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Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

REACTIONS TO THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST  
EVANGELICAL CONFERENCES AND  
*QUESTIONS ON DOCTRINE*  
1955-1971

A Dissertation  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

by  
Juhyeok Nam

June 2005

UMI Number: 3182012

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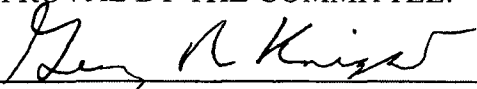
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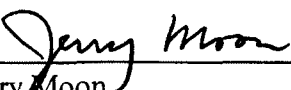
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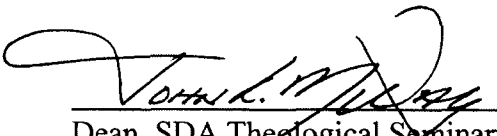
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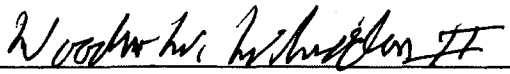
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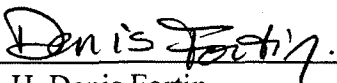
  
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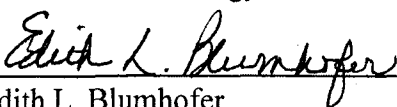
  
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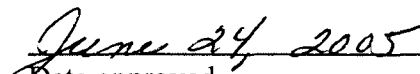
  
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ABSTRACT

REACTIONS TO THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST  
EVANGELICAL CONFERENCES AND  
*QUESTIONS ON DOCTRINE*  
1955-1971

by

Juhyeok Nam

Adviser: George R. Knight

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: REACTIONS TO THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST EVANGELICAL  
CONFERENCES AND *QUESTIONS ON DOCTRINE*, 1955-1971

Name of researcher: Juhyeok Nam

Name and degree of faculty adviser: George R. Knight, Ed.D.

Date completed: June 2005

Topic

The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956 resulted in the publication of articles favorable to Adventists in *Eternity* and *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, both of which evoked a variety of reactions among evangelicals and Adventists.

Purpose

This study identifies and analyzes various evangelical and Adventist responses to the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences and *Questions on Doctrine*. In particular, this investigation examines the interaction between the major theological camps that emerged within and outside the Adventist church.



## Sources

This research is a documentary/analytical study of materials produced between 1955 and 1971 in reaction to the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences and *Questions on Doctrine*. Sources of particular importance to this study have been major evangelical and Adventist periodicals and unpublished materials gathered from archival collections at Andrews University, the Ellen G. White Estate, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Loma Linda University, and the Presbyterian Historical Society.

## Conclusions

Four distinct types of reactions were identified by this research: (1) pro-Adventist evangelicals; (2) anti-Adventist evangelicals; (3) pro-*Questions on Doctrine* Adventists; and (4) anti-*Questions on Doctrine* Adventists. The first group was represented by Walter R. Martin, Donald Grey Barnhouse, E. Schuyler English, and Frank Mead, who accepted Adventism as an evangelical church. The rest of the evangelical world belonged to the second group and continued to regard Adventism as a cult. The third group was led by those General Conference leaders who participated in the Adventist-evangelical conferences and in the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*. The final group was led by M. L. Andreasen, who strongly protested against the book which he considered to be significantly un-Adventist. The reactions by and interactions among these four groups until 1971 show that the controversy over the Adventist-evangelical dialogues and *Questions on Doctrine* was never fully resolved and the four sides remained in tension.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADF	Seventh-day Adventist document file
AU	Center for Adventist Research, James White Library, Andrews University
C	Collection
DF	Document file
EGWE	Ellen G. White Estate, Main Office, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Fld	Folder
GCA	General Conference Archives, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
HL	Handwritten letter
LLU	Ellen G. White Estate, Branch Office/Department of Archives and Special Collections, Del E. Webb Memorial Library, Loma Linda University
PC	Personal collection
RC	Record collection
RG	Record group
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
TL	Typewritten letter
TMs	Typewritten manuscript
WDF	Ellen G. White document file

## PREFACE

### **Background of the Problem**

Perhaps no other book has aroused so much controversy in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as the 1957 publication of *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*.<sup>1</sup> The book was published as both a direct result of and a representative response to the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956. The conferences had been initiated by Walter R. Martin, an up-and-coming specialist in non-Christian cults, and Donald Grey Barnhouse, publisher of *Eternity*, one of the most popular evangelical magazines of the day in the United States. Written by an ad hoc committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in response to questions drafted by Martin, *Questions on Doctrine* was to be the apology par excellence of Adventism. However, when the book came out, it created an uproar both within and outside the church.

Evangelical Protestants found themselves divided on the issue of the acceptability of Seventh-day Adventists as Christians. Martin and Barnhouse had already abandoned their previous belief that Adventists were a cult group and had embraced them as

---

<sup>1</sup>*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957), 3.



“redeemed brethren and members of the body of Christ.”<sup>1</sup> But the majority of the evangelical world, which had viewed Adventism as a non-Christian cult in the company of Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Christian Science believers, remained “still unconvinced of [Adventism’s] adequate creedal orthodoxy,”<sup>2</sup> even after reading *Questions on Doctrine*.

Adventists, on the other hand, saw within their ranks an even greater division over *Questions on Doctrine* than there was among the evangelicals. Although the book received a de facto imprimatur from the General Conference and was hailed widely by many church leaders, it generated a passionate dissent concerning the book’s treatment of Christ’s human nature and the atonement. Singlehandedly spearheading this protest was Milian L. Andreasen, a retired theologian, who was widely regarded as the foremost authority on the Adventist sanctuary doctrine. Determined to have *Questions on Doctrine* censured and withdrawn, Andreasen campaigned against it, denounced it as “reprehensible”<sup>3</sup> and “the most subtle and dangerous error that I know of,”<sup>4</sup> and branded it “a most dangerous heresy.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, “Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians? A New Look at Seventh-day Adventism,” *Eternity*, September 1956, 45.

<sup>2</sup>John H. Gerstner, *The Theology of the Major Sects* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1960), 2.

<sup>3</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “The Atonement [III],” 1957, TMs, C 152, box 28, fld 8, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

<sup>4</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “A Review and a Protest [Atonement II],” 1957, TMs, C 152, box 28, fld 8, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

<sup>5</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “A Most Dangerous Heresy,” September 1960, TMs, C 152,

Although the debate on the evangelical orthodoxy of Adventist theology and *Questions on Doctrine* seems to have subsided on the evangelical side after the 1960s, it has continued into the twenty-first century within the Adventist church itself.<sup>1</sup> The heightened theological tension of the late 1950s and 1960s has so profoundly impacted the church that more than one author has seen the *Questions on Doctrine* controversy as a major turning point in the history of Adventism.<sup>2</sup>

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box 28, fld 8, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

<sup>1</sup>The following observations of Adventism represent some of the views and analyses on the continuing debate on this issue: Roy Adams, *The Nature of Christ* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1994); Herbert Douglass, "Thoughts on the Republished *Questions on Doctrine*," *Ministry*, August 2004, 16-19, 21; John J. Grosboll, *None Dare Call It Apostasy* (Wichita, KS: Steps to Life, 1992); William G. Johnsson, *The Fragmenting of Adventism: Ten Issues Threatening the Church Today* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1995); Ralph Larson, "The Scandal of a Book, [parts 1-8]," *Our Firm Foundation*, February 2004-January 2005; A. Leroy Moore, *Adventism in Conflict: Resolving the Issues That Divide Us* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1995); idem, "Questions on Doctrine Revisited," 8 May 1996, unpublished book manuscript, personal collection of A. Leroy Moore; Kenneth R. Samples, "The Recent Truth About Seventh-day Adventism," *Christianity Today*, 5 February 1990, 18-21; Colin D. Standish and Russell R. Standish, *Adventism Challenged*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Eatonville, WA: Hope International, 1990); idem, *The Evangelical Dilemma* (Rapidan, VA: Hartland Publications, 1994); idem, *The Embattled Church* (Rapidan, VA: Hartland Publications, 1995); Woodrow W. Whidden II, "Essential Adventism or Historic Adventism?" *Ministry*, October 1993, 5-9; idem, "Questions on Doctrine: Then and Now," *Ministry*, August 2003, 14, 15, 17, 18.

<sup>2</sup>For example, Kenneth H. Wood, "How We Got Where We Are: A Review of Some Aspects of Adventist History since 1955," 1978, TMs, restricted document, AU; George R. Knight, *A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1993), 142-143; idem, "Adventist Theology: 1844-1994," *Ministry*, August 1994, 10-13, 25; Johnsson, *The Fragmenting of Adventism*, 97.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In spite of the historical significance of the publication of *Questions on Doctrine* and the reactions that the book evoked, no comprehensive historical investigation has yet been conducted on the controversy surrounding the book. The substance of the spirited reactions that the Adventist-evangelical dialogues and *Questions on Doctrine* evoked and the interactions that took place between the various parties involved have not yet been a subject of serious research.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study identifies and analyzes various evangelical and Adventist responses to the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956 and *Questions on Doctrine*. This investigation also examines the interaction between the major theological camps that emerged within and outside the Adventist church in response to the book.

### **Justification for the Study**

This study should prove to be a useful contribution in three ways. First, it is an examination of an area of Adventist studies that has not received a detailed study thus far. Second, it leads to a deeper understanding of Adventism in the 1950s and 1960s and the controversy surrounding *Questions on Doctrine*. Third, it contributes to a better understanding of some of the theological divisions that have since existed in the Adventist church.

## Scope and Delimitations

A brief overview of the relationship between Adventists and evangelicals leading up to the dialogues of 1955-1956 is provided for contextual purposes. The overview shows a general trend of attitudes held by Adventists and evangelicals toward each other. This portion of the study does not enter into an in-depth discussion on the historical relationship between Adventists and evangelicals or between Adventists and Protestants in general. Neither does this overview provide an analysis of the Adventist understanding of the role of Protestantism in the end-time.

The main portion of this study covers the period in Adventist history from 1955 to 1971. The year 1955, the year of the first Adventist-evangelical dialogues, is a natural choice for the starting point of this study. The year 1971, marked by the publication of LeRoy Edwin Froom's *Movement of Destiny*,<sup>1</sup> has been selected as the terminal point of this study since Froom's book, though itself a controversial work, represents a major milestone in the *Questions on Doctrine* debate. Written by the Adventist leader of the Adventist-evangelical dialogues, *Movement of Destiny* remains as the "last word" on the *Questions on Doctrine* controversy from the viewpoint of contemporary church leaders.

This study examines major published and unpublished reactions to the Adventist-evangelical dialogues and *Questions on Doctrine*. Sources for this study are delimited to materials in English since the controversy took place primarily among English-speaking North Americans.

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<sup>1</sup>LeRoy E. Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1971).

## Key Individuals and Terms

The central narrative of this dissertation revolves around four individuals who were significantly involved in the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences and the reactions to the conferences. The four individuals are: LeRoy Edwin Froom, M. L. Andreasen, Donald Grey Barnhouse, and Walter R. Martin. Froom and Andreasen represented two divergent impulses within Adventism—one emphasizing commonalities between Adventism and other Christian churches, and the other stressing the distinctive aspects of Adventist theology. On the other hand, Barnhouse and Martin were two evangelicals who represented a particular strain within evangelicalism that inherited much of the theological fervor of the fundamentalism of the 1920s.

Froom (1890-1974) was one of the most influential thought leaders in the Adventist church from the 1920s to the time of his death. In 1928, while serving as an associate secretary of the Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, he founded *Ministry* magazine for Adventist pastors and leaders and served as its editor until 1950. At the time of the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences, he was serving as a professor at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and a field secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Froom was the Adventist church's most active apologist, particularly in the 1940s through the 1960s, writing tirelessly to promote Adventism as an evangelical Christian church. Through these endeavors, Froom made great efforts to bridge the gap between Adventism and the evangelical world. Among his writings, his four-volume *Prophetic*

*Faith of Our Fathers*,<sup>1</sup> the two-volume *Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers*,<sup>2</sup> and *Movement of Destiny*<sup>3</sup> are monumental apologetic tomes that represent his major intellectual contributions.<sup>4</sup>

Over the course of more than half a century of work for the Adventist church, Andreasen (1876-1962) served in wide-ranging capacities as a conference president, a head of educational institutions, a field secretary of the General Conference, and a professor at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. His lasting contribution to the Adventist church, however, lay in his role as the author of several significant works of theology. By the time of the Adventist-evangelical conferences, Andreasen had entered his retirement years. However, his books such as *The Sanctuary Service*,<sup>5</sup> *The Book of Hebrews*,<sup>6</sup> and *A Faith to Live By*<sup>7</sup> were making a continuing impact throughout the

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<sup>1</sup>LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation*, 4 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946-1954).

<sup>2</sup>LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers: The Conflict of the Ages over the Nature and Destiny of Man*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1965-1966).

<sup>3</sup>Froom, *Movement of Destiny*.

<sup>4</sup>For a brief biographical sketch of Froom, see *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1996 ed., s.v. "Froom, LeRoy Edwin." See also LeRoy Edwin Froom, "[Biographical Information]," n.d., TMs, fld 008293, AU.

<sup>5</sup>M. L. Andreasen, *The Sanctuary Service* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1937, 1947).

<sup>6</sup>M. L. Andreasen, *The Book of Hebrews* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1948).

<sup>7</sup>M. L. Andreasen, *A Faith to Live By* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1943).

church. In these books, he gave special attention to the doctrines of the atonement, sanctuary, and end-time. The hallmark of Andreasen's thinking was his final generation theology which taught that there will arise a generation of God's people in the end-time who will overcome sin completely and demonstrate to the universe that it is possible to live a sinless life.<sup>1</sup> In contrast to Froom whose primary contribution was finding common ground between Adventists and evangelicals, Andreasen's legacy lies in his attempts to highlight the distinctive features of Adventism and its role as God's remnant people at the end of time. Because of their divergent goals, Froom and Andreasen had an uneasy relationship which would lead to a deep rift in the course of their reactions to the Adventist-evangelicals conferences and *Questions on Doctrine*.

Barnhouse (1895-1960) was a longtime pastor of the Tenth Avenue Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia and the founder of the Evangelical Foundation, an organization he created in 1949 to bring together several of his ventures. These ventures included his national weekly radio show, launched in 1928, and the monthly *Eternity* magazine, founded in 1931 as *Revelation*. Though he was a thoroughgoing fundamentalist with regards to theology, Barnhouse refused to leave the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America to join Carl McIntire who seceded from the Presbyterian Church to form a separate denomination (the Bible Presbyterian Church) and a national coalition of fundamentalist churches called the American Council of Christian Churches. Though

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<sup>1</sup>For a full-length biography of Andreasen, see Virginia Steinweg, *Without Fear or Favor: The Life of M. L. Andreasen* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1979). For a brief biographical sketch of Andreasen, see *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1996 ed., s.v. "Andreasen, Milian Lauritz." See also "Andreasen, M. L., Biographical," n.d., TMs, WDF 961-a, AU.

considered by some as being liberal with his criticisms toward others and even “fiery” and “brusque” in his relations with those who disagreed with him,<sup>1</sup> Barnhouse chose to stay in the Presbyterian church and work with the dominant liberal faction.<sup>2</sup> This decision in the early 1940s placed him among more moderate fundamentalists who shared the same doctrinal concerns as McIntire’s group but did not agree with its militant and separatist methods. Throughout the 1940s and into the early 1950s, Barnhouse worked with an increasingly diverse group of Protestant Christians, even speaking at a World Council of Churches event, much to the consternation of his fundamentalist colleagues.<sup>3</sup> Hence, by the time Martin visited the Adventist General Conference in 1955, Barnhouse had become much more open toward other Christian groups than in his earlier years, which allowed him take a new look at Adventism and ultimately accept it as a Christian church.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*Dictionary of Christianity in America*, 1990 ed., s.v. “Barnhouse, Donald Grey”; *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 1984 ed., s.v. “Barnhouse, Donald Grey.”

<sup>2</sup>*Religious Leaders of America: A Biographical Guide to Founders and Leaders of Religious Bodies, Churches, and Spiritual Groups in North America*, 1991 ed., s.v. “Barnhouse, Donald Grey.” See also Mark Ellingsen, *The Evangelical Movement: Growth, Impact, Controversy, Dialog* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 99-104.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>For more information on Barnhouse, see *Religious Leaders of America*, 1991 ed., s.v. “Barnhouse, Donald Grey”; “Synopsis of the Life of Donald Grey Barnhouse,” *Eternity*, March 1961, 3; Margaret N. Barnhouse, “What Was He Like—Really?” *Eternity*, March 1961, 8, 10; Paul A. Hopkins, “What Made the Man?” *Eternity*, March 1961, 14-18, 35-42; Ralph L. Keiper, “The Life Text of Dr. Barnhouse,” *Eternity*, March 1961, 19-21.



Though he was just a young man of twenty-six years when the Adventist-evangelical conferences began in 1955, Martin (1928-1989) had already achieved a certain standing in the evangelical world as a counter-cult apologist. He would go on to become one of the most prominent apologist-polemicists in the evangelical world in the second half of the twentieth century. An ordained minister in the Southern Baptist Convention, he was fundamentalist in his theological outlook. Yet, much like Barnhouse, he was not part of the militant, separatist fundamentalism of McIntire and the American Council of Christian Churches. During the period of the Adventist-evangelical conferences and the ensuing interactions, Martin served as a contributing editor for *Eternity* for five years and the director of the Division of Cult Apologetics at Zondervan Publishing House until 1960, when he established an independent counter-cult organization, the Christian Research Institute. He remained at the helm of the Christian Research Institute to the end of his life, combating religious groups and ideologies that he judged to be cultic.<sup>1</sup>

Barnhouse and Martin were subscribers to the theology of the fundamentalism of the 1920s and 1930s. However, their resistance to the militant, separatist fundamentalism of their time led them to identify more closely with the newly emerging “evangelical” movement represented by the National Association of Evangelicals. This organization

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<sup>1</sup>See T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 35, 36; Douglas E. Cowan, “Historic Figures in the Christian Countercult Movement,” University of Missouri—Kansas City, <http://c.faculty.umkc.edu/cowande/ccp/martin.htm>, accessed April 28, 2005; Kevin Rische and Jill Martin Rische, “Biography,” Walter Martin’s Religious InfoNet, <http://www.waltermartin.org/bio.html>, accessed April 28, 2005.

was founded in 1942, a year after the establishment of the American Council of Christian Churches, in order to unite moderate fundamentalists and other conservative Protestants who possessed a more tolerant attitude toward other expressions of Christian faith. Though neither a central figure nor a part of a member church of this organization, Barnhouse allied himself with the National Association of Evangelicals and self-consciously became an “evangelical.”<sup>1</sup> The same was true for Martin. When Martin began his activities as a polemicist in the 1950s, he worked briefly as an editorial researcher for a periodical published by the National Association of Evangelicals.<sup>2</sup> Also, after making the decision to accept Adventism as Christian, Martin shared his conclusion with Frank Gaebelin, an official in the National Association of Evangelicals, who recommended to James D. Murch, a fellow official, that the Adventist church be accepted into their organization.<sup>3</sup>

The close association that Barnhouse and Martin had with the National Association of Evangelicals did not mean that their views and teachings were representative of the organization or the new evangelical movement as a whole. Though this movement was dominated by fundamentalists, it included non-fundamentalists who occupied various points of the theological and ideological spectrum between militant

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<sup>1</sup>Paul A. Hopkins, “What Made the Man?” *Eternity*, March 1961, 39. See also “Donald Grey Barnhouse,” Christian Book Distributors, <http://www.christianbook.com/html/authors/2561.html/195576938>, accessed April 28, 2005.

<sup>2</sup>Kevin Rische and Jill Martin Rische, “Biography,” Walter Martin’s Religious InfoNet, <http://www.waltermartin.org/bio.html>, accessed April 28, 2005.

<sup>3</sup>T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 42.

fundamentalism and liberalism.<sup>1</sup> Barnhouse, Martin, and other evangelicals with whom Adventists interacted in the 1950s and 1960s were part of the fundamentalist wing of evangelicalism which in fact was composed of moderate fundamentalists who did not join McIntire's separatist movement. The non-fundamentalist, more liberal segment of evangelicalism did not participate in these discussions.

Therefore, the term "evangelical" or "evangelicalism," when used in connection with those who interacted with Adventism in the 1950s and 1960s, refers to the moderate fundamentalist wing of the evangelicalism of the 1940s to the 1960s. The term can also be used to refer to the entire spectrum of evangelicalism, if employed in connection with the general phenomenon of evangelicalism in the delimited period. Similarly, the term "fundamentalist" or "fundamentalism" carries a particular definition in this study, referring to the moderate fundamentalists of Barnhouse's type and not including the militant fundamentalists of McIntire's type.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Since 1971, only three studies have been conducted to survey and analyze the reactions that the Adventist-evangelical conferences, *Eternity* articles, and *Questions on Doctrines* generated. The three works are: George R. Knight's introductory essay in the annotated edition of *Questions on Doctrine*, published in 2003<sup>2</sup>; Paul McGraw's Doctor

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<sup>1</sup>See Douglas A. Sweeney, "The Essential Evangelicalism Dialectic: The Historiography of the Early Neo-Evangelical Movement and the Observer-Participant Dilemma," *Church History* 60 (1991): 78-80.

<sup>2</sup>George R. Knight, "Historical and Theological Introduction to the Annotated Edition," in *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine: Annotated Edition*,

of Philosophy dissertation, “Born in Zion? The Margins of Fundamentalism and the Definition of Seventh-day Adventism,” submitted to George Washington University in 2004<sup>1</sup>; and A. Leroy Moore’s unpublished book manuscript entitled “*Questions on Doctrine Revisited*.”<sup>2</sup>

Knight’s 24-page essay affords helpful historical and theological perspectives on the Adventist-evangelical conferences and the Adventist reactions, with some references to evangelical reactions. While it provides a good overview of the events and insightful analyses of the reactions, it was not the purpose of the essay to provide an exhaustive analysis of the interrelationships and debates that took place among evangelicals and Adventists.

McGraw’s dissertation represents the only comprehensive research into the relationship between Adventists and Protestants throughout Adventist history. With a focus on the definition of “cult” as it has related to Adventism, it covers the entire period of this research and beyond—to the beginning of the twenty-first century. As such, McGraw’s work contains observations and conclusions that shed significant light on this research. Though McGraw devotes a significant portion of his work to the evangelical and Adventist reactions to the Adventist-evangelical conferences and *Questions on*

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ed. George R. Knight (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003), xiii-xxxvi.

<sup>1</sup>Paul Ernest McGraw, “Born in Zion? The Margins of Fundamentalism and the Definition of Seventh-day Adventism” (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 2003).

<sup>2</sup>A. Leroy Moore, “*Questions on Doctrine Revisited*,” 8 May 1996, unpublished book manuscript, personal collection of A. Leroy Moore.

*Doctrine*, it is not his purpose to provide a detailed, exhaustive narrative of the reactions and interactions that took place between 1955 and 1971. His analysis of the reactions and interactions during this period is mostly restricted to those that help shed light on the definition of “cult” as it relates to Adventism.

Moore’s “*Questions on Doctrine Revisited*” is primarily a work of theological analysis that attempts to show areas of convergence and divergence between *Questions on Doctrine* and writings by Andreasen. Though he does provide some historical analysis throughout the document, Moore’s main interest lies in bringing about theological reconciliation between the contemporary heirs of *Questions on Doctrine* and Andreasen. Furthermore, because this work focuses on doctrinal issues debated among Adventists, it does not contain any material on evangelical reactions.

These three studies are highly relevant works that complement the present research. However, they neither attempt nor furnish an extensive analysis of the reactions to the Adventist-evangelical conferences and *Questions on Doctrine* that this research seeks to provide.

### **Methodology and Sources**

This research is a documentary/analytical study of materials produced by Adventists and evangelicals between 1955 and 1971 in reaction to the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences and *Questions on Doctrine*. Using primary sources, the study documents the various reactions of Adventists and evangelicals and provides an analysis of the reactions and resulting inter-relationships. This analysis seeks to uncover

the underlying presuppositions that yielded varying reactions, while examining the internal logic and resulting conclusions of the reactions. Secondary sources are included to supply historical background and perspective.

This research pursues relevant published and unpublished materials produced by the major respondents to the Adventist-evangelical dialogues and *Questions on Doctrine*. Special attention has been given to the reactions of: (1) evangelical authors publishing through major evangelical publishers and major evangelical periodicals, and (2) Adventist leaders who either participated in the conferences with evangelicals or reacted in significant ways to the conferences and *Questions on Doctrine*. Published sources for this research include articles in such Adventist publications as *Review and Herald*, *Signs of the Times*, *Present Truth*, *These Times*, and *Ministry*. In addition, such evangelical periodicals as *Eternity*, *Christianity Today*, *Sunday School Times*, *Our Hope*, *The King's Business*, *Christian Life*, and *Christian Truth* have been used.

