W. Spaulding to H.E. Rogers, July 1921, Nashville, Tenn.
- 6 J.N. Loughborough, *Rise and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 1892, p. 114 and *The Great Second Advent Move-*

- ment, 1905/9, p. 193.
- 7 J.N. Loughborough, *Some Individual Experiences*. A Companion to the Book: "The Great Second Advent Movement." Document File 230B, Ellen G. White Publications, 1908 (?)
 - 8 The differences will be discussed below.
 - 9 The term was adopted by Professor Ingemar Linden, *The Last Trump*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1978, p. 85 to refer to those fringe groups who after the Millerite disappointment did not subscribe to the positions adopted at the Albany Conference in 1845, and out of which came the nucleus of Sabbatarian Adventists.
 - 10 P. Gerard Damsteegt, *op. cit.* p. 121, note 114.
 - 11 Of Crosier's extant articles and letters, none refers to Edson in any of the following periodicals: *The Day Star*, *The Day Dawn*, *The Voice of Truth and Glad Tidings*, *The Advent Harbinger and Bible Advocate* and *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*.
 - 12 P. Gerard Damsteegt, *op. cit.* p. 117, note 93.
 - 13 *Ibid.*, pp. 151-152 and notes 271-279. The same viewpoint is seen in Arthur L. White, "The Literary Resources of the Ellen G. White Estate and Policies Concerning their Use. An address given at Loma Linda, March 31, 1973, 24 pp. Here the Secretary of the Estate mentions among others "a few isolated documents of the 1840's and 1850's which if not read in the context of the time and in the light of retrospective statements of those involved in our early history, are capable of conveying misleading concepts. In such cases contemporary and retrospective statements must be brought to bear." Although his words apply only to documents in the Estate, they have been applied, in practice, to the writing of most denominational history.
 - 14 *Ibid.*, pp. 117, note 93.
 - 15 *The Hope of Israel*, Portland Maine, Vol. 3, Friday April 17, 1845, No. 1, p. 4, Cols. 1-2.
 - 16 *The Voice of Truth and Glad Tidings*, April 9, 1845, p. 15, Cols. 1-3.
 - 17 Letter of J.D. Pickands to Joseph Marsh, *The Voice of Truth and Glad Tidings*, Feb. 12, 1845, p. 12.
 - 18 Editorial, "The Types," *Midnight Cry*, October 11, 1844, pp. 116-117.
 - 19 Acts 3:19-20.
 - 20 Merwin R. Thurber, "Discovered: A Manuscript Letter from William Miller," *R & H*, April 15, 1976, pp. 4-6 and "The Atonement in Type and Antitype," *R & H*, April 22, 1976, pp. 8-9. See editorial "Was the Atonement finished on the Cross?" *Ibid.* pp. 11-12.
 - 21 Hale and Turner, "Has not the Saviour Come as the Bridegroom," *Advent Mirror*, Jan. 1845. See Editorials "Hope of Israel," *Voice of Truth and Glad Tidings*, May 14, 1845, p. 56; "Hope Within the Veil," *Jubilee Standard*, July 3, 1845, pp. 132-33; Samuel S. Snow, "Remarks," *Ibid.* June 5, 1845, p. 102.
 - 22 O.R.L. Crosier, *The Advent Harbinger and Bible Advocate*, March 5, 1853, p. 301 (Quoted in *R & H*, March 17, 1853, p. 176).
 - 23 O.R.L. Crosier, "Early History of Ontario County Revealed in Story of Late Owen R.L. Crozier," *The Daily Messenger*, Vol. 126, No 276, pp. 17-24, Canandaigua, N.Y. Thursday, November 22, 1923.
 - 24 J.N. Loughborough, *Rise and Progress of S.D.A.*, and *The Great Second Advent Movement loc. cit.* "The Spirit of God came upon him in such a powerful manner that he was almost smitten to the earth, and with it came an impression. 'The sanctuary to be cleansed is in Heaven.'" (emphasis ours)
 - 25 Samuel S. Snow, *The True Midnight Cry*, August 22, 1844, p. 4, Col. 2: "Now the important point in this type is the completion of the reconciliation at the coming of the high priest out of the holy place. The high priest was a type of Jesus our High Priest: the most holy place a type of heaven itself; and the coming out of the high priest a type of the coming of Jesus the second time to bless his waiting people." (emphasis his); Cf *Advent Herald* Oct. 2, 1844, p. 71, Col. 3, and *Midnight Cry*, Oct. 10, 1844, all written by S.S. Snow. Surprisingly, Appollos Hale had once ventured the question: "Why did not Christ enter the holy place on that day?" but only to dismiss it, "it is settled that he must come out on that day, or the type as to time must be forever unfulfilled." *Advent Herald*, Oct. 16, 1844 2nd ed. p. 83 Col. 1; and *Midnight Cry*, Oct. 19, 1844, pp. 130-1.
 - 26 J.N. Loughborough, *Some Individual Experiences*, *op. cit.* pp. 1-2. This manuscript amplifies the setting of the experience by revealing that it occurred after a 3rd prayer session in the cornfield. It then relates a practice akin to bibliolatri that led to understanding the distinctly audible voice. Edson dropped a pocket Bible on its back, which miraculously opened between the 8th and 9th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, thus shedding light on the nature of the cleansing of the Sanctuary. The letter of Loughborough to A.W. Spalding, from Sanitar-