A great majority of the unpublished materials were found at the Archives of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Silver Spring, Maryland; the Center for Adventist Research at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan; and the Ellen G. White Estate Branch Office/Department of Archives and Special Collections at Loma Linda University in Loma Linda, California. A limited number of unique documents were gathered from the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia. In addition, individuals with ties to the conferees of the Adventist-evangelical conferences allowed access to private collections and granted interviews.

Repeated requests were made to the Christian Research Institute (an anti-cult apologetics organization founded by Walter Martin) in Rancho Santa Margarita, California, for access to Martin's papers, but the requests were not granted. Contact was also made with the Martin family, but they did not have any materials of historical or theological significance.

### **Design of the Study**

Chapter 1 surveys (1) the evangelical views of Adventism from the nineteenth century to 1955 and (2) the Adventist views of evangelicalism from the nineteenth century to 1955.

Chapter 2 provides a summary description of the major sessions of the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1957 and overviews of the articles by Barnhouse and Martin in *Eternity* and the content of *Questions on Doctrine*.

Chapters 3 and 4 describe and analyze four major types of reactions to the Adventist-evangelical conferences, *Eternity* articles, and *Questions on Doctrine* in 1956-1971. The four were: pro-Adventist evangelicals, anti-Adventist evangelicals, pro-*Questions on Doctrine* Adventists, and anti-*Questions on Doctrine* Adventists. Chapter 3 describes and analyzes reactions appearing in evangelical publications, while chapter 4 examines and evaluates Adventist reactions, with an emphasis on the interactions between church leaders and M. L. Andreasen.

The General Conclusions section provides a summary description of the four major types of reactions and offers concluding observations and suggestions for further research.

### **Acknowledgments**

I am deeply indebted to numerous individuals and institutions whose support and guidance have contributed to the completion of this dissertation. First of all, I would like to pay tribute to my parents, Daegeuk and Young-Ja L. Nam, whose unceasing prayers and unfailing love have been the bedrock of my life. Their example of godliness and selfless service remain a source of inspiration. My father, in particular, remains a model of Christian theologian, pastor, teacher, researcher, and mentor whose footsteps I now joyfully follow.

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friend. My children, Sherwin and Ansel, have been a constant reminder of divine joy and blessings.

God has been very good to me throughout my doctoral work. God's hand has been clearly visible through these individuals, institutions, and countless others who have played different but vital roles. Therefore, this dissertation, though it bears my name, has been a communal project which I dedicate to the glory and honor of God.

## CHAPTER 1

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST EVANGELICAL CONFERENCES OF 1955-1956

Seventh-day Adventists and other Protestants have traditionally not been comfortable with one another. In fact, for most of Adventist history, each side has harbored a degree of suspicion and hostility toward the other. At various times, Protestants have branded Adventism as cultic and heretical, while Adventists have denounced Protestantism as Babylon. So, when Donald Grey Barnhouse and Walter Martin first publicly recognized Adventists as “redeemed brethren and members of the body of Christ”<sup>1</sup> in 1956, they were working to overturn more than a century of distrust that existed between the two sides. This chapter provides a brief survey of that troubled relationship prior to the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956.

#### **Protestant Views of Adventism Prior to 1920**

The newly emerging group of Sabbatarian Adventists in the 1840s and 1850s found itself in a hostile environment in the Protestant-dominated religious landscape of America. Initially, Protestant reactions to Adventists were not focused on Sabbatarian

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, “Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians? A New Look at Seventh-day Adventism,” *Eternity*, September 1956, 45.

Adventists, but were aimed at the faltering yet more visible movement of post-disappointment Millerites who formed a loose federation of congregations in 1845. A polemical work by one William H. Brewster featured his debate with Joseph Turner of *The Hope of Israel* magazine and denounced Adventism (particularly the premillennial advent faith) as a heretical system.<sup>1</sup>

It appears that most Protestants in the nineteenth century had little substantive opinion about Seventh-day Adventists. A survey of major encyclopedias of religion published by Protestants between 1850 and 1910 reveals that they either were unaware of the existence of Adventists or brushed them aside as a marginal and unimportant sect.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, it appears that those few individuals who cared to write extensively on Adventists were unanimous in their opposition.

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<sup>1</sup>William H. Brewster, *Adventism Reviewed and Its Leading Principles and Arguments Refuted* (Lowell, MA: C. L. Knapp, 1854).

<sup>2</sup>In the following works, Seventh-day Adventists are lumped together with other Adventist bodies and receive a brief description, each highlighting Sabbatarianism and the visions of Ellen White: *A Concise Cyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge: Biblical, Biographical, Geographical, Historical, Practical and Theological*, 1890 ed., s.v. "Adventists"; *A Religious Encyclopaedia: Or Dictionary of Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical Theology*, 1891 ed., s.v. "Adventists"; H. K. Carroll, "Adventists," *A Religious Encyclopedia: Or Dictionary of Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical Theology*, 3d ed. (1891), 4:2581-2582. In the following works, Adventists receive no mention except indirectly as Sabbath-keepers: *The Church Cyclopaedia: A Dictionary of Church Doctrine, History, Organization and Ritual*, 1884 ed., s.v. "Sabbatarians"; *The Dictionary of Religion*, 1887 ed., s.v. "Sabbatarian." Among the works that do *not* make any reference to Adventists are: John Henry Blunt, *Dictionary of Sects, Heresies, Ecclesiastical Parties, and Schools of Religious Thought* (London: Rivingtons, 1874); William Cathcart, ed., *The Baptist Encyclopaedia*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1883); and Charles H. H. Wright and Charles Neil, eds., *A Protestant Dictionary, Containing Articles on the History, Doctrines, and Practices of the Christian Church* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904).

Early Protestant opposition to Sabbatarian Adventism could be felt not only in the areas of eschatology or the Adventist criticism of Protestantism as Babylon, but also in the areas of the seventh-day Sabbath and Ellen White's visions—key distinguishing marks of the movement. Fodder for attacks on the seventh-day Sabbath doctrine of Adventism was plentiful in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Reaching back to the Reformation era, mainline Protestants had developed ample ammunition through their debates with Sabbatarians.

It was ironic, however, that a fresh round of attack was launched upon Adventists by T. M. Preble, a Baptist minister with a Millerite background who once espoused Sabbatarianism and wrote the article that influenced Joseph Bates, one of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism, to become a Sabbatarian. In his book, *The First-Day Sabbath*, Preble entered into a debate with J. N. Andrews, a leading Adventist scholar, and reiterated the prevailing Protestant argument that the “Jewish Sabbath” was no longer valid in the Christian dispensation. Preble asserted that Seventh-day Adventism, by stressing the Sabbath doctrine so much, belonged to the Jewish dispensation of the Old Covenant. Thus it was either an anti-evangelical movement or a non-Christian group.<sup>1</sup>

William Sheldon, writing in *Second Advent Pioneer*, a “first-day” Adventist periodical, voiced warnings to “honest people” who “have been deceived by the ‘visions’ of Ellen G. White.” He asserted that it was his Christian duty “to show that she is not a true prophetess.” Sheldon pointed out the fact that God did not reveal to Ellen White that

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<sup>1</sup>T. M. Preble, *The First-Day Sabbath: Clearly Proved by Showing That the Old Covenant, or Ten Commandments, Have Been Changed, or Made Complete, in the Christian Dispensation in Two Parts* (Buchanan, MI: W. A. C. P., 1867).

Sunday-keeping was the mark of the beast in visions preceding her acceptance of the seventh-day Sabbath. He charged that she had visions only after her acceptance of the Sabbath—essentially to validate her new conviction. While granting that White’s belief in the divine origin of her visions could be sincere, Sheldon asserted that the visions were the product of “a self-acting clairvoyant, of a religious order.” Thus the Seventh-day Adventist Church, established and shepherded by this “clairvoyant,” had to be a false, misguided movement.<sup>1</sup>

The twin offensives against Ellen White and the Sabbath were taken up repeatedly by Protestant writers on Adventism throughout the nineteenth century, while issues of Christ’s divinity, health reform, the sanctuary, the law and gospel, prophetic interpretation, and the state of the dead and other Adventist beliefs were also targeted. The writers came largely from the conservative, evangelical camp, which Adventists would otherwise have identified themselves with. One evangelical observer considered Adventists a group of “deluded people” and their theology the product of “a misapprehension and a misapplication of Scripture.”<sup>2</sup> Another labeled the Adventist system of doctrines to be “of Satan” and “not the doctrine of Christ.”<sup>3</sup> Yet another evangelical author made the categorical denunciation that books and pamphlets published by Adventists on the Sabbath and other issues contained “soul-destroying error” and

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<sup>1</sup>William Sheldon, “The Visions and Theories of the Prophetess Ellen G. White in Conflict with the Bible,” *Second Advent Pioneer*, 1 January 1867, 52.

<sup>2</sup>T. H. Woodward, *Which Is the Sabbath? Saturday or Sunday? Or a Check on Adventism* (San Francisco: H. G. Parsons, 1883), 10, 16.

<sup>3</sup>William Easton, *Seventh-Day Adventists and Atonement* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1890), 15.

“heresy.” He claimed he had “not been able to find anything Christian” in Adventist literature. To him, the Adventist Sabbath teaching was “nothing but an ignorant infatuation[,] . . . a misconception[,] . . . a misapprehension[,] . . . a sinful fanaticism[,] . . . [and] a miserable distortion of all historical facts.”<sup>1</sup>

Some accusations came from fellow Adventists (those who shared the Millerite heritage). These proved to be most acerbic in their statements. Miles Grant of the Advent Christian Church (one of two major derivatives of the Albany group) proclaimed that Ellen White contradicted the Bible and that her visions “do not come from the Lord; consequently, are of no value to the Christian, and should be rejected by all the true disciples of Jesus.”<sup>2</sup> By extension, Adventists were an unbiblical, unorthodox group that should be shunned by the Christian world. Also, A. F. Dugger of the Church of God (Seventh Day), the body of believers most closely connected to Seventh-day Adventists, labored to make a clear distinction between his church and Adventists. He charged that White’s “visions are regarded as divine revelations direct from the throne of God” and that “her testimonies settle all interpretations of the Bible,” making her the de facto standard of truth.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Frederick Mutschmann, *Sabbath or Sunday, Which?* (Allentown, PA: Church Messenger, 1890), 3, 5, 21.

<sup>2</sup>Miles Grant, *The True Sabbath: Which Day Shall We Keep? An Examination of Mrs. Ellen White’s Visions* (Boston: Advent Christian Publication Society, 1877), 104.

<sup>3</sup>A. F. Dugger, *Points of Difference between the Church of God and Seventh-day Adventists Briefly Stated*, The Bible Tract Series, vol. 5, no. 5 (Stanberry, MO: Church of God Pub. House, 1899), 4.

The most destructive and far-reaching damage inflicted upon Seventh-day Adventists came from neither conservative Protestants nor other Adventist bodies. Rather, it came from those who were once at the core of Adventist leadership—the most notorious being Dudley M. Canright. Prior to Canright, there had been other ex-Adventists, such as H. C. Blanchard and E. Hopkins, who published “exposés” of Adventism, attacking once again the Sabbath and Ellen White.<sup>1</sup> But none could match Canright in the vigor and vehemence with which he disparaged his former faith.

Converted to Adventism in 1859 and ordained to ministry five years later, Canright had been a foremost defender and promoter of the Adventist faith. He was “a forceful preacher and a polemic writer of considerable ability. He took a prominent part in church administration and for two years was a member of the [three-member] General Conference Committee.”<sup>2</sup> However, in February 1887 he left the Adventist church after a series of problems associated with personal faith, interpersonal relationships, and loss of belief in certain distinctive doctrines.

After leaving the church, Canright published bitter diatribes against Adventism among which three have been the mostly widely distributed—*Seventh-Day Adventism*

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<sup>1</sup>H. C. Blanchard, *The Testimonies of Mrs. E. G. White Compared with the Bible* (Marion, IA: Advent and Sabbath Advocate, 1877); E. Hopkins, *The Law and Sabbath; the Gospel and Lord's Day: Why I Quit Keeping the Jewish Sabbath* (Mount Morris, IL: Brethren's Publishing, 1885).

<sup>2</sup>*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1996 ed., s.v. “Canright, Dudley Marvin (1840-1919).”



*Renounced*,<sup>1</sup> *The Lord's Day*,<sup>2</sup> and *Life of Mrs. E. G. White*.<sup>3</sup> In these works Canright stated that he rejected Adventism in toto and branded it as a system of error and a “yoke of bondage” which “leads to infidelity.” He blamed his childish naïveté—a time when he had “no knowledge of the Bible, or history, or of other churches”—as the reason for joining the Adventist church at age nineteen.<sup>4</sup>

Canright’s books focused their attacks on the issues of the binding nature of the Ten Commandments (particularly the Sabbath commandment) and Ellen White’s ministry. After giving the Sabbath issue an extensive treatment in *Seventh-Day Adventism Renounced*, he devoted an entire book to the question in *The Lord's Day*. Contradicting all his earlier work as an Adventist leader, Canright argued forcefully that the decalogue was no longer valid and that Sabbath-keeping was not to be required of Christians.

Canright’s book on Ellen White is “a bitter and sometimes sarcastic attack designed to discredit Mrs. White’s claims to be a special messenger from God.” He charged her with “(1) being a ‘plagiarist,’ (2) suppressing some of her earlier writings, (3)

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<sup>1</sup>D. M. Canright, *Seventh-Day Adventism Renounced: After an Experience of Twenty-eight Years* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1889).

<sup>2</sup>D. M. Canright, *The Lord's Day from Neither Catholics Nor Pagans: An Answer to Seventh-day Adventism on This Subject* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1915).

<sup>3</sup>D. M. Canright, *Life of Mrs. E. G. White, Seventh-day Adventist Prophet: Her False Claims Refuted* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1919). This book was published posthumously in the same year that he died.

<sup>4</sup>Canright, *Seventh-Day Adventism Renounced*, 59, 64, 52.

using ‘her gift’ to profit financially, (4) yielding to human influences, (5) making false prophecies, and (6) teaching incorrect doctrines. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Needless to say, these assaults on Adventism, having been written by a “prominent minister and writer of that faith,”<sup>2</sup> quickly became “the chief weapon in evangelical Protestantism’s anti-Adventist arsenal”<sup>3</sup> and did much to promote the cultic image that Protestants had of Adventists during the decades that followed.

### **Adventist Views of Protestantism Prior to 1920**

The nineteenth-century view of Protestantism held by Adventists was decidedly influenced by the Millerite movement of the 1840s. William Miller considered the Protestant churches of his time to be the Laodicean church depicted in Revelation 3—full of “pomp and circumstance,” but destitute of spiritual power.<sup>4</sup> In 1843, when Millerites were being expelled in large numbers from mainline Protestant churches for their belief in Jesus’ second coming within a year’s time, Charles Fitch, a noted Millerite preacher, began identifying Protestantism with the eschatological Babylon of Revelation 14:8 and 18:1-5, a designation previously reserved for Roman Catholicism. In a stirring sermon entitled “‘Come Out of Her, My People,’” Fitch first equated Babylon with the Antichrist,

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<sup>1</sup>R. W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1979), 470.

<sup>2</sup>Canright, *Seventh-Day Adventism Renounced*, i.

<sup>3</sup>Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 469.

<sup>4</sup>William Miller, *Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ about the Year A.D. 1843: Exhibited in a Course of Lectures* (Troy, [MI]: Kemble & Hooper, 1836), 124, 125.

then asserted that anyone who opposes the “PERSONAL REIGN of Jesus Christ over this world on David’s throne, is ANTI-CHRIST.” Those who are in “the professed Christian world,” he continued, “Catholic and Protestant, are Antichrist.” Therefore, it was only logical for Fitch to issue the following appeal: “If you are a Christian, *come out of Babylon!* If you intend to be found a Christian when Christ appears [in less than a year], *come out of Babylon,* and come out NOW!”<sup>1</sup>

Initially, not all Millerites embraced Fitch’s radical attitude toward Protestantism or his call for separation from established churches. However, by “late 1843 and early 1844 it had become one of Millerism’s central features”<sup>2</sup> as the interpretation of the second angel’s message of Revelation 14.<sup>3</sup>

In the years following the Great Disappointment, the Millerite condemnation of and calls for separation from Protestant churches were taken up anew by Sabbatarian Adventists. These incipient Seventh-day Adventists regarded “the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6-12 as foundational to their message and mission,”<sup>4</sup> and in their

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<sup>1</sup>C. Fitch, “*Come Out of Her, My People,*” *A Sermon* (Rochester, NY: J. V. Himes, 1843), 5, 15, 19.

<sup>2</sup>George R. Knight, *Millennial Fever and the End of the World: A Study of Millerite Adventism* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1993), 157. For further discussions on this topic, see P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 78-84; Knight, *Millennial Fever*, 141-158; and Alberto Timm, “The Sanctuary and the Three Angels’ Messages, 1844-1863: Integrating Factors in the Development of Seventh-day Adventist Doctrines” (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1995), 56-62.

<sup>3</sup>See Fitch, “*Come Out of Her, My People,*” 3, 4; and J. Litch, *The Probability of the Second Coming of Christ about A.D. 1843* (Boston: David H. Ela, 1838), 186.

<sup>4</sup>Timm, “The Sanctuary and the Three Angels’ Messages, 1844-1863,” 119.

interpretation of the second angel's message, they "were in line with those Millerites who equated the fall of Babylon of Revelation 14:8 with the apostasy of the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches."<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, in their interpretation of the third angel's message, Sabbatarian Adventists of the 1840s saw themselves as the end-time remnant who possessed the "seal of the living God" (Rev 7:2) through observance of the seventh-day Sabbath and eschewing the "mark" of the beast (Rev 14:9), i.e., Sunday observance.<sup>2</sup> This interpretation naturally extended to the view that Sunday keepers will receive the "wrath of God" described in Revelation 14:10, which was identified as the seven plagues of Revelation 16.<sup>3</sup> This meant that even those Adventists who left Babylon by separating themselves from the organized churches of Catholicism and Protestantism could find themselves under God's end-time wrath if they refused the seventh-day Sabbath. Hence, the call to "come out of Babylon" was in actuality a call to join the ranks of Sabbatarian Adventists—God's end-time remnant. Thus it is easy to see how Sabbatarian Adventists found themselves under the ill grace of both the mainline Protestant churches and other ex-Millerite churches.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 123; J. White, "Watchman, What of the Night?" *Day-Star*, 20 September 1845, 26; Joseph Bates, *Second Advent Way Marks and High Heaps, or a Connected View, of the Fulfillment of Prophecy, by God's Peculiar People, from the Year 1840 to 1847* (New Bedford, [MA]: Benjamin Lindsey, 1847), 20, 21.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Bates, *A Vindication of the Seventh-day Sabbath, and the Commandments of God: With a Further History of God's Peculiar People, from 1847 to 1848* (New Bedford, [MA]: Benjamin Lindsey, 1848), 78; Editorial, "The Sabbath a Perpetual Weekly Memorial," *Present Truth*, July 1849, 2, 3.

<sup>3</sup>G. W. Holt, "Letter from Bro. Holt," *Present Truth*, March 1850, 64; J. White, *The Third Angel's Message* [Oswego, NY: James White, 1850], 14, 15.

In the 1850s and 1860s, Adventists continued to view Protestants from within the framework of the three angels' messages. In 1851, J. N. Andrews, one of Adventism's pioneer scholars, reiterated the position that "all corrupt Christianity"—i.e., Roman Catholicism and apostate Protestantism—is part of Babylon.<sup>1</sup> Three years later, Andrews returned to the topic and maintained that "the great body of Protestant churches" belonged to the Babylon of Revelation 14 and 18.<sup>2</sup>

James White, the foremost leader of the nascent Seventh-day Adventist Church, writing in 1859, upheld what had become the established Adventist position by identifying Babylon as "all corrupt Christianity," including apostate Protestantism. However, in the same article he introduced the idea of a two-phase fall of Babylon. He interpreted the fall depicted in Revelation 14:8 as "in the past," but the fall described in Revelation 18:1-4 as continuing from the present to the future.<sup>3</sup> Under this interpretation, White saw the 1840s as "only the beginning of confusion"<sup>4</sup> which would progress until the second advent. Thus the complete fall of Babylon was still in the future.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, White and other Adventist writers continued to issue urgent calls to other

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<sup>1</sup>J. N. Andrews, "Thoughts on Revelation xiii and xiv," *Review and Herald*, 19 May 1851, 81; [idem], "Three Angels of Rev. xiv," *Review and Herald*, 2 September 1851, 21.

<sup>2</sup>J. N. Andrews, "What Is Babylon?" *Review and Herald*, 21 February 1854, 36. See also, idem, "Three Angels of Rev. xiv, 6-12," *Review and Herald*, 20 February 1855, 178; idem, "Three Angels of Rev. xiv, 6-12," *Review and Herald*, 6 March 1855, 186.

<sup>3</sup>J. White, "Babylon," *Review and Herald*, 10 March 1859, 122, 123.

<sup>4</sup>George R. Knight, *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 78.

<sup>5</sup>See *ibid.*, 77-81, for further discussions on this issue.

Protestants to come out of Babylon which to them was “all the false and corrupt systems of Christianity,” including the “Protestant churches.”<sup>1</sup>

Even the spiritual revival that was taking place in Protestant churches in the late 1850s was suspect.<sup>2</sup> It was considered false, “because it did not lead the church back to the Bible truth as understood by the Sabbatarians.”<sup>3</sup> The Protestant failure to accept a unique cluster of doctrines known by Adventists as the “present truth”—such as the seventh-day Sabbath, the premillennial return of Christ, the two-phase heavenly ministry of Christ, and the conditional immortality of the human soul—continued to serve as the reason for denouncing Protestant churches as part of Babylon.

Perhaps the work that most served to cement the Adventist attitude toward Protestants was Uriah Smith’s widely circulated commentary on Revelation, first issued in 1865.<sup>4</sup> Keeping in line with the interpretations of his Adventist contemporaries, Smith in his commentary on Revelation 14:8 pointed out that Babylon is represented by “a great

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<sup>1</sup>J. White, *Life Incidents, in Connection with the Great Advent Movement, as Illustrated by the Three Angels of Revelation Xiv* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1868), 231.

<sup>2</sup>R. F. C[ottrell], “The Present ‘Revivals’ in Babylon,” *Review and Herald*, 13 May 1858, 206; J. W[hite], “Babylon,” *Review and Herald*, 10 March 1859, 122; [Uriah Smith], “The Recent Revivals,” *Review and Herald*, 21 April 1859, 172, 173.

<sup>3</sup>Timm, “The Sanctuary and the Three Angels’ Messages, 1844-1863,” 313.

<sup>4</sup>Uriah Smith, *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1865). This book was followed by *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Daniel* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1873). The two books were later combined into one volume as *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Daniel and the Revelation: Being an Exposition, Text by Text, of These Important Portions of the Holy Scriptures* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1882).

mass of confused and corrupted Christianity.” He contended that the fall of that Babylon was “caused by rejecting the vivifying truths of the first message, or great Advent proclamation.”<sup>1</sup> Though he did *not* single out “Protestantism,” but chose to refer to “confused and corrupted Christianity,” the reader can sense Smith placing the greatest share of the blame upon Protestants. After all, it was Protestants, not Catholics, who received overwhelming exposure to the Millerite advent message, pondered upon the veracity of the message, and rejected the message and its bearers in the 1840s. When the message of truth was delivered to them, Smith wrote, they clung to errors and led others also away from the truth. Hence, the Spirit of God left, and Babylon fell.<sup>2</sup>

In 1882, Smith merged his individual commentaries on Daniel and Revelation into one volume and made some revisions to each part. In this volume, his indictment of Protestantism is abundantly clear. He began by listing “Paganism, Catholicism, and backslidden Protestantism” as three components of spiritual Babylon. Then he stated that “the burden of the proclamation of the three messages is found” in the “last-named,” i.e., backslidden Protestantism.<sup>3</sup> Because Protestants failed to accept the advent message and continued their propagation of the “false doctrines and pernicious errors” of paganism and papalism,<sup>4</sup> Smith had no choice but to view them also as part of Babylon, which had fallen.

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation*, 233.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Smith, *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Daniel and the Revelation*, 706.

<sup>4</sup>Smith, *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation*, 233.

This attitude toward Protestantism would remain as the norm in the Seventh-day Adventist Church throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century. Though the rhetorical emphasis shifted subtly from “Babylon has fallen” to “Babylon will fall” at the very end of time, Adventists remained unequivocal that Protestantism had long since lost its protest and that all true Christians—i.e., God’s end-time remnant—will eventually accept the “present truth” centered on the seventh-day Sabbath and accept the Adventist faith.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, Protestantism in the eyes of Adventists was a great apostasy in progress.

### **Protestant Views of Adventism from 1920 to 1955**

American Protestantism was in great turmoil in the 1920s. Liberal, modernist Protestants who had moved away from the literal, historical interpretation of the Bible were pitted against militant fundamentalists who strove to uphold such interpretation.<sup>2</sup> In their struggle to maintain orthodox, biblical Christianity, fundamentalists made systematic efforts to distinguish orthodox Christian groups from those that were heterodox or heretical. To most fundamentalist anti-cult writers, Seventh-day Adventism belonged in the category of Christian heresy and cult.

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<sup>1</sup>See, e.g., George I. Butler, “Fall of Babylon,” *Review and Herald*, 22 November 1887, 9, 10; idem, “Has There Been a Moral Fall of the Churches?” *Review and Herald*, 15 December 1891, 776-779; 22 December 1891, 792, 793; and L. A. Smith, “Babylon’s Fall; and the Church’s Purification,” *Review and Herald*, 12 November 1901, 737.

<sup>2</sup>A more in-depth treatment of the Protestant fundamentalist movement in relation to Adventism can be found on pp. 28-35 of this study.



## William C. Irvine

According to J. Gordon Melton, a specialist on Christian sects and cults, William C. Irvine's 1917 book, *Timely Warnings*,<sup>1</sup> was "the first of the modern counter-cult books." This book was written to provide an encyclopedic catalogue of more than twenty prevailing "heresies" of the day, including British-Israelism, Christian Science, evolutionism, Jehovah's Witnesses, modernism, Mormonism, Roman Catholicism, Theosophy, and Seventh-day Adventism.<sup>2</sup>

Irvine's chapter on Adventism begins with scathing personal attacks on Ellen White whom he saw as the foundation of Adventism. From the outset, his agenda was to knock Ellen White down, which he hoped would lead to the discrediting of Adventism. Referring to the statements allegedly made by Drs. Russell and Fairfield of the Battle Creek Sanitarium and Dudley M. Canright, Irvine called White a "hysterical, neurotic woman founder" of the Adventist church. He also referred to the charges of plagiarism already made by Canright. Then Irvine concluded that White, far from being either a prophetess or a messenger of God, was a fraud and a lunatic. Having its basis on such a personage, he wrote, Adventism could not be a healthy manifestation of God's providence: "In religious matters at least, one expects to find the source for new light coming from a more lofty and spiritual plane."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>William C. Irvine, *Timely Warnings* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1917).

<sup>2</sup>J. Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults in America* (New York: Garland, 1992), 335.

<sup>3</sup>Irvine, *Timely Warnings*, 155.

Irvine then cited five major points of “heresy” in Adventism. They were Adventist teachings concerning: Christ’s atonement on the cross, the identity of Azazel, the nature of Christ, the state of the dead, and the Sabbath. He faulted Adventists for teaching that Christ’s atoning work on the cross was not final and saw the investigative judgment as robbing the completeness of Christ’s atonement on the cross. As for Azazel, if it represents Satan, asked Irvine, does this mean he is the sin-bearer, a co-redeemer of humanity with Christ? He considered the thought deplorable. Then he pulled a quotation from the 1915 edition of *Bible Readings for the Home Circle* which stated: “In His humanity Christ partook of our sinful, fallen nature.”<sup>1</sup> This view, which Irvine interpreted as Christ having sin in his very human makeup, was considered an unorthodox, heretical view. He contended that any position which deviated from the doctrine that Christ took a sinless, pre-fall nature (as understood by fundamentalist orthodoxy) was sufficient in itself to qualify a group as a cult. Irvine then presented arguments that had been raised in the nineteenth century against the Adventist doctrines of conditional immortality, the state of the dead, and the Sabbath.

This general survey of the cults and heresies from the fundamentalist perspective stood as a definitive volume on the subject for two decades. Over time, the book took another title, *Heresies Exposed*, and went through some ten editions and twenty-one

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<sup>1</sup>*Bible Readings for the Home Circle* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915), 115.

printings by 1955,<sup>1</sup> bearing serious charges against Adventism to millions in the English-speaking world.

### Jan Karel Van Baalen

Jan Karel Van Baalen was the next-generation anti-cult specialist from the fundamentalist world. He chose to include Adventism in his 1938 book, *The Chaos of Cults*.<sup>2</sup> Much like Irvine's work, this book was a catalogue of heretical movements, though it included only ten. Irvine and Van Baalen's works, along with Canright's work from an earlier era, would firmly establish Adventism as a cult in the minds of fundamentalists and emerging evangelicals in the 1920s through the 1950s.

Van Baalen's appraisal of Adventism was hostile from the outset: "Seventh-Day [*sic*] Adventism was truly born as 'the result of a predicament.'"<sup>3</sup> He argued that Adventism was created to make up for the disastrous time-setting effort by the Millerite movement. Throughout the book, a cynical and antagonistic tone colors his writing. Adventism is the Devil's "bait," which later reveals its "claws" to capture the less learned among Christians.

Van Baalen's attacks on Ellen White were basically a reiteration of Irvine's (and traditional) accusations, and the same was true of his evaluation of the doctrinal

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<sup>1</sup>William C. Irvine, ed., *Heresies Exposed: A Brief Critical Examination in the Light of the Holy Scriptures of Some of the Prevailing Heresies and False Teachings of Today*, 4th ed. (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1955).

<sup>2</sup>Jan Karel Van Baalen, *The Chaos of Cults: A Study of Present-Day Isms* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1938).

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 120.

distinctives of Adventism. To Irvine's list of the doctrinal errors of Adventism, he added the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked and the interpretation of the second beast in Revelation 13 as the United States, which he saw as a "disrespectful reference to Uncle Sam as a beast." In light of this latter point, Van Baalen suggested that Adventism was a politically and religiously "aggressive system."<sup>1</sup>

Van Baalen also charged Adventists with dishonesty and self-righteousness in the way they related to other Christians. He faulted Adventists for not presenting the world with a clear, one-volume statement of their beliefs and explained that "Adventists hide their errors in a mass of unobjectionable material."<sup>2</sup> Adventists, he said, are not forthcoming about their identity in public evangelism and confuse others by not revealing which of their doctrines are different from other evangelical churches. He found this highly subversive and unchristian.<sup>3</sup> Another charge that Van Baalen brought against Adventists concerned their attitude toward other Christians. Referring to the Adventist self-understanding as being a "prophetic movement" and the "remnant people," he took Adventism to be saying: "We alone have the truth."<sup>4</sup>

The 1948 edition of this book showed a significant addition in the author's treatment of Adventism. Van Baalen stated that he had had some contact with Adventist leaders, especially with LeRoy Edwin Froom, and publicly confronted Froom for the lack

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 126.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 121.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 125.

of reply on certain important questions dealing with Adventist peculiarities. He asked a series of questions:

- (1) Is it S.D.A. teaching that there is no entrance into heaven for those who have disagreed with your “church” to the extent of refusing to observe the sabbath day on Saturday? And in connection with this, Do I understand the S.D.A. position correctly when I conclude that man is redeemed in part by the work of Christ, and partly also by observing the S.D.A. sabbath day?
- (2) Does your own wording in the *Certificate of Baptism with Baptismal Vow*, in which the S.D.A. Church is called “the church of the remnant” mean that all other churches are outside the pale of the invisible or universal Church of Christ?
- (3) Do you approve “Evangelist” Venden’s words that when a man has refused to bow before Mrs. White’s “heavenly vision” he has rejected the Christ with pierced hands?
- (4) Do you approve of the statement of the S.D.A. publication *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*, 1915 ed., p. 115: “In his humanity Christ partook of our sinful, fallen nature?”<sup>1</sup>

Van Baalen did not indicate in future editions whether he received satisfactory answers to these questions. But the significance of these questions is perhaps not what they were about, but that Van Baalen publicly showed willingness to dialogue and to present Adventism in a more objective light. This was clearly a shift from the unilateral attacks based more on other critics of Adventism than on the statements of the believers themselves.

Though his questions in the preface apparently remained unanswered, Van Baalen’s presentation in the 1948 edition was already far less inflammatory toward Adventism than previous editions. First, he accepted F. D. Nichol’s *Midnight Cry*<sup>2</sup> as

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<sup>1</sup>Jan Karel Van Baalen, *The Chaos of Cults*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 9, 10.

<sup>2</sup>Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry: A Defense of the Character and Conduct of William Miller and the Millerites, Who Mistakenly Believed That the Second Coming of Christ Would Take Place in the Year 1844* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1944).

“scholarly and sober” and reflected Nichol’s research by rewriting his segment on the history of Millerism and early Adventism. Also, the highly cynical characterizations of Ellen White that adorned previous editions were completely dropped.<sup>1</sup>

Many instances can be seen of Van Baalen’s effort to portray Adventism according to what the denomination says it believes. In the doctrinal section, Van Baalen retained much of the same doctrinal disagreements. It is noteworthy, however, that references to the “claws” of Adventism were removed, and the devil was no longer pictured as being fond of using Adventism as a “bait.” Van Baalen even showed willingness to grant the possibility that Azazel could represent Satan, though he felt personally that this interpretation could easily do a “gross injustice” to “Christ’s saving work.” Further, he praised the Adventist church for its work in health and education, its emphases on the sanctity of the home, family, and marriage, its opposition to worldliness, and its adherence to many cardinal Christian doctrines.<sup>2</sup>

Then, Van Baalen asked “why this chapter should be included in a book dealing with Isms of a so much more serious nature?” He gave several reasons. First, he declared that Adventists deserve to be attacked for their denunciation of Protestantism. He argued in an almost-juvenile manner that Adventists “are asking for it. . . . *They* are the ones who began the attack upon all other churches.”<sup>3</sup> Obviously, he was referring here to the traditional Adventist view of Protestantism as joining the end-time religious

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<sup>1</sup>Van Baalen, *The Chaos of Cults*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., 164-167.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 174-176, 183.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 184. Emphasis in the original.

apostasy to form Babylon. Then, in a remarkable gesture, Van Baalen offered to mute his criticism of Sabbath-keeping if Adventism would remain “satisfied to hold to its own peculiar view of the sabbath [*sic*]” and not denounce other Sunday-keeping Christians as headed to hell. The author cited “the sin of schism” as the second reason. He contended that “until recently, the Christian church has always had two things on which all agreed: the Book and the Day. S.D.A. wants to change all that.”<sup>1</sup>

In the final analysis, Van Baalen’s criticisms of Adventism centered on the way the Sabbath is perceived in relation to salvation and on how Adventists see themselves in relation to other Christians. He noted that unless Adventists made it clear that the Sabbath is not the standard by which one is judged for salvation and abandoned the idea that it alone constitutes the remnant church, they would continue to be classified as a non-Christian cult.<sup>2</sup>

#### Other Negative Assessments

During the following decade, many of the same charges were repeated by various writers who placed Adventism in the cult category. J. Oswald Sanders called Adventism a religion that does not provide “the true liberty of the Gospel” and considered it a manifestation of “the recrudescence of first-century Judaism.” He also attacked Adventist

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 186, 184, 185.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 184-189.

public evangelists for taking “pains to conceal their peculiar doctrines. . . . Such subtlety and duplicity is characteristic of the whole of the Adventist movement.”<sup>1</sup>

Charges of legalism were echoed by Horton Davies who lumped Adventism together with the Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Anglo-Israel movement, and Mormonism as “Judaistic.”<sup>2</sup> F. E. Mayer contended that “the material principle of their [Adventists’] theology is legalism,”<sup>3</sup> while Arnold Black Rhodes charged that Adventism equaled “arbitrary legalism.”<sup>4</sup>

Criticism of legalism was usually accompanied by that of exclusiveness and “inflexible dogmatism.”<sup>5</sup> Davies accused Adventists of lacking “charity which should characterize . . . a Christian company” and of castigating all other churches that celebrate Sunday. Therefore, he warned that Adventism should not be confused with “the historic Christian Churches,” although Adventism had the “tendency to insinuate itself by glossing over the differences between its tenets and those of” evangelical Protestants.<sup>6</sup> Rhodes also warned that while an examination of the formal expressions of Adventism

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<sup>1</sup>J. Oswald Sanders, *Heresies: Ancient and Modern* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1948), 63, 65.

<sup>2</sup>Horton Davies, *Christian Deviations* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), 10.

<sup>3</sup>F. E. Mayer, *The Religious Bodies of America* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1956), 436.

<sup>4</sup>Arnold Black Rhodes, *The Church Faces the Isms* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), 78. Though published in 1958, it appears that the author seems oblivious to the dialogues that had been going on between Adventists and evangelicals. I, therefore, have included Rhodes’s book in this background chapter rather in the next, which deals with evangelical reactions to the dialogues.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>6</sup>Davies, *Christian Deviations*, 58, 57.



may show harmony with common Protestant doctrines, “this does not mean that they characteristically accept a place as an organic part of the modern body of Protestant denominations.”<sup>1</sup>

#### Some Positive Assessments

In spite of the overwhelming number of theologians and religious historians who attacked Seventh-day Adventism as a non-Christian cult during the first half of the twentieth century, there were a few who saw the church under a different light. Though neither significant nor convincing enough in their treatment of Adventism to make an impact on the scholarship or prevailing perceptions, this small group of scholars came to consider Adventism to be part of Christian orthodoxy.

Initially, Elmer T. Clark did not view Adventism as a healthy, Christian church. In his 1937 book, *The Small Sects in America*, he categorized Adventism as a “pessimistic sect,” which saw “no good in the world and no hope of improvement” because of its belief in “the imminent end of the present world-order by means of a cosmic catastrophe.” He further described Adventism in a wry, sarcastic manner, classifying its adherents as those who rely on unharmonious proof-texts, who call Sunday-observers “the pope’s Sunday-keepers and God’s Sabbath-breakers,” and who consider themselves as the only “prepared people” for the second coming. He also stated

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<sup>1</sup>Rhodes, *The Church Faces the Isms*, 80.

categorically that the three angels' message, presented by Adventists, "is not the message of evangelical Christianity."<sup>1</sup>

However, when his 1949 edition came out, Clark had a different story to tell concerning Adventists. In this edition, he made several insertions and deletions to the earlier edition, which put Adventism in a totally different light. The most significant insertion was:

It [Seventh-day Adventism] is an *evangelical* and *orthodox* group and accepts the principles of Protestant theology, being distinctive only in the doctrine of the second advent, in observing Saturday as the scriptural Sabbath, and in acknowledging the inspiration of Mrs. White.<sup>2</sup>

His previously sarcastic tone is replaced by a more objective and even sympathetic voice of approval. In the critical passage on the three angels' message, his earlier categorical claim that it "is not the message of evangelical Christianity" is deleted and the context is re-phrased to read: "This 'gospel of the kingdom' (the remnant message) [three angels' message] is that of the imminent second advent of Jesus Christ. . . ."<sup>3</sup> Although he is mute as to the reasons that led to his change in assessment, Clark's new appraisal, paralleling Van Baalen's softening of position, signaled rumblings of a new attitude forming among Protestants toward Adventists.

A similar but not-so-dramatic shift can be noted in Frank S. Mead's work. In his 1951 edition of *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, he classified

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<sup>1</sup>Elmer T. Clark, *The Small Sects in America* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1937), 27, 54, 55.

<sup>2</sup>Elmer T. Clark, *The Small Sects in America*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1949), 41. Emphasis added.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 42.

Adventists as “ultraconservative,”<sup>1</sup> possibly making a derogatory connection to fundamentalism.<sup>2</sup> But he modified his evaluation five years later by calling them “conservative evangelicals,” squarely in line with other Protestants.<sup>3</sup>

Also significant was E. Schuyler English’s 1956 “recantation” of some of the accusations that he had made against Adventism four years earlier. As the editor of *Our Hope*, an evangelical monthly, English had written a short but sharp criticism of Adventism in his January 1952 editorial. He charged that the heretical teachings of Adventists include: (1) the sinful, fallen humanity of Jesus (citing a pre-1949 edition of *Bible Readings*); (2) Christ’s atonement on the cross as incomplete; (3) Satan, not Christ, as the final sin-bearer; (4) the final annihilation of the wicked; and (5) the 144,000 as being composed exclusively of Adventists. Based on these observations, English concluded that the Adventist church was “the synagogue of Satan” and its teachings “soul-destroying error.”<sup>4</sup> Three years later, he added another charge that Adventists denied Christ’s full divinity.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Frank S. Mead, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951), 16.

<sup>2</sup>By the 1950s, fundamentalism had long gone out of favor with moderate conservatives. “Evangelicalism,” which rose out of the ashes of fundamentalism, had become the flagship movement for moderate conservatives.

<sup>3</sup>Frank S. Mead, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1956), 17.

<sup>4</sup>E. Schuyler English, “Seventh Day Adventism,” *Our Hope*, January 1952, 393-395.

<sup>5</sup>E. Schuyler English, “Report on Church Giving,” *Our Hope*, January 1955, 409, 410.

In February 1956, however, English issued a statement of regret entitled “To Rectify a Wrong.” In this editorial, he admitted that he had been “in error” in making false accusations against Adventism. Quoting extensively from “several months’ correspondence with Dr. L. E. Froom,” English confirmed that Adventists believed indeed in the full divinity and sinless humanity of Christ and the complete atonement on the cross. He accepted Froom’s explanation that Adventists did not believe in the 144,000 as consisting exclusively of Adventists. English went on to apologize for “grave misstatements” and commended Adventists’ “adherence to the Scriptures as to the Deity of our Lord and His atoning sacrifice of Himself for sin.”<sup>1</sup> Though in this editorial he remained mute as to whether the Adventist church was still a cult and “the synagogue of Satan,” English would in just a few months’ time become a staunch supporter of Martin and Barnhouse in their campaign to accept Adventism as Christian.

The publication of *The American Church of the Protestant Heritage* in 1953, edited by Vergilius Ferm, was another important step for Adventists in seeing positive appraisals of their church circulated among Protestants. Ferm invited leaders of different Protestant denominations to write an introduction to their faith and work. LeRoy Edwin Froom was asked to write about Adventists. The result, of course, was a very positive portrayal of Adventism in which Froom described Adventists as belonging “to the conservative Evangelical wing of Protestantism.”<sup>2</sup> Though what Froom stated was significant, it was perhaps more important for Adventists at that time just to be included

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<sup>1</sup>E. Schuyler English, “To Rectify a Wrong,” *Our Hope*, February 1956, 457-459.

<sup>2</sup>LeRoy Edwin Froom, “Seventh-day Adventists,” in *The American Church of the Protestant Heritage*, ed. Vergilius Ferm (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953), 378.

in such a catalogue of Protestant churches (Mormons, Christian Science, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the like were not included), rather than in catalogues of cults.

Unfortunately for Adventists, the case of Froom writing in Ferm's volume was a rare exception. For the time being, they had to be content to have their church dropped from anti-cult writings such as in Charles Braden's investigation into modern American cults. Braden included such "unpopular" groups as the Christian Scientists, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Theosophy, Spiritualism, and numerous other minority religious groups, but excluded Adventism from the list.<sup>1</sup>

In summary, Seventh-day Adventism was viewed with suspicion and considered a cult and a heretical movement by most conservative Christians during the first half of the twentieth century. Respected anti-cult writers such as William Irvine and Jan Karel Van Baalen, who were informed particularly by D. M. Canright, included Adventism in their catalogues of cults and relentlessly criticized major distinctive teachings of the church as unbiblical and heretical. In the late 1940s and early 1950s there was some reluctant softening of attitudes toward Adventists as past misrepresentations by Protestant writers came to light. A few observers even suggested that Adventists might be part of the Christian world, but their voices were drowned out by the chorus of criticisms leveled against Adventism. It would take the forceful and important voices of Donald Grey Barnhouse and his associate Walter Martin in 1956 to challenge the antagonistic views that Protestants held toward Adventists.

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Samuel Braden, *These Also Believe: A Study of Modern American Cults and Minority Religious Movements* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1949).

### Adventist Views of Protestantism from 1920 to 1955

During the first part of the twentieth century, the traditional Adventist identification of Protestantism as a soon-to-be apostate Babylon power remained firm in the denominational literature. Just a cursory look at expositions on the book of Revelation published during this period reveals an unwavering commitment to the established interpretation.<sup>1</sup> However, faced with demands of the new era in American life (the aftermath of World War I, the “Roaring Twenties,” the Great Depression, World War II, etc.), Adventists in the 1920 to 1955 era began to shift their attitudes toward Protestantism, or at least certain segments of it. These new attitudes surfaced particularly in their reactions to Protestant fundamentalism and in the rise of a new Adventist apologetics.

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<sup>1</sup>Stephen N. Haskell, *The Story of the Seer of Patmos* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1905); A. W. Anderson, *The World's Finale, a Brief Exposition of the Prophecies of the Seven Churches, the Seven Seals, and the Seven Trumpets of Revelation* (Warburton, Australia: Signs Publishing, 1912); H. A. Washburn, *Outline Lessons in Prophetic History* (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Education Dept., 1912); William Henry Wakeham, *Outline Lessons on the Books of Daniel and the Revelation* (Berrien Springs, MI: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Education Dept., 1926); A. W. Anderson, *Some Further Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation: To Be Read in Conjunction with Daniel and the Revelation by Uriah Smith* (Warburton, Australia: Signs Publishing, 1928); Charles Theodore Everson, *The Mark of the Beast* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1928); Francis D. Nichol, *God's Challenge to Modern Apostasy: A Study of the Three Angels' Messages and the Sabbath in the Light of the Modern Apostasy in Christendom. An Endeavor to Show That Revelation 14 Presents the Most Timely Message for the World Today* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1935); Cora Martin, *World History in Prophetic Outline: The Books of Daniel and Revelation with Questions and Necessary Explanations* (Madison, TN: Beacon Press, 1941); Merlin L. Neff, *Victory out of Chaos: Messages from the Book of Revelation for Today* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press 1942); Louis F. Were, *The Certainty of the Third Angel's Message: Proved by Important Principles of Prophetic Interpretation* ([Melbourne]: n.p., 1945); DeWitt S. Osgood, *Syllabus of Revelation: A Verse by Verse Study of the Apocalypse* (n.p., 1946).

## Reactions to Fundamentalism

The modernist-fundamentalist controversy in American Protestantism in the 1920s brought about an interesting twist to the antagonistic attitude that Adventists had held toward Protestants. Alarmed by the wave of liberal, modernist Christianity that had been sweeping across churches and seminaries in the United States from the second half of the nineteenth century, a self-consciously “fundamentalist” movement arose in American Protestantism in the early part of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> Though not without historical forebears, this movement was the first to embrace the name “fundamentalist” for itself, one which derived from a series of tracts entitled *The Fundamentals*, which were published in the United States between 1910 and 1915.<sup>2</sup>

The struggle between fundamentalism and modernism intensified in the 1920s over issues of evolutionism and higher criticism. Against the modernist reading of the Bible, which made much of it mythology and unreliable history, fundamentalists took up the battle cry of the sixteenth-century Reformation, *sola Scriptura*, as their own. *The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* describes well the beliefs and practices of fundamentalism:

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<sup>1</sup>For scholarly treatments on fundamentalism, see George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); idem, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991); Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism: 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Stewart G. Cole, *The History of Fundamentalism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1931); George W. Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1973); Louis Gasper, *The Fundamentalist Movement, 1930-1956* (The Hague: Mouton, 1963).

<sup>2</sup>Michael H. Blanco, “The Hermeneutics of *The Fundamentals*” (Ph.D. thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 1990), 12-17.

It is characterized by belief in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, miracles, a supernatural creation, the virgin birth, a substitutionary atonement, the bodily resurrection, and the literal second advent of Christ. To Fundamentalists, the Bible is literally true, and historically and theologically inerrant in its original autographs. Men and women are sinners who can be “saved” by a transforming new birth, and after which they must live lives of sobriety and righteousness characterized by modest dress, wholesome entertainment, abstinence from alcoholic beverages and (often) tobacco, and by regular prayer, Bible study, and militant missionary work.<sup>1</sup>

Adventists were quick to discover similarities between fundamentalist teachings and theirs, and became enamored with fundamentalism. Each of their reports on the Conference on Christian Fundamentals (the most important gathering of fundamentalists in the 1910s and 1920s) was very positive and approving in tone, though a few points of disagreement were pointed out (such as the fundamentalist belief in eternal punishment of the wicked and in the seventh-day Sabbath as a non-binding day).<sup>2</sup> One report in *Signs of the Times* on the third conference regarded fundamentalists as “doing a great work for God in the earth, and . . . helping to stay the time of great apostasy and the period of almost universal infidelity and skepticism that is coming on the earth.”<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, reporting on the fourth conference, Adventist writers proclaimed:

Now we want the Fundamentalists, and all others who are interested, to know that we as a denomination,—Seventh-day Adventists,—stand squarely behind them in

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<sup>1</sup>*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1996 ed., s.v. “Fundamentalism.”