ium, Calif. August 2, 1921 largely confirms the above manuscript, being written approximately 13 years later: "When they were thus kneeling the third time, and Brother Edson was praying, he said, 'A mighty wave of the power of God came upon me, and with an impression, almost as distinct as though spoken in an audible voice, 'The sanctuary is in heaven, and Jesus has gone in to cleanse it.'" (emphasis ours). The same episode of biblical magic follows. A photostat of this letter is available in the Advent Source Collection, and a portion is reproduced in L.E. Froom's manual "History of Prophetic Interpretation," section xviii—Decade following the Disappointment p. 274.

- 27 Hiram Edson, *Fragment of a Ms. on his Life and Experience*, pp. 9-10.
- 28 See references in note 21. Cf. "To the Brethren Scattered Abroad," from the *Hope of Israel*, quoted in the *Day Star*, Vol. 5, No. 6, March 25, 1845, pp. 21-24.
- 29 For Edson's supernatural experiences before the disappointment see his *Fragment of a Ms.* pp. 5-7.
- 30 See Editorials, "Greatly Mistaken," *The Voice of Truth and Glad Tidings*, Febr. 1847 pp. 70, Cols. 2 & 3, where Edson is accused of brutality toward his son. He would have received a revelation from God to punish him. He is alleged to have whipped him so unmercifully that he was arrested, tried and fined \$15.00 for his barbarity. But this information is said to come from "a gentleman just from the place." Although this piece of gossip may only be based on hearsay, it reflects knowledge of Edson's "revelations."
- 31 See Manuscripts of the *Sutton and Dorchester visions* copied by Edson, Advent Source Collection 1607, 1850/W58, General Conference of SDA, Washington D.C.
- 32 Letter to Hiram Edson, "Beloved Brethren, scattered abroad," *The Present Truth* December 1849, Vol. 1, No 5 pp. 34-36. This letter relates several "impressions", one vision of Mrs. White, 3 dreams, in addition to two charismatic manifestations of glossolalia with subsequent interpretations. James White, editor of that paper, concerned that the reader "may start back at the dreams and vision, etc." attempts to give a theological justification for these experiences. *Ibid.* p. 40.
- 33 Mrs. E.G. White, *Letter to Elder Littlejohn*, August 3, 1894: 1-49-1894, Document File 588, E.G. White Estate. In his letter to Elder L.E. Froom of April 8, 1937 from Elmhaven, St Helena, Cal., Arthur L. White assumes that "Sister White", his grandmother, alludes to the very manuscript here discussed.

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Georgia-Cumberland Continued from Page 11

stituency meeting of the conference on March 25, 1979. The report was negligent in that it gave assurance of first mortgages on the basis of third party information which actually only indicated that title policies had been ordered . . . The commission recommends that the General Conference Auditing Department investigate Jerry Wiggle's audit of the Georgia Conference Association as pertains to the Davenport loans for possible disciplinary action.

—Committee Members: Executive Committee and Association Board members from January 1965 to July 1981.

—The commission found that Executive Committee members and Association Board members must share a part of the responsibility for the Davenport loss in that they, as members of these boards, had a duty as fiduciaries for the constituency to be seekers of the facts in order to insist that proper business procedures be fulfilled in the financial affairs of the church. Their purpose as board members is to make certain that work is carried on in a proper and diligent business like manner. The Conference Executive Committee voted to accept these findings.

It should be noted that the Executive Committee voted a reprimand of its own failure as a corporate fiduciary.

Another verdict . . .

Continued from Page 6

by focusing on a narrow, legal definition of plagiarism, led readers to believe that a problem had been solved when the issues that do matter — ethics, inspiration-revelation, authority — have not even been seriously addressed.

1. Review 2-4-82, p. 3, "Adventists and Litigation," Neal Wilson.
2. Review 9-17-81, p. 13, "This work is of God or it is not"; Page 7 of a reprint of articles from this issue of the Review. Reprint titled, "Was Ellen G. White a Plagiarist?"
3. Alexander Lindey, *Plagiarism and Originality* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1974 reprint of New York: Harper & Brother, 1952), p. 232.
4. Lindey, p. 2 (emphasis supplied).
5. *Emerson vs Davies et al.* (1845) 8 Fed. Case 615, 624.
6. Lindey, p. 7.
7. Review 9-17-81, pp. 5-6; reprint, pp. 4-5 (emphasis supplied).
8. "The Truth About The White Lie," *Ministry* insert, August 1982, p. 2. The document was prepared by the White Estate staff in cooperation with the Biblical Research Institute and the Ministerial Association of the General Conference. Hereinafter, *Ministry* insert.
9. See Douglas Hackleman, "G.C. Committee Studies Ellen White's Sources," *Spectrum* vol. 10, no. 4 (March 1980) p. 9.
10. Vincent L. Ramik, "Memorandum of Law, Literary Property Rights 1790-1915," August 14, 1981, p. 3.
11. Ramik, p. 7.
12. *Emerson*, p. 625.
13. *Heldsburg Enterprise*, March 20, 1889, "Is Mrs. White a Plagiarist?" p. 1.
14. Ron Graybill, "E.G. White's Literary Work: An Update," an edited and annotated transcript of presentations made November 15-19, 1981, at the morning worship services of the General Conference, p. 5. Available through the White Estate.
15. Warren H. Johns, "Ellen White: Prophet or Plagiarist?" *Ministry*, June 1982, p. 13.
16. Ramik, p. 5.
17. *Farmer vs Elstner* (1888) 33F. 494, 496.
18. *Farmer*, p. 497.
19. *Farmer*, p. 497.

Martin Interview

Continued from Page 24

Of course, technically, I would have to say that the person who prophesies in the name of God and turns out to be wrong, has prophesied falsely. You have to say that. But they want to go further than that. They want to make Mrs. White a biblical false prophet which means she is not a Christian. I cannot endorse that.

CURRENTS: I don't think anyone familiar with the history would deny she felt she was right and felt she had some kind of mission to fulfill. In that sense I don't think anyone would attempt to say she was a false prophet,

who has fallen into a sin and is a believer, or is it a person who is a total unbeliever? That's your biblical part—deliberately attempting to lead people away from God.

CURRENTS: I find among disenchanted Adventists more of the charge that she was a fraud than that she was a false prophet.

MARTIN: Well, considering that 90% of her writings allegedly have been tainted by secular or religious sources, even if it was good material, one does get quite suspicious of her ethics and of her genuine commitment to truth.

CURRENTS: What about Mrs. White's view of the atonement—that it wasn't completed until 1844? Doesn't that fall under the category you are talking about?

MARTIN: The doctrine of the incomplete atonement is heretical. It was later changed into a modified Armenian device with the investigative judgment and was nothing more than a poor face-saving technique—as Dr. Barnhouse pointed out to Dr. Froom, to his great chagrin. It was just a way out of a nasty situation. She really bought the idea that this was the proper interpretation of Hebrews. She believed it. She was wrong. The people around her were wrong. She thought God had shown this to her because, I think, she tried to imbue a lot of her statements and doctrines with the divine seal of authority to get people to pay attention to her. Yes, I think she did that and I think that was sinful. However, I don't believe the intent of Mrs. White, in anything she taught, was to dishonor Christ or to turn against the gospel as she understood it.