<sup>2</sup>F. M. Wilcox, “A Conference on Christian Fundamentals,” *Review and Herald*, 19 June 1919, 2, 5-8; Leon A. Smith, “The Chicago Conference on Christian Fundamentals,” *Review and Herald*, 15 July 1920, 20; “The Christian Fundamentalists,” *Signs of the Times*, 6 September 1921, 9, 10; Asa Oscar Tait and Alonzo L. Baker, “Contending for the Faith,” *Signs of the Times*, 1 August 1922, 6, 7; L. K. Dickson, “We Are Hearing Everywhere of Fundamentalism: What Is It and What about It?” *Watchman*, October 1922, 22-24.

<sup>3</sup>“The Christian Fundamentalists,” *Signs of the Times*, 6 September 1921, 10.



their work of fighting evolution and the new theology, and that in so far as our courses run parallel, we shall coöperate [*sic*] with them to the fullest extent possible.<sup>1</sup>

Another fourth conference attendee exclaimed: “Fundamentalism is of God.”<sup>2</sup>

Two books published in 1924 provide a representative picture of Adventism’s sentiments concerning the modernist-fundamentalist controversy. The cover of Carlyle B. Haynes’s *Christianity at the Crossroads* shows a man who is bound for the holy city. He is scratching his head with indecision while reading the road sign which points one way toward modernism and the other way toward fundamentalism. Haynes’s promotion of fundamentalism is clear: “If the church teaches Modernism, with its tacit denial of Bible truth, it is disloyalty to Christ, disloyalty to the Bible, disloyalty to historic Christianity, to remain in that church. Every member who is loyal to the Scriptures should withdraw support and allegiance from any church” which teaches modernism. To Haynes, it was clear that there is “no middle ground—only a chasm.”<sup>3</sup>

The other book to note is *The Battle of the Churches: Modernism or Fundamentalism, Which?* by William Wirth. The cover portrays a modernist minister knocking out Jesus the cornerstone of the church in order to replace it with the new cornerstone of “evolution.” Wirth opens the book with a ringing statement: “The battle is on.” He goes on to speak ominous words: “It must be decided whether Christianity is to

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<sup>1</sup>Asa Oscar Tait and Alonzo L. Baker, “Contending for the Faith,” *Signs of the Times*, 1 August 1922, 7.

<sup>2</sup>L. K. Dickson, “We Are Hearing Everywhere of Fundamentalism: What Is It and What about It?” *Watchman*, October 1922, 23.

<sup>3</sup>Carlyle B. Haynes, *Christianity at the Crossroads* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1924), 124, 126, 8.

accept the holy Scriptures as the rule of faith, or have its way charted by the rationalism, theories, and speculations of men. . . . There can be no neutral ground in this controversy.”<sup>1</sup> Faced with the two polarizing options presented to them by the rapidly accelerating controversy in the Protestant world, Adventists sided with fundamentalists with whom they found much affinity.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, denominational periodicals carried articles by prominent leaders expressing strong support of and identification with fundamentalism. From April to July 1924, for example, W. W. Prescott ran a ten-part series on Christology in *Signs* entitled “The Gospel of a Fundamentalist.”<sup>3</sup> In the first installment, he declared: “I call myself a fundamentalist . . . because I cling to the original teaching of the gospel as presented in the Holy Scriptures. . . .”<sup>4</sup> In 1925, Milton C. Wilcox wrote a twelve-part defense of fundamentalist principles in the *Review* under the provocative title, “Fundamentalism or Modernism—Which?”<sup>5</sup> Even in 1929 when the fundamentalist movement seemed to be waning, F. M. Wilcox, editor of the *Review*, proclaimed: “Seventh-day Adventists, with their historical belief in the Divine Word, should count themselves the chief of

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<sup>1</sup>William George Wirth, *The Battle of the Churches: Modernism or Fundamentalism, Which?* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1924), 7.

<sup>2</sup>For further discussion on this, see Knight, *A Search for Identity*, 128-141.

<sup>3</sup>W. W. Prescott, “The Gospel of a Fundamentalist,” *Signs of the Times*, 29 April 1924-8 July 1924.

<sup>4</sup>W. W. Prescott, “The Gospel of a Fundamentalist: Christ Is Christianity,” *Signs of the Times*, 29 April 1924, 2.

<sup>5</sup>Milton C. Wilcox, “Fundamentalism or Modernism—Which?” *Review and Herald*, 15 January 1925-2 April 1925.

Fundamentalists [*sic*] today.”<sup>1</sup> Adventists, with their commitment to the literal interpretation of Scripture, were, in the words of Arnold Reye, “the logical focus for those who would continue the fundamentalism-liberalism conflict.”<sup>2</sup>

During the 1920s, Adventists also added their voices to the fundamentalist attacks on Christian modernism. Echoing the militant tones of fundamentalists, George B. Thompson, an editor of the *Review and Herald*, saw modernism as “destructive of all faith in God” and “infidelity renamed.”<sup>3</sup> Other writers decried it as “a devastating influence . . . upon Christian thought,”<sup>4</sup> “lethal” to true Christianity,<sup>5</sup> and a system of “pernicious doctrines taught and the evils practised [*sic*]” that are leading Christian churches to eschatological apostasy.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>F. M. Wilcox, “Forsaking the Foundations of Faith,” *Review and Herald*, 28 November 1929, 13, 14.

<sup>2</sup>Arnold C. Reye, “Protestant Fundamentalism and the Adventist Church in the 1920s,” 1993, TMs, fld 009640, AU.

<sup>3</sup>G. B. Thompson, “Liberalism,” *Review and Herald*, 6 May 1920, 3. Thompson was by far the most prolific Adventist writer on liberal theology in the 1920s. Some of his writings included: G. B. Thompson, “The New Theology,” *Review and Herald*, 27 May 1920, 3, 4; idem, “The Teaching Method of the New Theology,” *Review and Herald*, 3 June 1920, 3; idem, “The New Theology and Missions,” *Review and Herald*, 17 June 1920, 5; idem, “What Is the ‘New Theology’?” *Signs of the Times*, 28 March 1922, 6; idem, “Gnawing at the Vitals of Religion,” *Signs of the Times*, 23 May 1922, 13, 14;

<sup>4</sup>Elmer L. Cardey, “The World Adrift on an Ocean of Infidelity,” *Signs of the Times*, 9 May 1922, 2.

<sup>5</sup>Raymond D. Brisbin, “The New Triple Alliance: Spiritism, Evolution, Modernism,” *Signs of the Times*, 20 June 1922, 7.

<sup>6</sup>F. M. Wilcox, “Babylon Is Fallen: ‘Come out of Her, My People,’” *Review and Herald*, 21 February 1924, 2.

This latter point, which was expressed by F. M. Wilcox, is significant in that it isolates modernism as the culprit that leads Protestantism to fall—i.e., the eschatological fall. In an article entitled “Babylon Is Fallen,” Wilcox comes close to identifying modernism as the prophesied apostatizing force of Revelation:

The apostle Paul speaks of some who professed to belong to Israel who were not Israelites indeed, but it has remained for the church of the present day, as in no preceding period of history, actually to teach doctrines which are inimical to the holy faith she professes—doctrines subversive and destructive of the foundation principles upon which the church rests.<sup>1</sup>

If Wilcox came close to but stopped short of equating modernism with “the wine of Babylon,” Francis D. Nichol, associate editor of *Signs*, left nothing for conjecture. He asserted a month later that modernism was precisely what the Apostle John saw “looking with the prophetic eye down to the very days in which we live,” as he heard the second angel’s message of Babylon’s fall in Revelation 14:8 and 18:1-4. “Under the figurative title, ‘Babylon,’” wrote Nichol, “the prophet considers the great modern churches that have fallen away from the high standards of doctrine that formerly characterized them.”<sup>2</sup>

Significantly, Wilcox’s and Nichol’s interpretations of Revelation 14:8 and Revelation 18:1-4 show a shift from Uriah Smith’s. Whereas Smith and his contemporaries viewed Protestant rejection of Millerism as the reason for Babylon’s fall, Wilcox and Nichol pointed to Protestant modernism as the apocalyptic apostasy that fells Babylon. The two editors in 1924 were not necessarily negating the traditional

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Francis D. Nichol, “Come out of Her, My People,” *Signs of the Times*, 11 March 1924, 11.

interpretation, but their innovation certainly worked to shift the focus on the topic from that of the 1840s to the 1920s.

Also, in their placing of modernism as a key player in the end-time drama, Wilcox and Nichol ended up creating a new hero—the fundamentalists. As modernism’s nemesis in the Protestant world, fundamentalists became the vanguard of true Christianity and the anti-apostatizing force. In the same article on Babylon, Wilcox wrote of fundamentalists in these glowing terms:

We thank God for the conservative element which still exists in the great Christian church, and that in every denomination are found men and women who are still holding to the verity of the Scriptures of Truth, and who cry out against this process of honeycombing and disintegration which they see being carried on by the skeptics within the church.<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, without stating it in so many words, Wilcox and Nichol seemed to accept fundamentalists as a remnant people within Protestantism and exempt them from inclusion in Babylon, thereby removing obstacles to future Adventist courtship of fundamentalists and their evangelical children.

#### Rise of Adventist Apologetics

The second major area in which Adventists showed a shift in their attitude toward Protestants was in apologetics. From the 1930s through the 1950s, Seventh-day Adventists produced an unprecedented amount of full-scale apologetic literature in response to the mountain of criticisms and accusations that Protestants and ex-Adventists had been making. The main thrust of the Adventist apologetics was basically to “make

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

Adventism look more Christian,”<sup>1</sup> and to “prove” to the Protestant world that it is by no means a non-Christian cult.

F. D. Nichol, who became the *Review*'s associate editor in 1927 under Wilcox and then chief editor in 1945, was the church's foremost apologist of the period. Nichol wrote at least five different apologetic works covering all the major areas of Adventist thought. Among them *The Midnight Cry* is best known. This centennial history of Millerism provided a thorough documentation of the activities of pre-Disappointment Millerism and successfully refuted accusations of fanaticism that Protestants made as they attacked contemporary Adventists. In 1950 Nichol saw his conclusions accepted and promoted widely by a non-Adventist scholar, Whitney Cross, who published a landmark publication on religious revivals in western New York, *The Burned-Over District*.<sup>2</sup> Nichol's other books are also able apologies of Adventism. *Answers to Objections* (published in 1932, and revised and enlarged in 1947 and 1952)<sup>3</sup> and *Ellen White and Her Critics* (published in 1951)<sup>4</sup> were carefully written and well-reasoned works that,

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<sup>1</sup>Knight, *A Search for Identity*, 152.

<sup>2</sup>Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1950). However, David Rowe has criticized Nichol's handling of evidence and conclusions that are impossible to prove. See David Leslie Rowe, “Thunder and Trumpets: The Millerite Movement and Apocalyptic Thought in Upstate New York, 1800-1845” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1974), 54, 205, 206.

<sup>3</sup>Francis D. Nichol, *Answers to Objections: An Examination of the Major Objections Raised against the Teachings of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1932, 1947, 1952).

<sup>4</sup>Francis D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics: An Answer to the Major Charges That Critics Have Brought against Mrs. Ellen G. White* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1951).

according to George Knight, “went a long way toward improving Adventism’s public image.”<sup>1</sup>

In addition to Nichol’s apologetic works, books by William H. Branson and LeRoy Edwin Froom must be noted. Branson’s *Reply to Canright* was a much belated full-scale response to Canright’s attacks and a welcome tool for Adventist ministers encountering Protestant prejudices deepened by Canright’s works.<sup>2</sup> Froom’s monumental series on the history of prophetic interpretation, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* (1946-1954),<sup>3</sup> showed clearly how Adventism’s “peculiar” understandings of the prophecies are actually founded on a rich heritage of Bible-centered hermeneutics that goes back to the Early Church era. In these volumes, Froom presented a massive amount of historical data for each claim that he made. These books, claimed Froom, were distributed to and reviewed by numerous scholars outside the church, which led to a softening of positions concerning Adventism on the part of Protestants.<sup>4</sup>

Also, during this period an apologetic endeavor of a different sort could be seen in the “correction” of unorthodox statements and concepts in Adventist publications.<sup>5</sup> The first area of unorthodoxy was anti-Trinitarianism and semi-Arianism, which had been passed down from nineteenth-century Adventism. Though an increasing number of

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<sup>1</sup>Knight, *A Search for Identity*, 157.

<sup>2</sup>William H. Branson, *Reply to Canright: The Truth about Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1933).

<sup>3</sup>Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*.

<sup>4</sup>Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 467.

<sup>5</sup>See *ibid.*, 420-428, and Knight, *A Search for Identity*, 152-157, for further analysis of this issue.

Adventist leaders, including Ellen White by the publication of *The Desire of Ages*,<sup>1</sup> were adopting the historic Christian doctrine of the Trinity (including the co-equality and co-eternity of Jesus Christ with God the Father), some “old-school” Adventists were fighting the doctrine even in the 1930s and 1940s, considering it “utterly foreign to all the Bible and the teachings of the Spirit of Prophecy [Ellen White’s writings].”<sup>2</sup>

In response, changes were made in at least two historic documents of Seventh-day Adventists. First, the new statement of fundamental beliefs, which was issued in the 1931 denominational *Year Book*, spelled out explicitly the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>3</sup> Earlier statements, which were drafted by Uriah Smith who wrote them in the nineteenth century, were mute on the doctrine of the Trinity. Though not an officially recognized document until 1946, the 1931 statement served as a signal to the world that Adventists were unequivocally Trinitarian. Second, a significant revision of Uriah Smith’s *Daniel and the Revelation* was made in its 1944 edition to rid the book of anti-Trinitarianism and semi-Arianism. The work of revision was formally commissioned at the spring 1942 meeting of the General Conference Committee. Already in June of the same year, members of the committee commissioned to do the detailed work of revision reported: “The teaching on [against] the eternity of Christ is the one doctrine we have found it necessary to eliminate without comment, inasmuch as the book gives so strong a slant

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 530.

<sup>2</sup>J. S. Washburn, “The Trinity,” [1939], TMs, fld 011684, AU.

<sup>3</sup>*Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1931), 377.



toward Arianism that it cannot be harmonized with the Scripture in the light of the teachings in the Spirit of Prophecy.” After the deletions, the committee members could say: “We believe we have caught every place in the book where this doctrine has been alluded to. . . .”<sup>1</sup> Thus the 1944 edition of *Daniel and the Revelation* was purged of all traces of anti-Trinitarian views that earlier editions contained.<sup>2</sup>

The second area of “correction” had to do with the nature of Christ’s humanity. As Van Baalen pointed out in his criticism of Adventism, *Bible Readings for the Home Circle* from the 1915 edition onward contained statements that declared Christ’s human nature to be sinful—a teaching which Van Baalen and many others found to be repulsive. In 1914 W. A. Colcord, a member of the Review and Herald Publishing Association Book Committee, had penned for the 1915 edition that Christ was born in “sinful flesh” and that he “partook of our sinful, fallen nature.”<sup>3</sup>

Though divisions of opinion on this issue did exist in Adventism, denominational leadership in 1949 felt it was time to squelch “this erroneous minority position,” as Froom put it.<sup>4</sup> That year, D. E. Rebok, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, was asked to revise *Bible Readings*. The result was that Colcord’s

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<sup>1</sup>“Report on Revision of ‘Daniel and the Revelation,’” submitted June 3 and 4, 1942, by a Subcommittee of Seven to the Committee on Revision Appointed by the Spring Meeting in New York, April 7, 1942, TMs, RG 261, box 6769, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>Other areas of the book were also revised at this time. They dealt with various aspects of Smith’s prophetic interpretation such the “daily,” “king of the north,” ten divisions of Rome, 144,000, etc.

<sup>3</sup>*Bible Readings for the Home Circle: A Topical Study of the Bible, Systematically Arranged for Home and Private Study* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915), 174.

<sup>4</sup>Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 428.

comments were replaced by the following statement: “Just how far that ‘likeness’ [of Christ’s human nature to the sinner’s (see Romans 8:4)] goes is a mystery of the incarnation which men have never been able to solve.”<sup>1</sup>

These corrections as well as the production of carefully researched and logically presented volumes of apologetic nature were innovations that Adventists in the 1930s through the 1950s brought to their interaction with Protestants. The scholarly book-length treatments of issues in contention between Adventists and other Protestants showed that Adventists were serious about dialoguing and engaging in a rational discourse. Whereas previous dialogues between Adventists and Protestants tended to be shouting matches of propositional statements, the new books by Adventists appealed repeatedly to more objective, mutually acceptable sources (often Protestant writers themselves) in a tone more reserved and deferential—though not all uniformly fit this description.

The rise of Adventist apologetics in the 1930s may have had something to do with the Adventist experience with fundamentalists in the 1920s. Though they themselves were enamored with fundamentalists, Adventists learned quickly that this was very much a one-sided love affair. The experience of an Adventist attendee to the tenth Congress of World Fundamentalists in 1928 illustrates this predicament: “Let none suppose that Seventh-day Adventists are to be accepted as a normal part of Fundamentalism by its proponents. In private conversation it was easy to detect a bitterness against our

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<sup>1</sup>*Bible Readings for the Home: A Study of 200 Vital Scripture Topics in Question-and-Answer Form, Contributed by a Large Number of Bible Scholars* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1949), 143.

movement on the part of some of the leading speakers, which exceeded the publicly expressed bitterness against Modernism.”<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, Adventists’ courtship of fundamentalism seems to have continued with the stream of apologetic works in the following decades, since the only group of Christians (other than Adventists) that these books could have been written for is the fundamentalist movement. A cursory glance through the “objections” that Nichol attempts to quell in *Answers to Objections* shows that they could only be consistently raised by fundamentalists. A liberal modernist with a different set of presuppositions would not raise those objections.

Another evidence that Adventist apologetics was triggered by fundamentalism is that all serious anti-Adventist literature came from the fundamentalist camp. Leading anti-cult writers of the first half of the twentieth century were squarely in the fundamentalist camp.<sup>2</sup> This was to be expected since only those with fundamentalist views of Scripture and church would care so deeply about writing against what they judged to be heretical movements—a natural extension of the fundamentalist fight with modernism. It was natural thus for the emerging Adventist apologies to respond primarily to the fundamentalists who were attacking them.

It is very important to note that in all the weighty arguments that Adventists presented in their apologies, the focus was less on proving Protestant readers wrong than on showing Adventists to be right. This meant a departure from the traditionally condemnatory, polemical stance that Adventists took towards Protestants. Though the

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<sup>1</sup>H. A. Lukens, “World’s Fundamentalist Congress,” *Ministry*, July 1928, 16.

<sup>2</sup>E.g., David Anderson-Berry, Charles Braden, Elmer T. Clark, William Irvine, J. Oswald Sanders, Louis Talbot, and Jan Karel Van Baalen.

strong anti-Catholic, anti-Protestant rhetoric could be found here and there, the goal of apologetics shifted to providing evidence for the orthodoxy of Adventism. But this shift raises a number of questions: Did this mean that Adventists were ready to embrace the prevailing concept of orthodoxy and have themselves be measured by it? By whose definition did Adventists desire to be considered orthodox and Christian? These questions, unasked and unanswered yet in the 1930s and 1940s, would become crucial issues during the Adventist-evangelical dialogues of the 1950s.

Also, presenting Adventism as an orthodox group often meant presenting Adventism as the ideal Protestant church and, more importantly, the ideal fundamentalist denomination. Therefore, Carlyle B. Haynes described fellow Adventists as “entirely *normal* in their lives and in their views of Christianity.”<sup>1</sup> In another book on American churches, Haynes is quoted as having portrayed Adventists as the “Fundamentalists of the Fundamentalists.”<sup>2</sup> In his presentation of Adventism in *The American Church of the Protestant Heritage* (a non-Adventist project), Froom wrote: “Seventh-day Adventists belong to the *conservative Evangelical wing of Protestantism*. In fact, they are usually regarded as ultra-conservative, both in doctrine and standard of living.”<sup>3</sup> However, presenting Adventists as acceptable, orthodox, and truly Christian implied that Adventists

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<sup>1</sup>Carlyle B. Haynes, *Seventh-day Adventists: Their Work and Teachings* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1940), 15. Emphasis added.

<sup>2</sup>J. Paul Williams, *What Americans Believe and How They Worship* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), 332.

<sup>3</sup>Froom, “Seventh-day Adventists,” in *The American Church of the Protestant Heritage*, ed. Vergilius Ferm (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953), 378. Emphasis added.

would be open to accepting other fundamentalist groups as orthodox and Christian—a far cry from the stance taken by the Adventist pioneers of the previous century.

In summary, Adventist views of Protestants in the 1920s to 1950s were decidedly conditioned by the modernist-fundamentalist controversy that raged in the 1920s. Faced with an either/or situation, Adventists chose to side with fundamentalists whose theological leanings were much closer to them than those of modernists. Some Adventists saw modernism leading Protestantism to eschatological apostasy, whereas fundamentalism was seen as a divinely ordained movement that guarded the truth. Also, apologetic works appeared in Adventism during the 1930s-1940s in response particularly to the fundamentalist wing of Protestantism. They were essentially written to show the orthodoxy and normalcy of Adventism to fundamentalists who were the main authors and consumers of anti-Adventist literature. Having come a long way from the early “come out of Babylon” days, Adventists in the 1950s were ready for a more mature, nuanced relationship with Protestants, or at least with conservative Protestants with fundamentalist-evangelical theology.

### **Conclusions**

The 100-year period between the 1840s and 1940s saw significant changes in the relationship between Adventists and Protestants. Adventist appeals to Protestants to leave Babylon—apostate Christianity—and join the Adventist movement—the remnant church—became overshadowed by appeals to accept Adventists as fellow Christians. Particularly in the 1920s and 1930s, Adventists were deeply drawn to the fundamentalist struggle against modernism and were eager to show them that they were of kindred spirit.

Various apologetic works issued by Adventists during the 1920s through the 1940s had their aim in presenting themselves “as even being more fundamentalistic than the fundamentalists since Adventists had *all* the fundamentals,”<sup>1</sup> while refuting erroneous charges that had been left unanswered over the previous century. These apologetic works carried a friendlier and less argumentative tone than earlier works which displayed open disdain and condemnation toward Protestants in general. Through these efforts, Adventists hoped for (1) the removal of Protestant prejudices by correcting misconceptions and providing scriptural ground for “aberrant” teachings of Adventism and (2) a cooperative working relationship with fundamentalists on doctrines and issues that both agreed upon.

The change in Adventist attitudes and approaches toward Protestants—particularly fundamentalists—brought about gradual shifts in Protestant attitudes toward Adventists. As Adventists showed themselves capable of more mature, objective discourses on theology, Protestants began to return in kind with less derogatory remarks and more dispassionate reasoning. It would be safe to say that Van Baalen’s softened stance in 1948 came as a direct result of several apologetic efforts by Adventists. As seen in his 1948 edition of *The Chaos of Cults*,<sup>2</sup> Van Baalen’s reading of Nichol’s *Midnight Cry* and his correspondence with Froom contributed to deletions of several offensive expressions and provided greater allowances to minority doctrinal positions taken by Adventists. Furthermore, it was no mere coincidence that Clark’s acceptance of

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<sup>1</sup>Knight, *A Search for Identity*, 157. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>2</sup>Van Baalen, *The Chaos of Cults*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., 9, 10, 164-167.

Adventism as “evangelical and orthodox,”<sup>1</sup> English’s retraction of “grave misstatements” concerning Adventist teachings,<sup>2</sup> Ferm’s inclusion of Froom’s article on Adventism in *The American Church of the Protestant Heritage*, and Mead’s revised appraisal of Adventists as “conservative evangelicals”<sup>3</sup> came in the late 1940s through the 1950s.

Though rhetorical punches and counter-punches continued to fly between Adventists and Protestants well into the 1950s, there was a clear sense that the wide chasm between the two sides was narrowing. The rapprochement would intensify in the mid-1950s as Adventist leaders, represented mostly by Froom, made active overtures for dialogue toward Protestant leaders and elicited many positive (though mostly private) responses. Against such a backdrop Walter Martin and Donald Grey Barnhouse (editor of *Eternity* magazine) approached the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference with inquiries that would bring permanent changes to the nature of the relationship between Adventists and Protestants.

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<sup>1</sup>Clark, *The Small Sects in America*, rev. ed., 41.

<sup>2</sup>E. Schuyler English, “To Rectify a Wrong,” *Our Hope*, February 1956, 459.