CURRENTS: It would seem that the Christian has a lot of leeway in what he believes; and if there are some mistakes in his viewpoint, in some things he does. . . .

MARTIN: That doesn't make him a non-Christian. It makes him a Christian—uninformed, ignorant, or sinful; but still a redeemed person. Paul says, "Mark has forsaken me; Demetrius has loved this world." Does he send them off to hell? The man in I Corinthians 5, did he send him to hell? No. I therefore think Christians are capable of terribly stupid acts and statements, even dishonest and sinful acts. But they are also

PRINTED MATTER

Book Review

The White Truth by John J. Robertson.
Pacific Press Publishing Association
Mountain View, Calif., 1982.

The only commendatory description of John Robertson's *The White Truth* known to *Currents* was written by Pacific Press representative W. Paul Turpel in a promotional letter addressed to North American local conference presidents and Adventist Book Center managers, about a month and a half before the book's publication:

In answer to many prayers, the administration of Southeastern felt so keenly about preparing a book documenting truth which even the greatest skeptic could not refute, they relieved John [Robertson] of his responsibilities until the book could be researched further and written.

The manuscript arrived this past week. My brethren, it is a masterpiece . . . In 27 years of reading manuscripts I did something never done before. I read it word for word twice. (19 October 1981)

Is it any wonder that the Pacific Press is \$8 million in debt?

Probably the best thing about *The White Truth* is its brevity. It is an unabashed exhibit of apologetic boilerplate in which the desired conclusion is presupposed from the outset. Union College Division of Humanities chairman H. Ward Hill contemplated the negative potential of such tail-chasing logic:

Robertson's approach will hardly be convincing to those who are not already firm believers in Mrs. White's prophetic gift . . . And should they drift into a somewhat cynical mood, they would most likely feel that a more suitable title for The White Truth would simply be The White Wash!

Two examples of Robertson's special pleading and question begging defense involve the questions whether Ellen White ever admitted source dependence, and whether she might have been guilty of copyright infringement under 19th century law.

Robertson spends several pages attempting to convince readers that the preface to *The Great Controversy* contains an open, honest admission of all occasions of Mrs. White's unacknowledged source utilization. A year later Robertson was still convinced: "Yes, the introduction to *The Great Controversy* covers that in rather general terms, but it does cover it."

That is the kind of "White Truth" stretching by Robertson that destroys the integrity of his defense. *The Great Controversy* preface does admit that "in some cases . . . historian[s] . . . words have been quoted" (emphasis supplied). But there is no reference whatever to paraphrasing, which makes up almost the entire book. Also, *The Great Controversy* preface allows that "similar use

If what she says infallibly interprets the Scriptures . . . How is it that we test her infallibility?

in the sense you just described.

MARTIN: I am just talking about people who have left the denomination and people who are hostile to Adventism generally. They are picking this line up and I am getting flack on the subject of false prophets. So I have to be very careful when I talk about a false prophet. We do admit that anyone who says something in the name of God, and it doesn't come to pass, is prophesying falsely. But there is a deeper level to this. Is it a person

capable of repenting. That's what the General Conference should be doing right now, repenting. Repenting of these things and saying, "We just cannot sustain this any longer. The church is built on Christ, not on Mrs. White or her prophetic gift, or the revenue generated from her resources."

CURRENTS: Three Seventh-day Adventists will have to repent for keeping you from your lunch if we don't thank you right now and get out of your hair.

has occasionally been made" of the Adventist pioneers' published works (emphasis supplied). Only *The Great Controversy* is referred to in *The Great Controversy's* preface; the existence of source quotations is minimized ("in some cases," "occasionally"); and paraphrasing goes unmentioned.

Robertson stretches credulity to the snapping point when he insists that *The Great Controversy* preface is an open, candid admission by Mrs. White of her source requisitions used in testimonies, articles, books, sermons, and visions from 1845 to 1915. Besides, the weight of evidence suggests that Ellen White did not write the introduction to *The Great Controversy*.

Battle Creek Church head Elder George Amadon, claimed intimate friendship with James and Ellen White "since the summer of 1853," "having been prominently con-

A more suitable title for The White Truth would simply be The White Wash!

nected with the Review and Herald from 1853 to the time of its destruction by fire." He wrote to the *Battle Creek Daily Journal* in 1907, defending Mrs. White on a related point:

Mrs. White does not write the prefaces to her books, she is not a proof reader, and much of the work on her numerous volumes is done by literary helpers.

Robertson could have saved the church the several tens of thousands of dollars it spent on a Catholic copyright attorney's opinion that "there simply is no case" for believing that Mrs. White might have been guilty of plagiarism (copyright infringement) under 19th century legal canons. His next door neighbor, he tells readers, is "a respected judge of our city" who just happened to be interested in 19th century plagiarism law himself and provided Robertson with a "not guilty" verdict—for free.

How reduced would have been the impact of Robertson's conversation with the judge regarding Ellen White's plagiarism guilt if he had told readers his neighbor was Seventh-day Adventist Riverside Municipality Court Judge Robert Macomber?

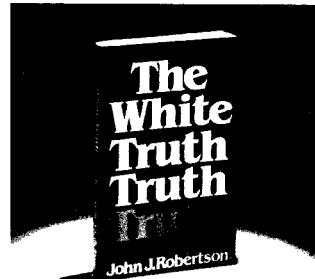
Note *Patriarchs and Prophets* page 309:

All intentional overstatement, every hint or insinuation calculated to convey an erroneous or exaggerated impression, even the statement of facts in such a manner as to mislead, is falsehood . . . Even the intentional suppression of truth . . . is a violation of the ninth commandment.

That pointed statement pronounces a judgment on the methods of defending Mrs. White employed by the author of *The White Truth*, which, by the way, it is not.

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By John J. Robertson

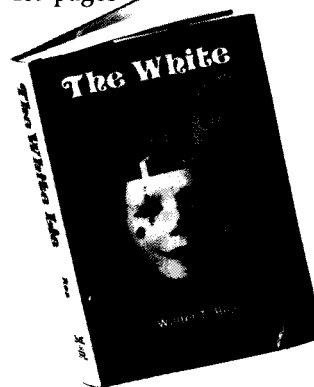
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Ford, Rea on Ankerberg Show

In the fall of 1982, Dr. Desmond Ford and Pastor Walter Rea appeared together on the John Ankerberg TV show—a weekly, 30-minute program focusing on controversial Christian issues. This nondenominational, viewer-supported program utilizes an informal discussion format and often presents Christians and non-Christians together in exchanges of viewpoint.

Aired over the satellite CBN (Christian Broadcasting Network) and PTL (Praise The Lord) networks and nine other stations in the United States, the potential audience is large. Host John Ankerberg is a young but experienced evangelist who earned the B.A., M.A., and M.Div. degrees, and is currently finishing requirements for his doctorate.

An Adventist layman who knows Ankerberg heard that a gospel congress was going to be held by Good News Unlimited in the Chattanooga, Tennessee, area in August 1982. Since this is where the Ankerberg show originates, the layman saw an opportunity for Ankerberg to interview GNU minister Desmond Ford. When Ankerberg and his assistant Bob Gerow were approached, they were interested because some Adventist controversies are similar to problems now surfacing in other denominations. Arrangements were also made to include decredentialed Adventist minister Walter Rea.

Beyond his own research, Ankerberg met with Chattanooga area Adventists familiar with the issues. Ankerberg also read official and unofficial Adventist publications, including *Questions on Doctrine*, *The Great Controversy*, *Omega*, *The White Lie*, and Ford's Glacier View document.

In early July, Ankerberg phoned and wrote the following Adventist leaders, inviting them to represent the church on the program with Ford and Rea: Neal Wilson, Robert Olson, Victor Cooper, Warren Johns and William Johnsson. All declined for various reasons; but the impression received was that they did not wish to participate in a

You said you were not a Seventh-day Adventist—I accept that apology.

public airing of theological differences that, they felt, should be handled privately, within the church.

The program was taped on 2 August 1982 and edited into four separate 30-minute segments. The first segment focused on



Ford's discussion of the 1844 movement and the traditional Adventist belief in an investigative judgment. Ford started the conversation by addressing Ankerberg:

If I may just give a moment of background—you said you were not a Seventh-day Adventist—I accept that apology. [laughter] I am one, and I love the church; but I want to see it come into full harmony with Scripture. Adventists have long claimed to be the heirs of the Reformation, based on the primacy and the adequacy and the sufficiency of Holy Writ. It was based on the priesthood of all believers and justification by faith. I want to see my church come into full harmony [with Scripture] in these areas. I believe the church has made a great contribution to Christendom. . . . but the sanctuary as usually presented by Seventh-day Adventists . . . has taken assurance from the vast membership of the church.