<sup>3</sup>Mead, *Handbook of Denominations*, 1956 ed., 17.

## CHAPTER 2

### FROM THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST EVANGELICAL CONFERENCES TO THE PUBLICATION OF *QUESTIONS ON DOCTRINE*

In 1955-1956 the Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership engaged in a series of dialogues with evangelicals to examine the commonalities and differences in beliefs between the two sides. Initiated by Walter Martin, a young evangelical scholar on cults, and sponsored by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and *Eternity* magazine, the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956 became a historic turning point in the relations between the two sides. The conferences culminated in the production of significant publications that quickly became landmark documents on Adventism.

#### **Walter Martin's Initial Inquiries to Adventists**

The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956 began when Donald Grey Barnhouse, publisher of *Eternity* magazine, formally commissioned Walter Martin, one of his consulting editors at *Eternity*, to “undertake research in connection with Seventh-day Adventism.”<sup>1</sup> Their previous published evaluations of Adventism had

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, “Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians? A New Look at Seventh-day Adventism,” *Eternity*, September 1956, 6.



been highly critical, classifying it as a cult and a “Satanic” movement.<sup>1</sup> While neither man expected the outcome of the research to overturn his long-held stance on Adventism, the new research endeavor was to represent, in an objective manner, official Adventist beliefs and practices and make detailed doctrinal evaluations based on what Adventists officially claimed to believe.

Barnhouse may have commissioned the probe, but it was Martin who initiated the process. Martin, though still a young scholar at age twenty-six, had already established a reputation within the evangelical world as a specialist on non-Christian cults and new religious movements in America. His research in the field of cults began in 1950 while still a junior in college.<sup>2</sup> His first book in the field was *Jehovah of the Watchtower*, published in 1953.<sup>3</sup>

By early 1955, Martin had nearly completed the manuscript for his book on cults to be entitled *The Rise of the Cults*. In that work, Martin had categorized Seventh-day Adventism as one of “*The Big Five* [cults], namely, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Christian Science, Mormonism, Unity, and Seventh-Day Adventism.”<sup>4</sup> He had included a chapter on Adventism based on his reading and analyses of Adventist literature as well as past

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, “Spiritual Discernment, or How to Read Religious Books,” *Eternity*, June 1950, 9, 42-44; Walter R. Martin, “The Rise of Cultism,” *Eternity*, July 1954, 22, 23, 40, 41; T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 35.

<sup>2</sup>“Walter Martin and Ken Samples Meeting with Ministers, Loma Linda Campus Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church (1/26/89),” 26 January 1989, TMs, ADF 3773, LLU.

<sup>3</sup>Walter R. Martin, *Jehovah of the Watchtower* (New York: Biblical Truth, [1953]).

<sup>4</sup>Martin, *The Rise of the Cults* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1955), 12.

publications on Adventism by evangelical and ex-Adventist writers. But he felt the need to contact Adventist leaders directly, verify the conclusions that he had arrived at in that chapter, and gather further materials for his future book on Adventism.

The first Adventist leader that Martin turned to was T. E. Unruh, president of the East Pennsylvania Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Martin contacted him after reading the letters that the Adventist leader and Barnhouse had exchanged in 1949 and 1950.<sup>1</sup> That exchange had been initiated by Unruh, who wrote a letter praising a radio sermon by Barnhouse on righteousness by faith. Barnhouse wrote a reply expressing “astonishment that an Adventist clergyman would commend him for preaching righteousness by faith, since . . . Seventh-day Adventists believed in righteousness by works.” He further stated that he understood the Adventist doctrine on the nature of Christ to be “Satanic and dangerous.” In spite of the sharp accusations that Barnhouse

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, “Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians? A New Look at Seventh-day Adventism,” *Eternity*, September 1956, 6; T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 36. Martin actually provides a conflicting account on how exactly the initial contact between him and the Adventist leaders came about. In his 1983 interview with *Adventist Currents* and various lectures given to Adventist audiences in 1989, Martin stated that LeRoy Edwin Froom, a leader in the General Conference and a professor at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, contacted him shortly after the publication of *The Rise of the Cults* to protest his classification of Adventism as a cult. Then, according to Martin, he received a call from Unruh who reached him also to take issue with his new book (“Currents Interview: Walter Martin,” *Adventist Currents*, July 1983, 16; “Walter Martin and Ken Samples Meeting with Ministers, Loma Linda Campus Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church (1/26/89),” 26 January 1989, TMs, ADF 3773, LLU; “Meeting between Walter Martin, Ken Samples, and the Faculty of the School of Religion, Loma Linda University at Linda Hall of the Campus Hill SDA Church on Thursday, January 26 from 1 to 3 pm,” 26 January 1989, TMs, ADF 3773, LLU; Walter Martin, “Adventists and the Sabbath,” 15 March 1989, TMs, ADF 3773, LLU). This account, however, seems to be based on faulty memory since the first printing of *The Rise of the Cults* did not occur until December 1955 and the initial contact had been made already in early 1955.

leveled at the Adventist faith, Unruh responded by sending a letter “affirming the evangelical character of Adventists [*sic*] doctrine.” With that letter, he included a copy of Ellen White’s *Steps to Christ* as a supporting document.<sup>1</sup>

The Unruh-Barnhouse correspondence, which continued for several months, ended abruptly in June 1950. In that month’s issue of *Eternity*, Barnhouse published an article entitled “Spiritual Discernment, or How to Read Religious Books” in which he gave a scathing review of *Steps to Christ* and called its author the “founder of the cult [of Adventism].” Barnhouse denounced the book as being “false in all its parts” and bearing “the mark of the counterfeit” from the first page. He also charged the book of subtly promoting universalism and containing half-truths and Satanic error.<sup>2</sup> “After that,” Unruh wrote later, “I saw no point in continuing the correspondence.”<sup>3</sup>

After reviewing the Unruh-Barnhouse correspondence, Martin contacted Unruh to request “a face-to-face contact with representative Seventh-day Adventists”<sup>4</sup> so that he could “treat them fairly” by “interviewing some of their leaders” in preparation for an upcoming book on Adventism.<sup>5</sup> Martin requested in particular to meet LeRoy Edwin Froom, an officer of the General Conference and a professor at the Seventh-day Adventist

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<sup>1</sup>T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 35.

<sup>2</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, “Spiritual Discernment, or How to Read Religious Books,” *Eternity*, June 1950, 9.

<sup>3</sup>T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 36.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, “Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians? A New Look at Seventh-day Adventism,” *Eternity*, September 1956, 6.

Theological Seminary. Moreover, he asked for copies of the most representative and authoritative doctrinal works published by the Adventist church for his examination.<sup>1</sup>

According to Martin's later account, his mission in approaching Adventist leaders was "to investigate and go through Seventh-day Adventist literature and materials and to find out why an organization which had come into existence in the 19th century was being so vigorously attacked by so many areas of evangelicalism; and if that attack was warranted, and how it could be corrected if, indeed, it was not."<sup>2</sup> Even if Martin's attitude when approaching Adventists was indeed that of an open-minded, scholarly probe, Adventist leaders regarded him with apprehension. As Unruh recounted later, "it was understood at the outset that Martin, a research polemicist, had been commissioned to write against Adventism"<sup>3</sup> and "a battery of probing questions that he had drawn up" was meant to expose Adventism in its heresy.<sup>4</sup>

Nonetheless, Unruh and Froom saw Martin's inquiry as an occasion to make headway in removing Adventism from the evangelical catalogue of cults. Encouraged by the thawing of evangelical attitudes toward Adventism over the previous decade, Froom saw this meeting as an unprecedented opportunity to significantly improve the church's standing with evangelicals. To their delight, Froom and Unruh received the support of

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<sup>1</sup>T. E. Unruh, "The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956," *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 36.

<sup>2</sup>Walter R. Martin, "Adventists and the Sabbath," 15 March 1989, TMs, ADF 3773, LLU.

<sup>3</sup>T. E. Unruh, "The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956," *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 37.

<sup>4</sup>Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 477.

the General Conference leadership, which created an informal committee in anticipation of the visit by Martin. The committee consisted of Unruh, the committee chair, Froom, and Walter E. Read, a field secretary of the General Conference.<sup>1</sup>

### **Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences (March 1955-May 1956)<sup>2</sup>**

March 8-10, 1955, Conference

After a series of telephone calls and letters between Martin and Unruh, the first meeting was set for Tuesday, March 8, at 1:30 p.m., at the General Conference headquarters in Washington, D.C.<sup>3</sup> Martin was accompanied by George E. Cannon, a New Testament professor at Nyack Missionary College in Nyack, New York. Cannon had not taken part in the correspondence but had been brought in by Martin. Cannon would examine issues dealing with biblical exegesis, while Martin would handle apologetics and history.<sup>4</sup> According to Martin, Cannon, a member of the Christian Missionary Alliance denomination, also held the view that Adventism was a cult. He had

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. See also T. E. Unruh, "The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956," *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 37-39.

<sup>2</sup>Since none of the conferences seems to have kept an official record, the narrative on the conferences in this section has been reconstructed from various published and unpublished sources. In the course of my research, I have identified five major conferences between the two sides from March 1955 through May 1956. According to R. A. Anderson, there were thirteen meetings overall (R. Allan Anderson to H. E. Whitford, 13 December 1956, TL, C 152, box 2, fld 11, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU), but it does not appear that all of them were formal doctrinal conferences.

<sup>3</sup>T. E. Unruh to Walter R. Martin, 4 March 1955, TL, Tobias Edgar Unruh Collection, LLU.

<sup>4</sup>"Meeting between Walter Martin, Ken Samples, and the Faculty of the School of Religion, Loma Linda University at Linda Hall of the Campus Hill SDA Church on Thursday, January 26 from 1 to 3 pm," 26 January 1989, TMs, ADF 3773, LLU.

read certain Adventist writings and judged them to be “flagrantly disobedient to exegesis.”<sup>1</sup>

As several participants of the conference have reported, the two groups came to this meeting with “wariness”<sup>2</sup> and “great suspicion”<sup>3</sup> in their hearts. According to Froom, “Martin came armed with a formidable list of definitely hostile and slanted questions, most of them drawn from well-known critics of Seventh-day Adventists,” among whom were D. M. Canright, E. S. Ballenger, and E. B. Jones.<sup>4</sup> Martin opened the meeting by discharging a “rapid-fire complex of questions”<sup>5</sup> that contributed further to a tense atmosphere. These questions centered on the “problematic” Adventist teachings on the nature of Christ’s divinity, the atonement, the relationship between salvation and God’s law, the Sabbath, the mark of the beast, the investigative judgment, the remnant, the state of the dead, and the role of Ellen White in Adventist theology.<sup>6</sup>

Martin also pointed out that contradictory views were being promulgated in Adventist publications on these doctrinal matters. While he felt many were in line with historic Christian orthodoxy, there were a sufficient number of heretical voices to arouse

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<sup>1</sup>“Currents Interview: Walter Martin,” *Adventist Currents*, July 1983, 17.

<sup>2</sup>T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 37.

<sup>3</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, “Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians? A New Look at Seventh-day Adventism,” *Eternity*, September 1956, 6.

<sup>4</sup>Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 478.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, “Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians? A New Look at Seventh-day Adventism,” *Eternity*, September 1956, 6.

confusion among evangelicals as to what exactly constituted the official Adventist position.

Among these discrepancies, what troubled Martin and Cannon the most involved Adventist teachings on the nature of Christ. In the course of his extensive reading of the Adventist literature, Martin had discovered ample references that denied the deity of Christ. Particularly among those works that were first published in the nineteenth century and reprinted in the contemporary Adventist media, Martin saw denials of the Trinity and Christ's co-equality with God the Father. Although he did find more of the recent Adventist books and periodicals teaching orthodox Trinitarianism, he could not see how Adventism could be recognized as a Christian church if the anti-Trinitarian view had a legitimate place in it.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, Adventist leaders opened their responses with a presentation of “a succinct statement on [the] fundamentally Protestant position on the Bible and Bible only as the rule of Adventist faith and practice.”<sup>2</sup> Rather than engaging in a point-by-point reply and rebuttal to the barrage of questions and accusations, they highlighted the doctrines that Adventists held in common with evangelical Christians. In his recounting of the dialogues, Froom listed these doctrines, which he called the “eternal verities”:

*The eternal pre-existence and complete Deity of Christ, His miraculous conception and virgin birth and sinless life during the Incarnation, His vicarious atoning death on the Cross—once for all and all-sufficient—His literal resurrection and ascension, His*

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<sup>1</sup>“Meeting between Walter Martin, Ken Samples, and the Faculty of the School of Religion, Loma Linda University at Linda Hall of the Campus Hill SDA Church on Thursday, January 26 from 1 to 3 pm,” 26 January 1989, TMs, ADF 3773, LLU; “Currents Interview: Walter Martin,” *Adventist Currents*, July 1983, 17, 18.

<sup>2</sup>Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 478.

Mediation before the Father, *applying the benefits of the completed Act of Atonement He had made on the Cross*. And climaxing with His personal premillennial Second Advent, which we firmly believe to be imminent, but without setting a time.<sup>1</sup>

The Adventist affirmation of the “eternal verities”—those beliefs which were considered to be shared in common with “all sound, evangelical, conservative Christians of all faiths in all ages”—was followed by a presentation of two other categories of the Adventist belief system. In the presentation of the first of the next two categories, Adventist leaders pointed to twelve doctrines on which the Adventist position was in the minority among evangelicals. These doctrines included baptism by immersion, the seventh-day Sabbath, free will, conditional immortality, and the complete annihilation of the wicked in the end-time. Adventist leaders noted that Adventism shared these teachings with *some*, though not all, Christian churches. They also pointed out that adherence to these doctrines did not constitute sufficient grounds for barring any denomination from the fellowship of Christian churches.<sup>2</sup>

The final category consisted of five doctrines that were unique to Adventism. These were presented to Martin and Cannon as the heart of what sets Adventism apart from other churches. The five were the teachings of (1) the heavenly sanctuary and Christ’s two-phase ministry in it, (2) the investigative judgment, (3) the Spirit of prophecy as manifested in Ellen G. White’s ministry, (4) the seal of God and mark of the beast, and (5) the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14. Adventist leaders declared that belief in these five doctrines as well as in the doctrines represented in the two

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 478, 479.



previous categories were “essential today for a full-rounded faith for these last days, and are the distinguishing characteristics of Adventism.”<sup>1</sup>

After dividing up all major Adventist teachings in these three categories, Adventist leaders claimed that the “three correlated categories, held in harmonious relationship, make [the Adventist church] a separate Protestant body, distinct from all others, yet soundly and basically Christian.” While the distinctive doctrines of the Adventist faith constituted “God’s distinctive ‘present truth’” for the end-time given to the Adventist church, the emphatic contention of the Adventist leaders was that those doctrines did not rob Adventism of its evangelical, Christian core.<sup>2</sup>

From this point on, the conferees engaged in a discussion involving the questions raised by Martin at the outset. Martin discovered quickly that his Adventist counterparts were denying vehemently many teachings that he had ascribed to them. He found the portrait of Adventism that Unruh, Froom, and Read were rendering to be “a totally different picture from what [he] had fancied and expected.”<sup>3</sup>

This realization compelled the participants to exchange questions and answers in writing so that concepts in contention could be made “crystal clear” to one another. Thus, Martin handed Adventist representatives his list of questions, and it fell upon Froom to draft the initial answers. Being a prolific writer and historian, Froom had little difficulty crafting a well-reasoned twenty-page response which was “whipped into shape by his

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 479.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. See also Donald Grey Barnhouse, “Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians? A New Look at Seventh-day Adventism,” *Eternity*, September 1956, 6, 7.

secretary after hours” that evening. Martin and Cannon were also provided with “books and periodicals that substantiated the claims” made over the course of the day. With the written response and the publications provided to the evangelical representatives, the two sides retired for the night.<sup>1</sup>

When the two parties returned to the General Conference building the following day, Wednesday, March 9, Martin made a dramatic announcement that shocked the Adventist conferees and permanently changed the nature of the relationship between Adventists and evangelicals. He and Cannon had pored over the documents given to them and reflected on the discussions of the previous day until 2 a.m. As a result, they had concluded that they had been wrong in their past assessment of Seventh-day Adventism. Martin said: “While we did not expect things would turn out this way we are now prepared to say, you folk are not heretics as we thought but rather redeemed brethren in Christ.”<sup>2</sup> With this new-found conviction, Martin stood in stark contrast to not only his own earlier writings, but also to the entire evangelical world. He made it clear that he now believed that “Adventists who believed as did the conferees were truly

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<sup>1</sup>T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 38. Barnhouse indicates that the presentation of “scores of pages of detailed theological answers” to Martin’s questions was made “on a second visit” (Donald Grey Barnhouse, “Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians? A New Look at Seventh-day Adventism,” *Eternity*, September 1956, 6). However, accounts by actual participants of the meeting corroborate the statement that the exchange of written materials took place on the first day of the first meeting.

<sup>2</sup>Roy Allan Anderson, “Brief Story of the Origin of *Questions on Doctrine*,” n.d., TMs, C 152, box 28, fld 8, AU.

born-again Christians and his brethren in Christ.” Then, “in a dramatic gesture he extended his hand in fellowship.”<sup>1</sup>

Although Martin and Cannon now acknowledged Adventism as Christian, they continued to challenge Adventist leaders with penetrating questions about Adventist theology. They strongly contested each Adventist doctrine in the second category and categorically rejected the five distinctive doctrines of Adventism as unscriptural. Nonetheless, they were able to extend the “hand of fellowship” to Adventists because they had discovered that Adventism, when it came to the historic core beliefs of the Christian church, was squarely in line with evangelical Christianity.<sup>2</sup>

The unexpected change in convictions concerning Adventism would result in a completely new set of challenges for Martin. Whereas his original purpose was to write a definitive book exposing the cultic nature of Adventism, Martin was now faced with the dilemma of writing a volume, as Froom described,

that would be both fair to us [Adventists], and would also state his own convictions as to the genuineness of our Christianity, but would, at the same time, show up what he believed to be certain of our errors and heresies, as he then saw them. And *all this in such a way as to satisfy, if possible, those who had commissioned his writing assignment*—who wanted him to expose the errors of Adventism. It was a most difficult order under such changed circumstances.<sup>3</sup>

Froom wrote also of the pressures that Cannon faced: “Martin’s colleague was likewise warned by his campus authorities of the grave consequences of sharing such a

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.; T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 38.

<sup>3</sup>Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 480.

revolutionary view on Adventism. He too faced a real crisis in connection with his campus responsibilities, in relationship to the organization to which he was accountable.”<sup>1</sup> Froom noted that being willing to testify publicly of the Christianity of Adventism would require “moral courage” on the part of both men.<sup>2</sup> With the implications of their new stance extending much beyond what they had come prepared for, Martin and Cannon asked the Adventist leaders to join them in “praying for divine guidance and wisdom in [Martin’s] newly developed writing problem.” So the five conferees knelt immediately around the table and prayed.<sup>3</sup>

The striking turnabout in the evangelicals’ attitude engendered a significant change in attitude among the participants of the conference. Froom wrote that thereafter “tension and suspicion diminished, then virtually disappeared. Calmness and confidence in our Christian integrity took their place.”<sup>4</sup> This is not to say that the meetings were completely free from tensions or disagreements. In his letter to Froom and Read on March 11, Unruh wrote, “Whatever we do we must avoid implying any ulterior motives or questioning their ability or their purpose. It is only fair that I should tell you that Brother Martin smarted just a little under what might have appeared as a personal attack on him in the closing minutes of our conference together.”<sup>5</sup> Still, the spirit of the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 480, 481; T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 38.

<sup>4</sup>Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 480.

<sup>5</sup>T. E. Unruh to L. E. Froom and W. E. Read, 11 March 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11146, GCA.

conference turned toward that of cooperation rather than confrontation after the prayer together.

From that point on, the meetings started all over again. Martin drafted a new set of questions, written in a less confrontational tone. Nonetheless, he continued to probe deeply into where evangelicals and Adventists differed, and where Adventists had long been considered to be cultic. Adventist leaders, in return, promised to provide Martin and Cannon with fully documented, well-reasoned responses to each of Martin's questions.

As the second day wore on, it became clear that many more meetings would be necessary to cover each question thoroughly. Moreover, Martin would need to bring his new conclusions regarding Adventism to Barnhouse, while Adventist leaders would need to consult the General Conference leadership and theologians of the church for accurate and representative responses to Martin's questions. The meetings ended the next day, March 10, with the next meeting scheduled for a week later, Thursday, March 17, at 10 a.m., at Unruh's office in Reading, Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup>

#### March 17, 1955, Conference

Little is known about the details of the March 17 meeting in Reading. What is clear about this particular conference is that all five of the conferees were present and that the two parties discussed the subject of the identity of the scapegoat in Leviticus.

Other details, however, are not known. Whatever other points of debate there may have been, Martin must have been reassured in his new-found appreciation of

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<sup>1</sup>T. E. Unruh to Walter R. Martin and G. E. Cannon, 11 March 1955, TL, Tobias Edgar Unruh Collection, LLU; L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin and G. E. Cannon, 27 March 1955 [dictated before 17 March 1955], TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

Adventism as he reportedly stated, ““We are going to take you [Adventists] out of the “cults” in our write-ups.””<sup>1</sup> This conference adjourned with the next meeting set for April 11-12, 1955, at the General Conference headquarters.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, the conferees exchanged correspondence with one another in anticipation of the next meeting. On March 30, Martin sent a set of twenty-four questions asking for clarification and explanations on various theological issues.<sup>3</sup> There was also communication between Barnhouse and Unruh. Apparently, Martin had made some headway with Barnhouse in moving toward a revision of his views on Adventism. Froom reported in his letter to Martin that “Dr. Barnhouse also called T. E. Unruh by phone and apologized in a very Christian and manly way for the [June 1950] article that appeared in the journal, *Eternity*, and expressed the hope that they could get together and have a little talk about these matters.” Froom also reported that Barnhouse “was anxious to correct wrong impressions left as a result of the article.”<sup>4</sup> Though this phone conversation did not yet represent a full recognition of Adventism as Christian by Barnhouse, it did serve as an indicator of changes to come.

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<sup>1</sup>L. E. Froom to E. Schuyler English, 18 March 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA; L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin, 18 April 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin, 12 April 1955 [dictated earlier], TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin, 5 April 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

<sup>4</sup>L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin, 12 April 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

## April 11-12, 1955, Conference

The content of the April 11-12 meeting—the third conference—is much better known than that of the March 17 meeting. In his April 15 report to R. R. Figuhr, president of the General Conference, Froom stated that the five conferees spent most of their time examining and dialoguing on answers to the twenty-four questions submitted by Martin. Of the twenty-four, Froom had drafted eighteen of the responses, with Read writing the rest.<sup>1</sup> Froom also described Martin's reaction to the attacks on Adventism by Louis Talbot, a prominent evangelical leader, that occurred in the March 1955 issue of *The King's Business*. Froom wrote, “[Martin] was so agitated that he paced the room like a lion, and he said they are going to put the crimps on that man and either force a retraction or force him to stop that type of stuff!” Froom continued gleefully that Adventists “have won friends in a powerful circle—friends who believe that we have been unjustly treated and are set to make a defense of our adherence to sound Biblical positions.”<sup>2</sup>

The conference, however, was not without tense moments. Froom's April 18 letter to Martin betrays his disappointment with an aspect of the conference. Apparently, contrary to what he had indicated at the second conference, Martin was now going to include Adventists in an *Eternity* series on cults, but would give Adventists “a fair and favorable write-up,” thereby helping to “change popular misconceptions and

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<sup>1</sup>L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin, 21 April 1955, TL, C 152, box 2, fld 10, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

<sup>2</sup>L. E. Froom to R. R. Figuhr, 26 April 1955 [dictated on 15 April 1955], TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

misrepresentations” concerning Adventism. Perhaps out of fear of dampening the otherwise extremely positive session for Adventists, Froom had failed to voice his concern over the prospective inclusion of Adventism in the series on cults, regardless of how positive the content might be. So he now felt “constrained” to write Martin to express his objection to that decision. He stated, “I am deeply disappointed in what seems to me to be your reversal on the ‘cult’ aspect.”<sup>1</sup> As events unfolded, that series was never developed in *Eternity*, and the potential new tension between the two groups was averted.

#### Break between Conferences (April to August 1955)

The two sides did not meet again until August due to Froom having to make a trip to Europe from April 20 to August 8. However, this break proved to be useful as each side had the chance to reflect on the meaning of the conferences and to lay groundwork for further interactions. By the end of April it became clear that over the course of the three conferences a firm foundation had been laid for historic, unprecedented rapprochement between the two sides. During these four months of break between the conferences, both parties would make concerted efforts toward greater acceptance of one another. Moreover, the inclusion of Roy Allan Anderson to the Adventist side just before the next conference would contribute further to the mutual efforts toward rapprochement.