In the second segment, Rea described the events which led him to write *The White Lie*. He outlined his discovery of Mrs. White's ubiquitous source dependence. He explained how he shared his findings with the White Estate, and how he met with a committee of 18 scholars and administrators in 1980 to demonstrate to them his findings. The committee agreed that the borrowing was more extensive than they had believed and voted that it should be brought to the attention of the church. They also recommended that Rea be given scholarly help to bring his research into presentable form. But within two months Rea received a letter from the General Conference that essentially said, according to Rea, "We'll take it from here."

Rea and Ford discussed their varying view of Mrs. White's inspiration and her impact on Adventist theology. Then Ankerberg summed up the program with a brief recounting of the conversations between Walter

Martin and the General Conference in the mid-fifties that led to the "infamous" *Questions on Doctrine*, and a warning of sorts:

In 1980, the denomination appears to have elevated Ellen G. White's interpretation of Scripture to a position equal in authority with Scripture itself. Now, it seems, she is the only authoritative interpreter of Scripture for Adventists. This crucial decision by the leadership of Adventism has forced evangelical leaders to reevaluate. It's the consensus of those with whom I have talked that if in belief and practice the Adventist leaders abide by this decision, they will have turned their great church down the road to being a cult by denying the basic tenets of the Christian faith.

The third and concluding program was primarily a question and answer period with audience participation. The fourth program, on the Davenport issue, was never completely edited for production. Ankerberg preferred to focus on issues that directly involve the gospel. The Davenport discussion is, however, included on the unedited audio cassettes and printed transcripts. The three programs aired on CBN in late September and early October, and in mid October and early November on the PTL network. It is not known when the programs will be repeated.

Response to the programs, as with any controversial topics, has been mixed. Many Adventist pastors have written Ankerberg to express their agreement with Ford or Rea, stating that they no longer consider Ellen White's inspiration to be of canonical authority.

The four segments are available on audio cassettes for a \$15 contribution or as written transcripts for a gift of \$5 to: The John Ankerberg TV Show, P.O. Box 8977, Chattanooga, TN 37411.

Our Sense of Shock

ALTERNATING CURRENTS

by Gordon W. Thompson

Reacting to a Newsweek cover painting of a topless female, then Adventist Review editor Kenneth Wood, in a July 1982 editorial, elaborated on "The Sense of Shock."

Wood asked how many Adventists are shocked by television's "double entendres," by the visits of state leaders to the Vatican, by divorced church members who remarry "without Biblical grounds," by those who "attack the writings of Ellen G. White or take issue with the historic beliefs of the church?"

An Adventist physician wrote to Wood, noting realities that he found far more shocking.—Ed.

After reading your editorial ("The Sense of Shock") in the 8 July '82 *Adventist Review*, my wife Elaine and I felt somewhat remiss for not having let you know more about our feelings of shock and outrage. However, surely you must know that such confessions from the laity have been discouraged by years of dependence on the "Good Old Review," where seldom is seen a discouraging, controversial, or critical word—let alone expressions of shock and outrage.

Newsweek, even *Ministry*, print frank, self-critical letters, but not the *Review*. And unfortunately, no Meg Greenfield haunts the hallowed halls of the *Review* and Herald Publishing Association, ready to address the passing Adventist scene. What the laity misses for lack of a syndicated columnist it supplants with rife cynicism.

So what's happening in the "Hill Country?" You'd better believe we are shocked and outraged. What a tragedy that some have apostacized—at least from *our* church. Others have just given in to hopeless apathy. They will stay in the church because it's their subculture; and, after all, they've grown used to being disenfranchised and treated with condescension. For the rest of us—a thousand days of weeping.

There is a large segment within the church who have been cloned to believe that church leaders can do no wrong, that it is unchristian to criticize, that God will work His inscrutable way through trying circumstance, and that faithful stewards don't complain. I've heard statements from church leaders that imply a cynical dependence upon the laity's spiritual naivete. Whether that is a widespread, conscious *modus operandi* or simply a subconscious habit, I don't know—but we are shocked and outraged at leadership.