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<sup>1</sup>L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin, 18 April 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.



### **Further Efforts toward Rapprochement**

Martin's changed view of Adventism led him to launch a twofold campaign during these intervening months. First, he urged Adventist leaders to purge concepts and expressions from denominational publications that deviated from what he considered to be orthodox Christian teachings. He also encouraged Adventists to express their teachings in ways that evangelicals could understand.

Second, he began the work of persuading fellow evangelicals to accept Adventism as Christian. During this intervening period, Martin engaged in conversations with major evangelical leaders, challenging them to rethink their positions on Adventism. Not only did he talk extensively with Barnhouse, but also to such notable figures as Frank Gaebelein, president of the National Association of Evangelicals; John S. Wimbish, a well-known pastor in New Jersey; Wilbur Smith and Carl F. H. Henry, prominent professors at Fuller Theological Seminary; Louis Talbot, head of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (which later became Biola University) and publisher of *The King's Business*; and E. Schuyler English, publisher and editor of *Our Hope*, with whom Froom was also exchanging personal dialogues. Such activities by Martin are referred to in various letters during this period and beyond.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin, 12 April 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA; L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin, 15 April 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA; L. E. Froom to John S. Wimbish, 15 April 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA; L. E. Froom to R. R. Figuhr, 28 April 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA; L. E. Froom to R. R. Figuhr, 10 May 1955 [dictated on 6 May 1955], TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA; T. E. Unruh to W. E. Read and L. E. Froom, 18 July 1955 [dictated on 15 July 1955], TL, RG 11, box 3203, GCA; L. E. Froom to Special Group Dealing with Questions and Answers Prepared for Dr. Walter R. Martin, 23 November 1955, TL, C 152, box 2, fld 10, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

In addition, Martin was appointed in July as the director of the division of cult apologetics at Zondervan Publishing House, one of the most prominent evangelical publishers in the world. Zondervan had been a source of many anti-Adventist writings circulating in the evangelical world. Upon his appointment to this post (which he accepted in addition to his responsibility at *Eternity*), Martin canceled the contracts already signed for the publication of two anti-Adventist leaflets—one of which had been written by Louis Talbot.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, the Adventist leaders' new-found friendship with Martin led them to follow his lead in moving toward evangelical orthodoxy. A clear sign of such a move by Adventist conferees is found in Froom's report to Figuhr on the third conference. In that letter, Froom warned Figuhr that the phrasing of Adventist leaders' responses to Martin may appear strange. In an unwitting foreshadowing of intra-church controversies to come, Froom acknowledged that "some of the statements are a bit different from what you might anticipate." But he explained that the statements must be understood in the particular context of dialoguing with the evangelical world: "If you knew the backgrounds, the attitudes, the setting of it all, you would understand why we stated these things as we have."<sup>2</sup>

Froom then asserted that some of the prominent thinkers of Adventism were "altogether too narrow" in the way they expressed the Adventist faith. "But most serious

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<sup>1</sup>T. E. Unruh to W. E. Read and L. E. Froom, 18 July 1955 [dictated on 15 July 1955], TL, RG 11, box 3203, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>L. E. Froom to R. R. Figuhr, 26 April 1955 [dictated on 15 April 1955], TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

of all,” he continued ominously, “is the fact that in [M. L.] Andreasen’s book on Hebrews there are some gravely inaccurate statements.” Froom also cited the writings of Milton E. Kern, former dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, and W. H. Branson, former General Conference president, as containing inaccuracies and conflicts with the official position of the Adventist church. Thus, he concluded, “We will have to have a serious study of safeguarding our literature and making it more accurate, and our publications, as well as our public oral presentations.”<sup>1</sup>

Moments before sailing to Europe, Froom dictated another letter to Figuhr with the same concern. In the letter, Froom declared that those doctrines that Adventists share with evangelical orthodoxy must be highlighted in the church’s teachings and publications. “We have been misunderstood,” he wrote, “because we have not placed the emphasis where it belongs. We have been so intent on giving a [distinct] message that we have forgotten to put in the forefront the gospel of that message.” Then he asserted that having “the right emphasis” means placing the gospel—as shared with the evangelical world—prominently in the presentations of the Adventist message. Of course, Adventists should not neglect their unique message, Froom wrote, but they “should present these distinctive truths as simply applications of the gospel for this particular time.” He continued that such a “proper presentation” of the Adventist teachings “enhances the distinctiveness” while eliminating the “offensiveness that was characteristic under the old ‘knock ‘em and drag ‘em out’ method.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>L. E. Froom to R. R. Figuhr, 28 April 1955 [dictated on 20 April 1955], RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

Figuhr did not comment specifically on all the points that Froom made. But he did inquire with Froom asking which parts of the writings of Kern, Andreasen, and Branson were objectionable. Figuhr wondered if, at least for Branson's writings, any problematic sections might be "just a slip" and "an oversight."<sup>1</sup>

But Froom, in his response to Figuhr, was adamant that their works on the atonement and the nature of Christ represented a deeper problem than Figuhr surmised. Though, writing from Europe, he was not able to give specific references, Froom stated that a segment in Andreasen's *Book of Hebrews*<sup>2</sup> was "a plain and straight misconception of the intent of the translation or an expression in the book of Hebrews," which Martin and Cannon had already pointed out. Because Andreasen's "misinterpretation" was "based upon a distortion of a text," Froom wrote, he and Read were forced to admit to Martin and Cannon that they "could not sustain Brother Andreasen in his contention."<sup>3</sup>

Froom also contended that the writings of Branson and Kern contained questionable materials supporting the sinful human nature of Jesus Christ. They are more than a slip or an oversight, Froom noted, but an evidence that many Adventist leaders "feel that Christ had . . . sinful nature." He went on to state that his informal poll among several Adventist leaders revealed that "nearly all of them had that idea."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Figuhr to L. E. Froom, 29 April 1955, TL, RG 11, box 3204, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>Andreasen, *The Book of Hebrews*.

<sup>3</sup>L. E. Froom to R. R. Figuhr, 10 May 1955 [dictated on 6 May 1955], TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. In the case of Branson, Froom was referring to *Drama of the Ages* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1950), 81, 101. On those pages, Branson wrote that Jesus Christ came to the earth and took "upon Himself sinful flesh" (81) and that

Froom blamed this phenomenon on being “too weak in theology and in giving the right impression to others.” He implied that many Adventist leaders supported the idea of the sinful nature of Christ without understanding all its implications—due to imprecise theological thinking and lack of experience in communicating with other Christians. Therefore, Adventist workers “need to catch a new vision of [their] place as the heralds of the everlasting gospel.”<sup>1</sup>

In other letters to Figuhr, Froom declared the need for communicating clearly the evangelical fundamentals in Adventist publications so that even the distinctive teachings of Adventism will be presented in ways that would be acceptable to the evangelical world.<sup>2</sup> In one letter, Froom wrote that Adventist workers need to “give a new emphasis, an emphasis in which Christ and the fundamentals of the gospel are given as the foundation.” He also wrote that Adventist publishing houses as well as the Adventist

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Christ had to have partaken of “man’s sinful nature” (101).

Coincidentally, A. Gallagher of Queensland, Australia, wrote Branson on May 20, pointing out these two statements as representing a “terrific” and “extreme” view of Christ’s human nature (A. Gallagher to W. H. Branson, 20 May 1955, TL, C 152, box 2, fld 10, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU). A month later, Branson, having accepted Gallagher’s critique, directed the Signs Publishing Company, the Australian publisher of his book, to correct the “sinful” on page 81 to “our” and “sinful” on page 101 to “actual” (W. H. Branson to C. F. L. Ulrich, 21 June 1955, TL, C 152, box 2, fld 10, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU). Branson also wrote Gallagher, thanking him for pointing out the “unfortunate” choice of wording (W. H. Branson to A. Gallagher, 21 June 1955, TL, C 152, box 2, fld 10, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU).

<sup>1</sup>L. E. Froom to R. R. Figuhr, 10 May 1955 [dictated on 6 May 1955], TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>L. E. Froom to R. R. Figuhr, 6 May 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.; L. E. Froom to R. R. Figuhr, 10 May 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

leadership at large “need to be more guarded” about their statements so as not to provide grounds for attacks by evangelical critics.<sup>1</sup>

On yet another occasion, Froom wrote Figuhr that clear, gospel-oriented publications on the sanctuary, the atonement, the nature of man, and Ellen White’s ministry were needed. Expressing his dissatisfaction with the materials written by Andreasen, Read, and Uriah Smith, Froom called for a scholarly presentation on the issue of the sanctuary and the atonement from which “most of our conflict and antagonisms come.”<sup>2</sup>

The activities of Martin and Froom between April and August show how determined each—and by extension each side—was in desiring to build a lasting bridge between evangelicalism and Adventism through these dialogues. As they prepared for what would prove to be a pivotal meeting with Barnhouse in August, the five conferees were not only well aware of the historic nature of the conferences, but determined to make history by publicly linking hands in fellowship at the denominational level.

#### **Inclusion of Roy Allan Anderson and the Disagreement between Froom and Read**

In anticipation of the next major conference in August, which was to be held at the Barnhouse farm in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, the Adventist leaders added Roy Allan Anderson, head of the Ministerial Association of the General Conference, to their

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<sup>1</sup>L. E. Froom to R. R. Figuhr, 6 May 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>L. E. Froom to R. R. Figuhr, 10 May 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

committee.<sup>1</sup> The request for Anderson was made by Froom, who felt that Anderson would be “adept at such contacts and would creditably acquit himself, even though he was not with [the committee] in the other three meetings.”<sup>2</sup>

Initially, Froom’s suggestion to add Anderson was not received enthusiastically by Unruh. In his letter to Read and Froom on July 18, Unruh wrote that it would be important to “keep [the] circle complete in . . . future negotiations.” He did not think it

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<sup>1</sup>Although participants of the conferences have provided conflicting accounts on whether Anderson was present from the first meeting or not, contemporary evidence shows that he joined the committee later—in August 1955. In their accounts published decades later, Froom and Martin place Anderson at this meeting (Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 477; “Currents Interview: Walter Martin,” *Adventist Currents*, July 1983, 17), though their recollections of events are not very precise. Even Anderson himself seems to indicate that he was present from the first meeting, though his account too lacks precision on the sequence of events. He states he was present at the time of Martin’s announcement accepting Adventism as Christian (Roy Allan Anderson, “Brief Story of the Origin of *Questions on Doctrine*,” n.d., TMs, C 152, box 28, fld 8, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU).

However, Unruh—also writing years later—claims that Anderson was added to the committee in August, though he had participated in the conference in April (T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 39). Contemporary correspondence between the participants of the meetings indicate that Anderson was not a participant in the first sessions held in March and April. In his May 6 letter to Figuhr, Froom requests that Anderson be given permission to join the committee at the meeting to be held on Barnhouse’s farm in August, “even though he was not with us in the other three meetings” (L. E. Froom to R. R. Figuhr, 6 May 1955, RG 58, box 11145, GCA). Unruh, in his July 18 letter to Froom and Read, writes of having a “meeting of the five of us,” meaning Martin, Cannon, Froom, Read, and Unruh himself (T. E. Unruh to W. E. Read and L. E. Froom, 18 July 1955 [dictated on 15 July 1955], TL, RG 11, box 3203, GCA). Also, the absence of any references to Anderson in the letters and documents of March and April 1955 strongly suggests that Anderson was not present (see, for example, T. E. Unruh to Walter R. Martin and G. E. Cannon, 11 March 1955, TL, Tobias Edgar Unruh Collection, LLU). Thus, if Anderson was present at all in earlier meetings, he was not there as a full participant, but perhaps as an occasional observer.

<sup>2</sup>L. E. Froom to R. R. Figuhr, 6 May 1955, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

wise to enlarge the group at that point in time.<sup>1</sup> Froom responded from England that the inclusion of Anderson would merely be keeping in step with the addition of Barnhouse to the evangelical side. He reminded Unruh that his initial choice for the third person in the conferences had been Anderson. But because Anderson was away on a trip, Read had been chosen to be part of the team. Froom added that Anderson's past interactions with leaders of other churches would be an asset to the committee.<sup>2</sup> In a separate letter to Figuhr, Froom also noted that Anderson was "used to the phraseology of the non-Adventist" since he had "worked with them years and years in evangelism."<sup>3</sup>

Unlike Unruh, Read agreed with Froom's suggestion of including Anderson. In fact, he even offered to leave the committee to make room for Anderson, stating that "we do not want too many persons" in this type of discussion. Read's offer may be read as merely a gesture of humility, or perhaps a sign of unease that was developing between him and Froom.<sup>4</sup>

Whatever the motive for Read's response may have been, it appears that a degree of unease did exist between him and Froom. The tension boiled over just before Froom's departure to Europe. Froom had written a draft of a letter to Louis Talbot who had

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<sup>1</sup>T. E. Unruh to W. E. Read and L. E. Froom, 18 July 1955 [dictated on 15 July 1955], TL, RG 11, box 3203, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>L. E. Froom to T. E. Unruh, 5 August 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11146, GCA. Interestingly, Froom recalled in this letter that he and Unruh initially discussed adding Nichol because of his "keenness and ability." However, due to Nichol's "sharp and argumentative ways," Read was chosen instead.

<sup>3</sup>L. E. Froom to R. R. Figuhr, 8 August 1955, TL, RG 11, box 3204, GCA.

<sup>4</sup>W. E. Read to L. E. Froom, 22 June 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.



written a scathing diatribe against Adventism in the March 1955 issue of *The King's Business*. On the advice of Read, Froom showed Figuhr the letter, which remained yet unpolished. After reading the draft, Figuhr suggested a major softening of language and tone before sending it out to Talbot, which Read apparently agreed with.

Froom was deeply perturbed by this course of events. He felt that by having been urged to show an unpolished draft of the letter to Figuhr, he was now subjected to the changes suggested by Figuhr. At the same time, Froom found Figuhr's suggestions too constraining. Writing from England, Froom made some forceful statements to Read regarding this incident:

You seem to feel that I am a little free with my adjectives and adverbs. Yes, I am, and designedly so. . . . On the matter of the Talbot letter, I shall not knowingly be caught in a situation of that kind again. I deeply regret ever having let Elder Figuhr see that letter, and the letter will never see the light of day. I would not want it to go with the deletions suggested—flat, tame, and largely pointless, a mere record of what is or is not correct.<sup>1</sup>

When writing to Figuhr eleven days later, Froom remarked, "I cannot forget the unfortunate counsel given me by Brother Read to present an unfinished manuscript to you—the one concerning Dr. Talbot's article. That counsel was foolishly followed. . . ." Then, he stated rather emphatically, "I cannot work in Brother Read's harness, I am sure."<sup>2</sup>

Even to an uninvolved third party, Froom was candid about his displeasure with Read. "I still think," Froom wrote to Arthur Maxwell, editor of *Signs of the Times*, "that Brother Read gave me bad counsel and I followed his poor counsel in giving [the Talbot

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<sup>1</sup>L. E. Froom to W. E. Read, 29 April 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11146, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>L. E. Froom to R. R. Figuhr, 10 May 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

letter] to Elder Figuhr. The facts are true, but the way Read would work, I would have a plain, flat, colorless thing that I wouldn't want to present anywhere. He does not have the faculty of making words live.”<sup>1</sup>

Judging from the above statements by Froom, the differences in style between him and Read can be readily seen. But whether that was the reason for Read's offer to leave the committee cannot be ascertained. In the end, Read remained with the committee, and Anderson was added in August before the big meeting in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

#### August 25-26, 1955, Conference with Barnhouse

On August 25, Froom, Unruh, Read, and Anderson went to Barnhouse's home in Doylestown for their first-ever meeting with the publisher. The invitation had been extended to the Adventist conferees just as Froom was leaving for Europe.<sup>2</sup> After a series of letters exchanged over the summer and a planning meeting that took place at the General Conference headquarters on August 22 (which Anderson joined officially for the first time), the dates and the agenda had been set.

The seven conferees—including Barnhouse and Anderson—began the meeting with a statement by Barnhouse affirming the conclusions on Adventism arrived at by Martin and Cannon. Barnhouse shared how and why he had long held anti-Adventist views. But since March, Barnhouse had come to share Martin and Cannon's new understanding that many Adventists were “sober, sane, truly regenerated” Christians. He

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<sup>1</sup>L. E. Froom to A. S. Maxwell, 24 May 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11146, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>T. E. Unruh to Walter R. Martin, 2 May 1955, TL, Tobias Edgar Unruh Collection, LLU; L. E. Froom to R. R. Figuhr, 6 May 1955, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

continued that while he found some of the teachings of Adventism to be “totally alien to [his] thinking,” he acknowledged that “some of these positions had been held in the past by noted Christians.” Thus, while reserving the right to refute “two or three [Adventist] positions which evangelicals hold to be in error,” Barnhouse was now “ready to extend a hand” to Adventists as Christian brethren.<sup>1</sup>

The rest of the conference was spent reviewing the questions and answers developed among them since the first conference in March. Barnhouse, in particular, recognized that he had held erroneous views on Adventism concerning the issues of Ellen White, the Sabbath, the nature of Christ, and salvation. The Adventist leaders confirmed that Adventism understood (1) Ellen White’s writings as subordinate to the Bible; (2) Sabbath-keeping as a response to salvation, and never as a means; (3) Jesus Christ as the eternal second member of the Godhead; and (4) salvation as involving free will, activated by grace (in the manner of Arminian thinking).<sup>2</sup> In the course of this dialogue, the two sides affirmed the finding that there had been “many misunderstandings [that] rested on semantic grounds, because of [the Adventist] use of an inbred denominational vocabulary.” Unruh recounted that the evangelicals helped Adventist leaders to express their beliefs “in terms more easily understood by theologians of other communions.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, “Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians? A New Look at Seventh-day Adventism,” *Eternity*, September 1956, 7. See also T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 39.

<sup>2</sup>See Donald Grey Barnhouse, “Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians? A New Look at Seventh-day Adventism,” *Eternity*, September 1956, 7.

<sup>3</sup>T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 40. See also Donald Grey Barnhouse,

By all accounts, the interaction between the two sides was cordial and agreeable. The positive tone of the meetings can be perceived in Froom's exultant depiction of the meetings in the first post-Doylestown letter to Martin and Cannon as "the glorious days that we spent together."<sup>1</sup> Though Barnhouse, Martin, and Cannon continued to raise strong objections to such Adventist teachings as conditional immortality, the seventh-day Sabbath, and the investigative judgment, they agreed with Froom that "they are not points that distinguish us as Christians or non-Christians, as orthodox or heretics. . . ."<sup>2</sup> In his letter to Martin and Cannon, Froom remarked: "I think we have followed a fundamentally right course to establish the basis of common loyalty to our Lord and His gospel, to recognize the propriety of variant views in areas that do not affect our salvation and should not separate brethren in the Lord in their fellowship as Christians."<sup>3</sup>

The two sides ended the Doylestown conference with the agreement to simultaneously publish books on Adventism. The Adventist book would be in a question-and-answer format providing answers to frequently asked evangelical questions on Adventist beliefs (which had already been submitted by Martin), while Martin would write a book entitled *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventists* to put forth reasons why

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"Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians? A New Look at Seventh-day Adventism," *Eternity*, September 1956, 7.

<sup>1</sup>L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin and G. E. Cannon, 28 August 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11146, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>L. E. Froom to Donald G. Barnhouse, 28 August 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin and G. E. Cannon, 28 August 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11146, GCA.

Adventists should no longer be classified as a non-Christian cult.<sup>1</sup> According to Unruh, Barnhouse also accepted the “challenge” of his son, Donald Grey Barnhouse, Jr., to publish his new view on Adventism in the pages of *Eternity*, where “he knew it would precipitate a storm and would cost him many subscriptions.”<sup>2</sup>

Thus the Doylestown conference served to seal permanently the positive intercourse between Adventists and evangelicals that had been taking place from March. With the points of common and divergent beliefs clearly outlined, and the orthodoxy of Adventism sufficiently established, the two sides were now ready to shift their attention to convincing the evangelical world of the correctness of their conclusions through planned publications.

#### Adventist Leaders’ Meetings with General Conference Officers (September-December 1955)

Adventist leaders who participated in the dialogues with Martin, Cannon, and Barnhouse made their first official report to the General Conference officers on September 20, 1955. The meeting was attended by Figuhr, the vice presidents, secretary, treasurer, and a few other General Conference leaders invited by Figuhr and Froom. It

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 40. During my personal interview with him on 10 November 1999 in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, Donald Grey Barnhouse, Jr., corroborated this account. At the time of the interview, Barnhouse, Jr., was serving as a pastor in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania—not far from Doylestown.

was not the regular Officers' Meeting, which would have included the associate secretaries and treasurers.<sup>1</sup>

At this meeting the participants in the dialogues gave a presentation of about three and a half hours detailing the developments of the conferences. Unruh opened the presentation by recounting how the initial contact was made and how the dialogues got started. Froom, Read, and Anderson then went over the main points of the dialogues and the consensus that had been reached. The officers were supplied with the answers written by the Adventist committee of four in response to Martin's thirty-one questions (expanded from his earlier 24). The meeting concluded with the consensus that once the documents were fully read by the officers and further revisions were made and approved by the same body, they would be cleared for publication.<sup>2</sup>

Another meeting of the same "little group" of higher-ranking officers on October 14 took place as a continuation of the September 20 meeting. Participants of the meeting had been asked to carefully go over the manuscripts given to them since September 20 and to return them by October 14 with "any criticisms, suggestions, additions or deletions that . . . would strengthen the answers, or that would be desirable."<sup>3</sup> The prevailing

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<sup>1</sup>L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin, 29 September 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA; R. R. Figuhr to W. R. Beach et al., 4 October 1955, TL, RG 11, box 3203, GCA; L. E. Froom to T. E. Unruh, 29 August 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11146, GCA; L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin, 2 September 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA; T. E. Unruh to L. E. Froom, 8 September 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA; L. E. Froom to T. E. Unruh, 13 September 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11146, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin, 29 September 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA; L. E. Froom to T. E. Unruh, 29 August 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11146, GCA; L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin, 12 October 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>R. R. Figuhr to W. R. Beach et al., 4 October 1955, TL, RG 11, box 3203, GCA.

assessment on the part of the officers was that the writers had done “a very fine piece of work in explaining what Seventh-day Adventists believe.” Figuhr remarked that they had “carefully avoided any suggestion that any new point of faith is being established, or that any readjustments are being made in the statement of [Adventist] Fundamental Beliefs” which was drafted in 1931 and recognized by the world church in 1946.<sup>1</sup> At the end of the October 14 meeting, the select group of officers “heartily approved” the statements and the plans for publication.<sup>2</sup>

One point of concern raised by some of the officers, however, had to do with the relationship between these statements and past doctrinal positions of the Adventist church. As had been anticipated by Froom in his April 26 letter to Figuhr,<sup>3</sup> some in attendance at the October 14 meeting asked whether these statements indicated any change in doctrinal positions. In fact, this question had also been posed by Martin, particularly in his inquiries on the nature of Christ. Froom’s position was that the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin, 17 October 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA. I have not been able to find the minutes for this meeting and the September 20 meeting. Because this was not an official meeting of General Conference Officers, but rather a select group of “top” leaders, official minutes may not have been kept. Since the minutes are not available, I have not been able to ascertain exactly which leaders were in attendance at these meetings. The list of invitees to the meeting, however, can be ascertained through Figuhr’s letter to W. R. Beach and others (Figuhr to Beach et al., 4 October 1955). They were: (1) W. R. Beach, secretary; (2) C. L. Torrey, treasurer; (3) L. K. Dickson, A. L. Ham, W. B. Ochs, A. V. Olson, and H. L. Rudy, vice presidents; (4) J. I. Robison, associate secretary; and (5) F. D. Nichol, *Review and Herald* editor. The inclusion of Robison and Nichol must have been due to their widely recognized theological expertise (L. E. Froom to T. E. Unruh, 29 August 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11146, GCA). Froom, Read, and Anderson were, of course, present as well.

<sup>3</sup>L. E. Froom to R. R. Figuhr, 26 April 1955 [dictated on 15 April 1955], TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

responses to Martin did not constitute a formulation of any “new” theology. They were new only in the way they were expressed for the benefit of the evangelical audience, but not in substance. However, these discussions led to the decision to ask the committee of four to add a formal statement that describes the way contemporary Adventists related to various past positions on doctrine.