Shocked and outraged—not because of half-naked nymphs on the cover of *Newsweek*, but because our leaders have too often appeared wretchedly political, morally pitiful, poorly trained, blindly indifferent to their obligations and responsibilities, and, in a

sense, very naked. The sin is not in the viewing but in the being. The eye salve is to permit us to see the nakedness.

We would like to believe that the majority of our leaders and administrators are men of principle (sadly there are not more women to leaven the whole); but why can they not, without equivocating, call sin by its right name and administratively rid the church of those within its ranks who are guilty of arrogance, dishonesty, greed, double dealing, and/or just plain old fashioned calcified incompetence? Christ's righteousness is not intended as a modest fig leaf for sin but as a replacement for the filthy rags of wickedness and hypocrisy.

Our gold has been taken by an array of Aarons—by some to build altars (the edifice complex), but by most to assure themselves a "comfortable" retirement. They have ransacked the church. They have stolen our trust in their integrity as well. When Achan confessed, his cache was uncovered and he was stoned. But our leaders don't confess, and the data detailing their dishonesty, greed, and incompetence is seldom available. To the shame and damage of our church we continue them in office. Forgive them, certainly. Love them, assuredly. Keep them in office—incredibly!

Leaders who abrogate their responsibilities, bury their horde, and cover up their guilt need to be removed from office. It is not our desire to see them humiliated. Treat them with Christian care (not charity; they've had enough of that already).

We don't need a Moses to ask "who is on the Lord's side?" Often the guilty are so debauched in cynical hypocrisy that they would have no trouble rationalizing their position as "on the Lord's side."

Some of our leaders are great at the "rebuking sin" ploy—anyone's sin but their own. When it gets close to home, they shift into the excuse mode: "Forgive us, for we know not what we do"—precisely and obviously enough. But this church desperately needs people who have been trained to know what they are doing, not just ordained to it.

We are more shocked and outraged by the double dealing of our leaders and the double standard of "justice" than by all the double entendres on TV sitcoms. We don't have to live with television. It is our leaders who turn us off.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church needs a reformation. Forget The Reformation; it is irrelevant until we've had our own. When there is unpunished impropriety among our leaders and administrators, what can the laity say about divorce and remarriage? Which is the worse adultery? When the leaders of the church withhold the facts

about Ellen White for 100 years, what can the members have to say about truth?

Church leaders need to get their priorities straight. We need to understand the *Eli message* in all its obvious significance ("In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions" and "the guilt of Eli's house will never be atoned by sacrifice or offering") before we tackle the *Elijah message*.

Instead of Moses, we're getting Eli and Sons. Whenever there is a grievance or complaint, our leaders are quick to see insubordination, rebellion, and apostasy, rather than addressing the real issues. What can be expected from members when the hierarchy tolerates such abuses within its ranks—shocking, scandalous, outrageous abuses? Well, it is our (His) church, not the G.C. Committee's church; and we want it to have a faithful and true witness. Those whom He loves He rebukes and disciplines, and we love our Lord and His church and cherish its Good News. We love our leaders. We want to be able to trust and follow their leadership. But, if they are untrustworthy and dishonor the Lord, they should be disdained (I Samuel 2:30).

Where are the Peters in church office today who are ready to denounce the reverse sorcery of making God's money disappear, to denounce those leaders who certainly have lied to us as well as to the Holy Spirit? The few Peters around can't get a hearing. It remains for a few "crack-pots" with their crude newspapers, broadsides, and tapes to spell out the sorry mess. It is embarrassing that there is so much truth in what they have reported and so little of the facts presented in the *Review*.

We have "know nothings" who write our local newspaper criticizing them for revealing what the *Review* won't publish. (The *San Bernardino Sun* series was excellent, even-handed reporting). Believe me, we poor deluded peasants are shocked and outraged. We are outraged by "Hophni" and "Phinehas" and their "three-pronged fork" game. We are outraged by "Eli" failing to restrain. We are outraged because they have treated "the Lord's offering (and His people) with contempt."

We not only want sin called by its right name, we want a single standard of ethics and justice applied fairly and forthrightly. Instead, when the going gets tough, the culpable scurry back into the cracks of the hierarchical edifice.

We are shocked and outraged. Now what?

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