On November 4, 1955, Froom, Read, and Anderson met with the same group of officers of the General Conference to present their statement on the contemporary Adventist church’s relationship to past positions. This meeting was attended by Figuhr, A. V. Olson, L. K. Dickson, C. L. Torrey, and J. I. Robison, as well as Froom, Read, and Anderson. The statement gave a frank admission to the diversity of doctrinal positions—and even heresies—among early Adventists, while affirming the Adventist concept of “present truth,” i.e., the truth as understood in the present time but subject to change with a better understanding of the truth in the future. The statement was approved unanimously for inclusion in the Adventist responses.<sup>1</sup>

On December 5 the General Conference Officers’ Meeting (the official standing body of leaders including lower ranking officers such as associate secretaries) decided to circulate the questions and answers to denominational workers. A committee consisting of four individuals—L. K. Dickson, R. A. Anderson, W. E. Read, and J. I. Robison—was formed to draft an appropriate introduction to the document.<sup>2</sup> The introduction written by

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<sup>1</sup>L. E. Froom to W. R. Beach et al., 8 November 1955, TL, RG 21, box 3490, GCA; L. E. Froom to T. E. Unruh, 4 November 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11146, GCA. This statement would become chapter 3 of *Questions on Doctrine*.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Officers’ Meeting, 5 December 1955, GCA.



the committee was accepted on December 14, and the Officers' Meeting voted to send the introduction and the document to all local and union conference presidents in North America. This decision was reaffirmed by the same body on December 28, giving the document full endorsement from the General Conference leadership.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Officers' Meeting, 14 December 1955, GCA. The politics behind this decision betrays the continuing unease that Froom felt toward Read. In his letter to Unruh, Froom wrote that it was Read who "talked to the Officers [*sic*] and urged that he be given two hours of the presiden't [*sic*] council to officially tell this story, and to present these documents." Froom expressed that he was "quite stirred" about this development, stating that "to release these documents to our presidents and others beyond the presidential group [at the General Conference headquarters] would be "a betrayal of an understanding—at least a tacit understanding—that would be gravely misunderstood by . . . Martin" (L. E. Froom to T. E. Unruh, 19 December 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11146, GCA). Froom believed that the Adventist leaders owed it to Martin to have the first public use of the document before it was released widely. To disseminate the document to the presidents of local and union conferences would mean to distribute publicly, which in Froom's mind amounted to "a very grave breach of Christian ethics" (L. E. Froom to A. V. Olson, 21 December 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA). Furthermore, Froom felt that Read's actions showed his tendency to be "terribly possessive" and to "take things out of everyone else's hands and run it, irrespective." Then, to drive home his displeasure with the incident, Froom threatened to withdraw from the group "if Brother Read were to continue to press such matters" (L. E. Froom to T. E. Unruh, 19 December 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11146, GCA).

Froom's protest resulted in the document being held from distribution until Figuhr's return from a trip on December 22. There is no record of the discussions that occurred in the days following that date. Apparently, Froom, Read, and the officers reached an understanding by December 28, as the Officers' Meeting minutes of that day indicate an agreement to "go forward with the plan of submitting these questions and answers as prepared" to the local and union conference presidents due to meet in Kansas City the next month (Minutes of the General Conference Officers' Meeting, 28 December 1955, GCA).

Most likely, Froom did not truly intend to leave the Adventist representation. The dialogues were too important to him to quit so suddenly. He seems to have been reacting to Read's action without consulting him first. Also, Froom's reaction seems hypocritical in light of his liberal sharing of the same document with his evangelical correspondents as well as several Adventist leaders in his circle of confidence (See L. E. Froom to Peter Hoogendam, 24 August 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA; A. S. Maxwell to L. E. Froom, 4 October 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA; L. E. Froom to Otto A. Dorn, 20 October 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA; L. E. Froom to Fenton E. Froom, 20 October 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA; L. E. Froom to A. R. Yielding, 28 October

This series of meetings with key General Conference officers and the decision of the Officers' Meeting to distribute the document to local and union conference presidents in North America represented another major milestone in the Adventist-evangelical dialogues. It gave a resounding endorsement of the statements by Froom, Read, Anderson, and Unruh, thereby providing a firm footing for the publication of the book that would be known as *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*.

#### February 2, 3, and 6, 1956, Conference

The next major conference between Adventist and evangelical leaders took place on February 2, 3, and 6, 1956, at the General Conference headquarters. The purpose of the meeting was "to consider any further queries that may occur to the non-Adventist mind on the wording" of the official responses provided by Adventist leaders.<sup>1</sup> Although several interactions had taken place among the individuals involved in the dialogues since the Doylestown meeting, this meeting was the first to be convened after the formal General Conference approval of the responses to Martin's questions. Both sides were now ready to lay out detailed plans for the publications.

This conference, which had originally been scheduled for November and December, came on the heels of a crisis in the dialogues precipitated by the publication of

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1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA; L. E. Froom to M. K. Eckenroth, 9 November 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA; L. E. Froom to W. G. C. Murdoch, 9 November 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA; L. E. Froom to C. E. Wittschiebe, 9 November 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11146, GCA; L. E. Froom to Wilbur M. Smith, 10 November 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11146, GCA; L. E. Froom to Louis T. Talbot, 15 November 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11146, GCA).

<sup>1</sup>L. E. Froom to Special Officer Group Dealing with 33 Questions and Answers, 10 January 1956, TL, RG 21, box 3495, GCA.

*The Rise of the Cults*. When this book was released in December 1955, Adventist leaders were greatly dismayed by Martin's inclusion of Adventism in his list of cults. Though the original chapter on Adventism was dropped, it was still prominently categorized as a cult, particularly in the second chapter of the book. In that chapter, Seventh-day Adventism was still named as one of the "Big Five" cults, but which was so "complex" that it must be handled in a separate book. In fourteen other occasions in the book, Adventists were mentioned by name in the category of cults.<sup>1</sup>

Understandably, the Adventist conferees felt betrayed and bewildered by the book. In their separate lengthy letters to Martin, Froom and Anderson questioned whether Martin's embracing of Adventists as fellow Christians had been a disingenuous and conniving move to befriend Adventist leaders only to condemn them even more hurtfully later on. Anderson asked whether "one whom I have held in such high esteem as a true brother in the faith of Jesus Christ was after all a caviling critic,"<sup>2</sup> while Froom declared that the chapter in question was a source for "a shocking disillusionment" and "grave damage" to their relationship.<sup>3</sup> Froom added that the sense of betrayal felt by Adventist leaders compelled them to think of "a new basis of understanding and negotiation" and a complete rethinking on the usefulness of the dialogues.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Martin, *The Rise of the Cults*, 12-15.

<sup>2</sup>R. Allan Anderson to Walter R. Martin, 28 December 1955, TL, C 152, box 28, fld 8, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

<sup>3</sup>L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin, 28 December 1955, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

The potential crisis in the dialogues was averted, however, during the first week of the new year after Martin telephoned Froom with apologies and corrections. Martin explained that the manuscript for *The Rise of the Cults* had been written before his contacts with Adventists. Though he pulled out the full chapter on Adventism and made changes to the book jacket, he was not able to delete or rewrite all the references to Adventism in the introductory chapters. Martin assured Froom that the second edition of the book would be stripped of the remaining statements on Adventists.<sup>1</sup>

Adventist leaders accepted Martin's apologies, and a new conference date was set for February 2, 3, and 6. Martin and Cannon went to Washington, D.C., with a few additional questions centering on the interpretation of the prophetic time periods in Daniel 8 and 9, the nature of Christ's priesthood in the book of Hebrews, and Michael the Archangel. Another issue that was discussed was the relationship between the Adventist book in responses to Martin's questions (which by this time had increased to 33) and Martin's book, which would utilize those responses.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>L. E. Froom to Special Officer Group Dealing with 33 Questions and Answers, 10 January 1956, TL, RG 21, box 3495, GCA. Martin's excuse reveals a gross negligence on his part. It would seem that the nine months between March and December would have given him enough time to make relevant corrections to his manuscript. Especially, as Zondervan's director of cult apologetics, he would have been in the position to make the necessary changes. Either Martin forgot about what he had written in the second chapter when he pulled the chapter on Adventism, or he did not conduct a thorough check on the final pre-publication draft. Either option presents a case for gross negligence, considering the type of damages such a publication brings. To his credit, Martin did remove all references to Seventh-day Adventism in the second (revised and enlarged) printing of 1957, where he attacked "the big six" cults: Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, Mormonism, Unity, Father Divine, and Spiritualism (Martin, *The Rise of the Cults*, 12).

<sup>2</sup>L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin, 8 February 1956, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

Martin's visit to Washington on this occasion took on a greater significance as he received opportunities to address two important Adventist audiences on the weekend of February 4 and 5. First, he was invited to speak at the Takoma Park Seventh-day Adventist Church during the Saturday morning worship on February 4.<sup>1</sup> The Takoma Park church, located adjacent to the General Conference headquarters, included in its membership many important leaders of the Adventist church and was considered one of Adventism's most important congregations. Then, on Monday, February 6, Martin addressed the faculty and students of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, which was also located at the General Conference headquarters.<sup>2</sup> Martin's appearances at such important Adventist venues signaled the deep level of trust and cooperation that had developed between the two sides. After the visit, Froom remarked that this was "the most important of our conferences."<sup>3</sup>

#### May 1956 Conference with Barnhouse<sup>4</sup>

In anticipation of the planned publications, the second meeting with Barnhouse was arranged for late May. Once again the conferees spent two days in Barnhouse's

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<sup>1</sup>Leslie R. Mansell to Walter R. Martin, 23 January 1956, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA; Walter R. Martin to Leslie R. Mansell, 30 January 1956, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>L. E. Froom to Special Officer Group Dealing with 33 Questions and Answers, 10 January 1956, TL, RG 21, box 3495, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin, 8 February 1956, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

<sup>4</sup>I have not been able to ascertain the exact dates of this conference in any of my research findings. Judging by various letters and the General Conference Officers' Meeting minutes surrounding the conference, it was most likely in late May some time during the week of May 21-25 (Monday-Friday).

home in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. The purpose of the meeting was to further examine Adventist answers to questions posed by Martin and Barnhouse and to finalize plans for publications from both sides. The evangelical questions centered on the role of Ellen White in Adventist theology and the doctrine of the sanctuary. Though discussions on these issues had already occurred on numerous occasions, this meeting provided another occasion for Barnhouse, Martin, and Cannon to affirm the conclusions about Adventism that they had come to.<sup>1</sup>

What remained, thereafter, was to publish their new findings so that the larger Christian world would also come to view Adventists as fellow Christians. In fact, prior to coming to this conference, the evangelicals had already made plans to disseminate this new view on Adventism through articles appearing simultaneously in September in at least three different Christian magazines, including *Eternity*, *Our Hope*, and *Christian Life*. The plan, designed by Russell Hitt, managing editor of *Eternity*, was to have these articles serve the role of “conditioning the Christian fraternity in North America and preparing them for the book” by Martin.<sup>2</sup> One of these articles would be written by Barnhouse himself in *Eternity*, followed by a series of explanatory articles by Martin. Martin’s book, *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventists*,<sup>3</sup> was scheduled to be

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<sup>1</sup>T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 42; L. E. Fromm to Walter R. Martin, 7 June 1956, TL, C 152, box 42, fld 14, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU; W. E. Read to R. R. Figuhr, 8 June 1956, TL, RG 21, box 3497, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>W. E. Read to R. R. Figuhr, 8 June 1956, TL, RG 21, box 3497, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>By the time this book was actually published in 1960, the title of this book would be changed slightly to *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*.

published before the end of 1956, and from the Adventist side, *Questions and Answers* (as it was tentatively called) would be released one month after Martin's work.<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

With these specific agreements on the publication schedule reached, the historic Adventist-evangelical conferences came to a formal end—some fourteen months after they had started. The journey that Barnhouse, Martin, and Cannon took over this period was truly a remarkable one. In spite of their well-known antagonism toward Adventism, they displayed the courage and resolve to admit to their past misunderstandings once presented with clear evidences that demanded rethinking. Moreover, over the course of the fourteen months, they invited other evangelical leaders to reconsider their views on Adventism and made plans to publicly acknowledge their new attitude toward Adventism.

The journey taken by Adventist leaders was also an extraordinary one. Figuhr and the committee of four also had the courage and resolve to face hostile and previously unknown inquirers, trusting Adventism could speak for itself. Their “leap of faith” was rewarded quickly, with the evangelical party accepting Adventism as Christian—literally overnight! Over the course of the next fourteen months Adventist leaders strove to respond to Martin's questions in ways that would be more clearly communicated to the evangelical world. At the same time, Adventist leaders—particularly Froom—also sought to “mainstream” Adventist theology by highlighting its evangelical orthodoxy and

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<sup>1</sup>W. E. Read to R. R. Figuhr, 8 June 1956, TL, RG 21, box 3497, GCA; L. E. Froom to Walter R. Martin, 18 June 1956, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

censoring previously tolerated views that went against both established Christian orthodoxy and the majority thinking within Adventism on some issues.

As history would show, the *Eternity* articles by Barnhouse and Martin and the following year's publication of *Questions on Doctrine* proved not only to be the culmination of the fourteen-month journey by the participants of the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences, but a monumental landmark in the history of Adventist-evangelical relations, pointing in the direction of mutual acceptance and tolerance.

### **Overview of *Eternity* Articles and *Questions on Doctrine***

*Eternity* Articles on Seventh-day Adventism  
(September 1956-January 1957)

#### **Barnhouse's September 1956 Article**

Barnhouse published the historic article signaling his recognition of Adventism as Christian in the September 1956 issue of *Eternity*. It was an act of courage and conviction that opened a new chapter in the relationship between Adventism and the rest of Protestantism. In the article, Barnhouse announced his acceptance of Seventh-day Adventists as "redeemed brethren and members of the body of Christ." He expressed the desire to move Adventism "out of the list of anti-Christian and non-Christian cults into the group of those who are brethren in Christ," thereby doing "justice to a much-maligned group of sincere believers." He explained that the purpose of the article was to trace the steps in the change of attitude and to document the justification of the change. Barnhouse's objective was not to engage in in-depth theological analyses of Adventist beliefs. That task would be reserved for Martin in the upcoming issues. Rather,



Barnhouse's job was to invite readers to take a "new look at Seventh-day Adventism," as the secondary title suggested.<sup>1</sup>

Barnhouse opened his article with a brief description of the events between March 1955 and May 1956 that led to the change in his attitude toward Adventism. He then noted key doctrinal clarifications that Adventist leaders gave that helped clear up his own misunderstanding of the past. He cited five—(1) that Ellen White's writings "are not on a parity with Scripture" and "*not* a test of fellowship"; (2) that Sabbath-keeping is in no way a determinant of salvation, thus Sunday-keepers are also members of the Christian church; (3) that Adventist media will now identify their denominational affiliation; (4) that Adventism repudiates Arianism and believes in "traditional Christianity's Trinitarian doctrine"; and (5) that the Adventist view on salvation is Arminian—placing them in the same camp with Methodists and the Holiness churches.<sup>2</sup>

Barnhouse saw some of these claims by Adventists as new positions. But he recognized that they may be "merely the position of the majority group of sane leadership," which had always been held. For him it did not matter whether the claims were new or old. What truly mattered was that what he heard from the Adventist leaders represented the *current* belief system of Adventism.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, "Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians? A New Look at Seventh-day Adventism," *Eternity*, September 1956, 6, 45.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 7, 43. Regarding the third point, many Protestants had cried deception when Adventist magazines and radio programs did not always identify themselves as Adventist-affiliated. At the prodding of Martin and Froom, they began announcing their denominational affiliation in 1956.

<sup>3</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, "Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians? A New Look at Seventh-day Adventism," *Eternity*, September 1956, 7. Barnhouse would always hold

Barnhouse then moved to “some sharp areas of disagreement” between Adventists and evangelicals. They were the Adventist beliefs in conditional immortality, the seventh-day Sabbath, and the investigative judgment (including the teaching on the scapegoat). He was especially critical of the latter, calling it “the most colossal, psychological, face-saving phenomenon in religious history!” Rejecting the two phases of Christ’s post-ascension ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, he further disparaged the doctrine as “*stale, flat, and unprofitable,*” on the one hand, and “unimportant and almost naive,” on the other hand.<sup>1</sup>

However, Barnhouse declared that these differences were not significant enough to deter Adventists from joining the evangelical ranks. Even the doctrine of the investigative judgment—which he and Martin had initially thought to be “the doctrine on which it would be impossible to come to any understanding which would permit” inclusion in the Christian church—did not detract from his changed attitude. Barnhouse’s primary theological yardstick seems to have been whether a group recognized the completeness and all-sufficiency of Christ’s salvation. Over and over, as he outlined the areas of sharp disagreement, Barnhouse asked repeatedly whether the acceptance of the

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that Adventists had indeed undergone a change in their theology. In his January 24, 1957, letter to R. A. Greive, an ex-Adventist minister in New Zealand who was dismissed from ministry in 1956, Barnhouse stated that “the whole doctrine of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment have undergone recasting and reinterpretation in Adventist theology within the last few years, and in the new definitive volume entitled ‘This We Believe—The Faith of Seventh-day Adventists,’ [one of the names considered for *Questions on Doctrine* in early 1957] . . . these reinterpretations are rather plainly evident” (Donald Grey Barnhouse to R. A. Greive, 24 January 1957, TL, Donald Grey Barnhouse Collection, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA).

<sup>1</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, “Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians? A New Look at Seventh-day Adventism,” *Eternity*, September 1956, 43-45.

distinctive Adventist doctrine in question played a role in salvation. If White's writings were "*not* a test of fellowship," if Sabbath-keeping was not "in any way a means of salvation," if the investigative judgment did not take away from the completed work of the atonement on the cross, and if the identification of the scapegoat in Leviticus 16 as Satan was not "part or completion of the atonement . . . which Christ alone vicariously made on Golgotha," then Barnhouse was ready to "acknowledge them [Adventists] as redeemed brethren and members of the Body of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

But even in this acknowledgment, Barnhouse was careful to make a distinction between various hues of theological understanding within Adventism. First, he dismissed outright the "lunatic fringe" and "wild-eyed irresponsibles" of the Adventist church which adhered to various heretical ideas such as Christ having fallen human nature. Then he asserted that it was the "majority group of *sane* leadership" to whom he was ready to "extend a hand . . . as Christian brethren. . . ."<sup>2</sup> What he basically was stating was that only those Adventists who agreed with the General Conference leadership as represented by Froom, Anderson, Read, and Unruh could be accepted into the fellowship of true Christians.

With this article, Barnhouse became the first evangelical leader to go on record in support of accepting Seventh-day Adventism as a Christian church. Though it certainly

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 7, 44, 45.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 6, 7. Barnhouse and Martin became aware of such groups not only through surveying past Adventist publications, but also through the contacts that they received during the Adventist-evangelical Conferences. A number of current and former Adventists wrote and telephoned Barnhouse and Martin suggesting that the depiction of Adventism that they were receiving from the General Conference leadership was not fully representative. A fuller discussion on these contacts can be found in chapter 4.

was not an unqualified endorsement of Adventism, this article achieved its objective of challenging the evangelical world to take a new look at Adventism.

**Martin's Three-part Series (October 1956, November 1956, and January 1957)**

After Barnhouse's groundbreaking article, it was Martin's job to present systematically the history, theology, and religious practices of Adventism in the new light that he and Barnhouse had come to view them. In the three-part series that followed Barnhouse's article, Martin presented the historical background of Adventism in the first article, key teachings of the Adventist church as expressed by the contemporary denominational leadership in the second article, and then, in the last article, an investigation into the key differences between evangelicalism and Adventism.<sup>1</sup>

In the first half of the October article, Martin provided a description of Adventism's Millerite beginnings and the rise of the Seventh-day Adventist movement. Using Francis Nichol's *The Midnight Cry* as the primary source of information, Martin wrote dispassionately on Millerism by simply summarizing the course of events that led to the development of Sabbatarian Adventism and eventually to Seventh-day Adventism.

It was in the latter half of the article that Martin opened the discussion on the life and work of Ellen White. While he acknowledged that "in some places orthodox Christian theology and the interpretations of Mrs. White do not agree," he testified that

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<sup>1</sup>Walter Martin, "The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism: Its Historical Development from Christian Roots," *Eternity*, October 1956, 6, 7, 38-40; idem, "The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism: What Seventh-day Adventists Really Believe," *Eternity*, November 1956, 20, 21, 38-43; idem, "The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism: Adventist Theology vs. Historic Orthodoxy," *Eternity*, January 1957, 12, 13, 38-40.

“on the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith necessary to the salvation of the soul and the growth of the life in Christ, Ellen G. White has never written anything which is seriously contrary to the simple, plain declarations of the gospel.” He also pointed out that critics of White derived their information from D. M. Canright and E. B. Jones who brought out unverifiable charges against White. Since Adventists never claimed infallibility for White and have always held her writing to be inferior to the Bible, Martin argued, there was no reason to bar Adventists from Christian fellowship based on their acceptance of Ellen White as having been an inspired messenger for God.<sup>1</sup>

In the November article, Martin presented the three categories in which Adventist beliefs could be classified—the same divisions that he took from the Adventist leaders. The three categories were: (1) “Cardinal Doctrines of the Christian Faith”; (2) “Alternate Views on Secondary Teachings”; and (3) “Doctrines Peculiar to Seventh-day Adventism.”<sup>2</sup> Stating that a concise statement from Adventists themselves would establish their Christian orthodoxy “far better than a hundred articles by a non-Adventist,” he reproduced a statement on Adventist beliefs prepared by Froom, Anderson, Read, and Unruh for inclusion in what would become *Questions on Doctrine*. This statement sought to show emphatically that Adventists were believers in the Trinity and Christ’s “full and complete atonement” on the cross. It denounced both Arianism and works-oriented salvation that Adventists had been associated with. It ended with an

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<sup>1</sup>Walter Martin, “The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism: Its Historical Development from Christian Roots,” *Eternity*, October 1956, 6, 7, 38-40.

<sup>2</sup>Walter Martin, “The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism: What Seventh-day Adventists Really Believe,” *Eternity*, November 1956, 20.

unequivocal statement of solidarity with evangelicals: “We are one with our fellow Christians of denominational groups in the great fundamentals of the faith. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

In the rest of the article, Martin gave a resounding support for Adventism’s claim to a place in evangelical fellowship. Although it was true that there have been “many unrepresentative quotations” by Adventists of the past and the fringes, Martin noted that Adventism in 1956 was a far cry from either early Adventism or what critics had made it out to be. He stated that Adventists had “always as a majority, held to the cardinal, fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith which are necessary to salvation, and to the growth in grace that characterizes all true Christian believers.” Therefore, Martin argued, “whatever else one may say about Seventh-day Adventism, it cannot be denied from their truly representative literature and their historic positions that they have always as a majority held to the cardinal, fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. . . .”<sup>2</sup>

Particularly in the concluding sections of his article, Martin affirmed Adventism as teaching salvation by grace. Martin focused on two areas of Adventist beliefs that evangelicals had misgivings about. First, he addressed the question of the scapegoat. Evangelicals had thought that viewing the scapegoat as Satan resulted in assigning Satan the role of a co-sinbearer with Christ, thus taking a role in the redemption of humanity. Martin argued that this was a misunderstanding of the true position of Adventism, which saw Satan only as receiving “the retributive punishment for *his responsibility* in the sins

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 20, 21, 38. This statement would become the third chapter of *Questions on Doctrine* (“Seventh-day Adventist Relationship to Past Positions”) a year later in its near-verbatim form.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 43.

of all men,” and never vicariously bearing the sins of anyone. Next, Martin quoted from the “Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists” to show that Adventism was squarely in line with evangelicals in viewing the law as having no part in salvation. He declared that Adventism held “the clear scriptural teaching of salvation by grace *alone* through the blood of Jesus Christ *apart* from the deeds of the law.”<sup>1</sup>

In the final paragraphs of the article, Martin began the discussion of some key differences between Adventism and evangelicalism. The first issue was the doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary, particularly the investigative judgment teaching. As the article concluded, he merely described how the doctrine arose in Adventism and what the key tenets of the doctrine were. He refrained from evaluating the teaching fully in this article as it would be covered in the article to be published in January 1957.

Martin opened the next and final article in the series with two questions: (1) “Are there serious differences regarding cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith between Seventh-day Adventist theology and evangelical orthodoxy?” and (2) “Are the other differences that exist an insuperable barrier to fellowship between Seventh-day Adventists and evangelicals?” Martin’s answer to the first question, based on his analysis in the preceding article, was a clear “no.” He wrote that Seventh-day Adventists held a “clear fundamental allegiance to the cross of Jesus Christ, and to the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, regarding which Seventh-day Adventists are orthodox.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 40.

<sup>2</sup>Walter Martin, “The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism: Adventist Theology vs. Historic Orthodoxy,” *Eternity*, January 1957, 12, 13, 38-40.

It was Martin's response to his second question, however, that occupied the bulk of the article. He identified seven prominent teachings on which he found genuine differences between Adventism and evangelicalism. The seven Adventist teachings were: (1) conditional immortality and the annihilation of the wicked, (2) the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment, (3) Azazel the scapegoat as Satan, (4) the seventh-day Sabbath, (5) Ellen White and the Spirit of Prophecy, (6) health reform and unclean foods, and (7) the remnant church. In each case Martin faulted Adventists for an unsound hermeneutic of Scripture, speculation, and/or carrying a potential for veering toward heresy. However, he recognized that none of these was central to the issue of salvation and that on many of these issues Christians throughout history had had honest differences in interpretation and opinion. Thus, Martin's answer to the second question was once again "no." "The differences that exist between Seventh-day Adventist theology and accepted historic orthodoxy," he declared, "do not justify the [negative] attitude which many have held toward Seventh-day Adventism of either the recent past, or the present." In spite of the differences in interpretation in some areas, Martin concluded, it was "definitely possible . . . to have fellowship with Seventh-day Adventists. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

Martin's articles in *Eternity* echoed in many ways Barnhouse's observations on Adventism. Though he contended that the majority of Adventists had always been orthodox in the cardinal doctrines, Martin agreed with Barnhouse that there were Adventists who may not be in conformity to evangelical orthodoxy. Martin also agreed

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.



with Barnhouse that there have been changes and revisions in Adventist theology.

“Seventh-day Adventism in 1956,” he penned,

is a far cry from the Adventism—rightly criticized in certain areas—of Dudley M. Canright. . . . Many of the earlier minority positions in Adventism have either been reversed or revised in line with the convictions of the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination . . . [regarding] the cardinal truths of the gospel.<sup>1</sup>

For Martin, whether Adventists had changed their theology over the years was not an important question. His concern, as was Barnhouse’s, was with the *present* status of Adventist theology. Satisfied with the answers he received from Froom, Anderson, Read, and Unruh over the previous year and a half, Martin in 1956 was not only willing to embrace Adventists as Christians, but to defend them with great enthusiasm.

*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*  
(Published in 1957)

*Questions on Doctrine*, the second significant product of the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences, was finally released by the General Conference leadership in the fall of 1957. Originally planned for publication in early 1957, a month after the release of Martin’s book in late 1956, it was published later than expected due to the delay in the completion of Martin’s book (which was finally published in 1960)<sup>2</sup> as well as to additional editing that was required for *Questions on Doctrine* itself.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 38.

<sup>2</sup>Because Martin’s *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* was published in 1960, I have chosen not to include it in this chapter but in chapter 3, where I present evangelical reactions to the conferences and *Questions on Doctrine*. Though it is indeed a direct result of the conferences, the discussion on Martin’s book is better situated in the context of the ongoing reactions to the dialogues and *Questions on Doctrine* that began in 1956 and extended into the 1960s.

The book, which opened with an introduction and the Adventist “Fundamental Beliefs” statement of 1931, contained Adventist responses to forty-eight questions posed by Martin over the course of the conferences. It also included three appendices, a Scripture index, and general indices to bring the total number of pages to 720. The forty-eight chapters were divided by topic into ten different sections, with the appendices and indices forming the eleventh section. The ten sections were: (1) “Preliminary Questions”; (2) “Questions about Christ”; (3) “Questions on the Relationship of Ellen G. White’s Writings to the Bible”; (4) “Questions on the Law and Legalism”; (5) “Questions on the Sabbath, Sunday, and the Mark of the Beast”; (6) “Questions on Prophecy, Daniel 8 and 9, and the 2300 Days”; (7) “Questions on Christ and His Ministry in the Sanctuary”; (8) “Questions on the Second Advent and the Millennium”; (9) “Questions on Immortality”; and (10) “Miscellaneous Questions.”

Aside from the first section, the majority of the book is devoted to answering questions that put the orthodoxy of Adventism to test. Section II, on the nature of Christ, makes an unequivocal affirmation of Christ’s membership in the Trinity, seeking to debunk once and for all the evangelical charge that Adventist Christology is Arian. Section III, on Ellen White, states clearly that her writings were not on a par with the Bible, but stood in a lesser place. Section IV, on the law, affirms the Adventist teaching on salvation by faith and grace—and never by works. Section V shows the Sabbath to be biblical. It fends off the evangelical challenge that the Sabbath runs contrary to the belief in salvation that comes from grace. This section also explains that the concepts of the remnant and eschatological Babylon neither place Adventists as the only saved people nor condemn non-Adventists as automatically damned. Section VI provides a concise

explanation and rationale for Adventist prophetic interpretation. Describing why Adventists cling to the historicist school of interpretation, it explains why Adventists see 1844 as the end of the 2,300-year prophetic period. Section VII on the sanctuary doctrine is an apology on the Adventist understanding of the atonement and the heavenly sanctuary, including the scapegoat and investigative judgment teachings. This section's most significant chapter is perhaps the last one entitled, "The Investigative Judgment in the Setting of the Arminian Concept." Capitalizing on the fact that Calvinists do not necessarily condemn Methodists and other Christians of Arminian orientation, this chapter defends the investigative judgment by showing how this teaching does not take away from Christ's salvation, but merely emphasizes human responsibility to accept the gift of salvation—particularly in the end-time. Section VIII, on the Second Coming, portrays the unique end-time scenario as believed by Adventists. Section IX, on immortality, defends the conditionalist faith of Adventism through biblical exposition and historical evidence. Section X—the final section—is a "Miscellaneous Questions" section that answers questions on the term "everlasting gospel," demonology, unclean foods, and the Adventist position on the method of world mission. The three appendices that immediately follow the last section are compilations of quotations from Ellen White's writings that support the book's assertions on the nature of Christ's divinity and humanity and the atonement.

The evolution of *Questions on Doctrine* from a series of ad-hoc answers to a 720-page book was a process that took nearly two years. The August 1955 Doylestown conference formally launched the process, which hit a landmark plateau when the General Conference Officers' Meeting granted approval in December 1955 for distribution of the

manuscript answers among key denominational workers, including North American conference presidents, editors, and college and seminary teachers. During the first half of 1956, Martin and the Adventist conferees exchanged further questions and answers, leading up to the second Doylestown conference in May. On July 25, the updated “Questions and Answers” manuscript (as it was then called) went out to a much wider group of Adventist leaders, with the request for “constructive criticism or suggestion.” According to Froom, who wrote the cover letter for the manuscript package, it was sent out to more than 225 Adventist leaders around the world. He stated, “No more eminent or representative group could have been consulted. No more competent group could approve. And that they did.”<sup>1</sup>

On September 19, 1956, the General Conference Officers’ Meeting formed an editorial committee to prepare the manuscript for publication. A. V. Olson, a general vice president of the General Conference, was asked to serve as the chairman. The rest of the committee consisted of W. E. Read and Merwin Thurber, book editor of the Review and Herald Publishing Association. In addition, the officers appointed W. G. C. Murdoch, R. Hammill, L. E. Froom, and R. A. Anderson as consultants to the committee.<sup>2</sup> Between September 1956 and January 1957 the committee evaluated the suggestions and criticisms that had arrived from the field.<sup>3</sup> Several of these came from leading scholars and editors

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<sup>1</sup>L. E. Froom to [Seventh-day Adventist Leaders Worldwide], 25 July 1956, TL, RG 58, box 11145, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Officers’ Meeting, 19 September 1956, GCA. Anderson was actually added to the committee five days later on September 24 (Minutes of the General Conference Officers’ Meeting, 24 September 1956, GCA).

<sup>3</sup>W. E. Read to R. R. Figuhr, 27 December 1956, TL, RG 11, box 3206, GCA.

of the church. The Review and Herald Publishing Association had a strong representation with Merwin Thurber, Julia Neuffer, Don Neufeld, and Raymond F. Cottrell responding.<sup>1</sup> As would be expected, many theology professors also submitted evaluations, including George Keough (Newbold College), Edward Heppenstall (seminary), and Siegfried H. Horn (seminary).<sup>2</sup>

With the work of the editorial committee completed, what remained was receiving the final approval and the logistical work of making specific plans for publishing and publicizing the book. The General Conference Officers' Meeting voted on January 23, 1957, to ask the Review and Herald Publishing Association to publish *Questions on Doctrine*.<sup>3</sup> Then on January 30 the executive committee of the Review and Herald Publishing Association accepted the book manuscript on a "text basis."<sup>4</sup> The officers' meeting of April 15 approved the final title, *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrines*, and the introduction of the book, which had been developed by an ad hoc

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<sup>1</sup>Julia Neuffer to R. R. Figuhr and others, 12 September 1956, TL, PC 6, RC 858, GCA; Merwin R. Thurber to R. R. Figuhr et al., 13 September 1956, TL, PC 6, RC 858, GCA; D. F. Neufeld and R. F. Cottrell to R. R. Figuhr and others, 14 September 1956, TL, PC 6, RC 858, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>Geo. A. Keough to L. E. Froom, 27 August 1956, TL, PC 6, RC 858, GCA; Edw. Heppenstall to R. R. Figuhr, 13 September 1956, TL, PC 6, RC 858, GCA; Siegfried H. Horn to A. V. Olson, 15 October 1956, TL, PC 6, RC 858, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Officers' Meeting, 23 January 1957, GCA.

<sup>4</sup>T. E. Unruh, "The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956," *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 44. "Text basis" meant that the publishing house would not be providing any editorial oversight, but simply serve as a printer and distributor.

committee headed by Figuhr.<sup>1</sup> Though the book had mostly been written by the conferees of the Adventist-evangelical dialogues in response to Martin's questions, no mention of any of their names was given in the book. Rather, the introduction presented the book as "prepared by a representative group of Seventh-day Adventist leaders, Bible teachers, and editors." It was important for the book to be received as a consensus document of the Adventist church, rather than the work of a few individuals. After all, by the time of its publication, it had been through several General Conference committees and had incorporated comments by critical readers. Thus, the introduction was signed simply as "The Editorial Committee."<sup>2</sup>

On May 1 the General Conference Officers' Meeting created a committee to draw up plans for publicizing *Questions on Doctrine* in collaboration with the Review and Herald Publishing Association.<sup>3</sup> Under the committee's direction, publicity for the book began in June 1957. That month's issue of the *Ministry* magazine, published by the Ministerial Association of the General Conference, contained an article by its editor, R. A. Anderson, on the upcoming publication of *Questions on Doctrine*.<sup>4</sup> In September the

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Officers' Meeting, 15 April 1957, GCA. The last word of the title, "Doctrines," was initially plural, but the "s" was dropped at some point before the publication. The ad hoc committee was formed on February 20 by the officers, with R. H. Adair, R. A. Anderson, F. D. Nichol, A. V. Olson, H. L. Rudy, and M. R. Thurber as its members (Minutes of the General Conference Officers' Meeting Minutes, 20 February 1957, GCA).

<sup>2</sup>*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 3, 10.

<sup>3</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Officers' Meeting, 1 May 1957, GCA. The committee members were J. I. Robison, R. A. Anderson, and W. E. Read.

<sup>4</sup>R. A. Anderson, "Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine," *Ministry*, June 1957, 24.

officers' meeting voted in favor of a massive advertising campaign both within and outside the church.<sup>1</sup> Various Adventist magazines began publishing notes and advertisements, while non-Adventist periodicals were invited to review the book. A four-page flyer was created for advertisement among non-Adventist ministers. Also, a plan was laid out for 500 high-ranking religious leaders in North America to receive complimentary copies.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, in early November 1957, *Questions on Doctrine* came off the press. The Review and Herald printed 5,000 copies, each priced at \$5.00. The first advertisement for *Questions on Doctrine* in the *Review and Herald* introduced it as “the book for which every Seventh-day Adventist worker and layman has been waiting.” The book was presented as “720 pages full of wonderful truth,” and certainly “not a ‘new’ pronouncement of faith and doctrine.”<sup>3</sup>

Promotion for the book continued for the rest of the year and on into 1958. The promotional efforts received a boost by the resolution of the Annual Council of the General Conference Committee on October 24-28, 1957. The resolution urged churches to purchase and disseminate the book among public libraries, non-Adventist churches and clergy, and various educational institutions.

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Officers' Meeting, 16 September 1957, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 44; Minutes of the General Conference Officers' Meeting, 11 November 1957, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>Advertisement for *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, *Review and Herald*, 24 October 1957, 29.

By the end of November the first edition of *Questions on Doctrine* had been nearly sold out, and the second edition was ready to be printed with some corrections to the introduction. With a flood of requests for the book, with one North American union conference ordering 40,000 copies, the Review and Herald printed more than 50,000 copies of *Questions on Doctrine* in its first printing of the second edition. The high volume allowed the publishing house to lower the price of the book to \$1.50—quite a bargain for a 720-page tome.<sup>1</sup>

*Questions on Doctrine* was—and remains—a historical document of extraordinary significance in several ways. First, along with Barnhouse and Martin’s articles in *Eternity*, *Questions on Doctrine* marked a major milestone in Adventist-evangelical relations. Speaking directly to evangelicals in an intentionally un-parochial language, *Questions on Doctrine* represented the most friendly overture to date attempted by Adventism. Second, *Questions on Doctrine* was created as a result of two phases of collaboration—neither of which had previously occurred in the same depth. The first phase was between evangelical leaders and Adventist leaders, while the second was among Adventist leaders. The book made a unique contribution not only to the theological dialogue between evangelicals and Adventists, but also among Adventists themselves. Third, *Questions on Doctrine* is significant for the attention it has received since its publication. Before its release, Anderson wrote in *Ministry* that no other book

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Officers’ Meeting, 30 October 1957, GCA; Minutes of the General Conference Officers’ Meeting, 13 December 1957, GCA; R. R. Figuhr to Union Presidents, 6 November 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3206, GCA.



produced by Adventists had had “more careful scrutiny.”<sup>1</sup> As it would turn out, even more scrutiny from all sides would follow its publication.

### Summary

The two major fruits of the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956 were the series of articles on Adventism in the September-November 1956 and January 1957 issues of *Eternity*, and in the book, *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*. The articles by Barnhouse and Martin showed from the evangelical perspective where Adventism and evangelicalism agreed and disagreed. Their analyses sought to demonstrate that Adventists were orthodox in doctrines and evangelical in faith and practice, despite clinging to several “heterodox” teachings that had no bearing on salvation. *Questions on Doctrine* echoed the *Eternity* articles by expressing solidarity with evangelicals in the “cardinal” doctrines of historic Christianity. It sought to debunk all traditional misunderstandings of Adventism, while providing defenses of the teachings on which Adventism was either in the minority or held a unique position.

Together the two documents created new terms and boundaries for future dialogues between the two parties and for evaluations of each another. The documents showed a mutually agreed-upon outline of where the two parties cohered and differed—unlike earlier works which incorrectly or anachronistically identified areas of disagreement. With these documents providing a new structure to the dialogue, both

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<sup>1</sup>R. A. Anderson, “*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*,” *Ministry*, June 1957, 24.

evangelicals and Adventists had a set of documents that served as central reference points for debate and discussion.

## CHAPTER 3

### REACTIONS IN EVANGELICAL PUBLICATIONS

In September 1956, the evangelical world was stunned by *Eternity's* new stance on Adventism. Never had any major evangelical figure come out so publicly in support of Adventism's inclusion in evangelical Christianity. Immediately, reactions flared up within evangelicalism, particularly in its fundamentalist wing. Then, the publication of *Questions on Doctrine* in 1957 by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* in 1960 by Martin added fuel to the raging controversy. In the years that followed, the controversy involved several major evangelical leaders and publishers as Adventism's standing vis-a-vis evangelicalism was debated vigorously.

#### **Initial Reactions to the Conferences and the *Eternity* Articles (1956-1957)**

##### Reactions in *Eternity*

##### **Letters to *Eternity***

The first set of reactions to Barnhouse and Martin came in the form of letters and subscription cancellations sent to *Eternity*. The "Letters to the Editors" section of the magazine began printing readers' responses in the November issue. The segment entitled "Heresy or No?" featured two letters that gave opposing reactions to one another.

Florence Cummins of Stanley, Wisconsin, took Barnhouse's article as indicating a major change in Adventist teachings and asked why Adventists who were "supposedly 'repentant'" had not issued "a public statement of their error and made a public apology."<sup>1</sup> The other letter was written by Robert L. Wendt, an economics professor at Salem College in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Wendt shared a story about the warm relationship that he had developed in 1953 with an Adventist economics professor from Atlantic Union College (an Adventist institution in South Lancaster, Massachusetts), and stated that he had "come to the same conclusion the recent *Eternity* article reached."<sup>2</sup>

The December issue carried a brief report from the magazine on the letters that were coming in on Adventism. In his monthly "Letter to Our Readers," Paul Hopkins, executive secretary of the Evangelical Foundation, which published *Eternity*, reported that 70 percent of the mail on Adventism was "favorable" to the article by Barnhouse.<sup>3</sup> This issue included two positive responses to the series on Adventism. Interestingly, both letters were from Adventists—H. R. Kehney of Alma, Michigan, and Francis F. Bush of Glendale, California. Their letters were featured under the title, "S. D. A. Thanks." Kehney thanked Barnhouse and Martin for telling "the evangelical churches that S.D.A. [*sic*] are sincerely trying to be Christians."<sup>4</sup> Bush acclaimed *Eternity* for printing an objective and honest appraisal of Adventism. He lamented the "cruel distortion" of

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<sup>1</sup>Florence Cummins, letter to the editor, *Eternity*, November 1956, 2.

<sup>2</sup>Robert L. Wendt, letter to the editor, *Eternity*, November 1956, 2.

<sup>3</sup>Paul A. Hopkins, "A Letter to Our Readers," *Eternity*, December 1956, 4.

<sup>4</sup>H. R. Kehney, letter to the editor, *Eternity*, December 1956, 54.

Adventist beliefs that persisted among evangelicals and reported as a case in point that the Bible Institute of Los Angeles bookstore was not carrying the current *Eternity* issues on Adventism. Then he conceded that “perhaps we Adventists are to blame for this intolerant attitude.” He closed the letter by affirming the Adventist leaders who “are doing so much to correct past mistakes and give the world a more correct impression.”<sup>1</sup>

Two more responses were featured in the January issue—both by non-Adventists—with one in favor of and the other opposed to the new *Eternity* stance. The two letters reflect well the two types of evangelical responses that were expressed in the ensuing months and years. The letter criticizing the magazine came from Jack L. Hamilton, pastor of a Presbyterian church in Richmond, Virginia. Hamilton charged that *Eternity* had erred by judging “a whole denomination by what a few leaders said.” He challenged the magazine “to find some laymen of [the Adventist church] who do not believe that one must worship on Saturday in order to be saved.” He charged that Adventists in his region were “legalist [*sic*], lawkeepers—they believe the writings of Ellen G. White and treat them as inspired.”<sup>2</sup> This charge that the Adventist laity practiced their faith differently from what their leaders told Barnhouse and Martin would be developed by a number of critics in the following years.

The other respondent in the January issue, J. L. Van Avery of Nelliston, New York, wrote approvingly as he described his positive encounters with Adventists. He said his experiences with members of different denominations led him to believe that “the

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<sup>1</sup>Francis F. Bush, letter to the editor, *Eternity*, December 1956, 54.

<sup>2</sup>Jack L. Hamilton, letter to the editor, *Eternity*, January 1957, 2.

most important thing needed among the various groups is more love and understanding.”<sup>1</sup> Van Avery’s emphasis on accepting Adventists in spite of significant theological differences—though in itself not a theological response—is representative of a more open and liberal stance that some evangelicals took toward Adventists.

The next month’s issue printed two highly critical letters under the title, “SDA Controversy Rages.” Mrs. Ruby Richards of Omaha, Nebraska, saw *Eternity*’s new position as “nothing short of absurd.” She saw Adventists as “bringing their converts into the bondage of the Mosaic law (no matter what the leaders say!).” She chastised *Eternity* for sympathizing with “heresy.”<sup>2</sup> The other letter was written by Arthur H. Giles, a pastor in Duluth, Minnesota. Giles related his recent experience at an evangelical bookstore where his payment for the September issue of *Eternity* was refused by the clerk. The clerk told him that the magazine was not being sold “because of the compromising article about Seventh-day Adventism.” Giles then suggested that *Eternity* stop printing Martin’s articles until Adventists produce a published “refutation of the heterodox teachings as found in S.D.A. publications” and withdraw from circulation books teachings such “heterodox teachings.” Adventist corrections should have preceded *Eternity*’s articles on Adventism, he wrote.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>J. L. Van Avery, letter to the editor, *Eternity*, January 1957, 2.

<sup>2</sup>Ruby Richards, letter to the editor, *Eternity*, February 1957, 2.

<sup>3</sup>Arthur H. Giles, letter to the editor, *Eternity*, February 1957, 2.

The April issue featured three more letters. The first letter, written by Herbert S. Bird<sup>1</sup> of the American Evangelical Mission in Ethiopia, raised three major objections to Barnhouse and Martin. The first dealt with the issue of Ellen White. Bird noted that there was an “apparent contradiction” between the statements by General Conference leaders quoted in Martin’s October 1956 article and the Adventist baptismal certificate and fundamental beliefs statements. Because segments of this letter were edited out it is not possible to ascertain where exactly he saw a contradiction. Most likely, in his mind the contradiction lay between the official Adventist statements concerning Ellen White as having “the gift of prophecy” “just as in past ages God raised up prophets and messengers”<sup>2</sup> and Froom’s assertion that Ellen White “did not lay claim to the title of prophet, preferring to be called a ‘messenger’ and ‘servant’ of God.”<sup>3</sup>

Bird’s second objection to Adventism centered on the issue of legalism. He quoted the following statement from Ellen White’s *Great Controversy* as representative of the legalistic thrust of Adventist teachings: “As [those who have truly repented of sin] have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, *and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God*, . . . their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves

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<sup>1</sup>In response to Barnhouse and Martin’s *Eternity* articles and *Questions on Doctrine*, Bird also would write a major article in *Christianity Today* in 1958 and a book entitled *Theology of Seventh-day Adventism* in 1961. For a discussion on Bird’s responses, see pp. 192-197 of the present study.

<sup>2</sup>Herbert S. Bird, letter to the editor, *Eternity*, March 1957, 2.

<sup>3</sup>Walter Martin, “The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism: Its Historical Development from Christian Roots,” *Eternity*, November 1956, 38.

will be accounted worthy of eternal life.”<sup>1</sup> Though this portion of the letter was edited down once again, Bird’s issue with White and Adventism is clear: that Adventism teaches salvation by keeping the law. Interestingly, as he made this second point, Bird qualified his objection by stating that his charge was based on the level of legalism “as it has been met on the local level by Christian people,” granting the possibility that there might be a gap between what the leadership was claiming and what the membership was practicing.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, Bird raised the concept of the remnant church as taught by Adventists. However, rather than objecting to the theology of the remnant, Bird found fault with Adventists who “feel themselves under constraint to bring [evangelicals] who are not part of that ‘remnant’ into [the Adventist] fold.” Accusing Adventists of dividing evangelical churches by taking away members, he protested that Adventists could not cause division on one hand, while on the other hand asking for the “right hand of fellowship.”<sup>3</sup>

In response to Bird, Martin wrote a three-point rebuttal that was printed immediately below. This was the first and only response by Martin to a letter sent to *Eternity*. In response to Bird’s first point concerning Ellen White, Martin emphasized that Adventism needed to be defined and judged by what its official position is on White, rather than by the practices of individual Adventists. He stated that if Adventists did not

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 483, quoted in Bird, letter to the editor, *Eternity*, March 1957, 29.

<sup>2</sup>Bird, letter to the editor, *Eternity*, March 1957, 29.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*



make belief in White's writings a test of fellowship, evangelicals should not make her a point of strife with Adventists.<sup>1</sup>

Second, Martin dismissed Bird's charge of legalism based on his quote from Ellen White by declaring that the "quotation is nothing more than pure old-fashioned Arminianism." "Any good Wesleyan Methodist or Pentecostalist will tell you," Martin wrote, "that if you are saved by grace and then openly violate the Ten Commandments, and are not found to be in harmony with the revealed Word and commandments of God, then you will lose your salvation." Declaring "this is all Mrs. White taught," Martin maintained that he was not ready to condemn all Arminians to being cultic.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, Martin responded to Bird's issue with the remnant concept by claiming that the concept had "undergone a redefinition." He wrote that the "remnant" now meant "all within the Body of Christ," and was not restricted to the Adventist church (though Martin did not indicate whether Adventist leaders would completely agree with such a characterization). On the question of "proselytization," Martin countered by giving the example of Southern Baptists who were also accused to taking members away from other churches. He noted further that all denominations had grown in part by proselytizing. Thus it would be wrong to single out Adventists. "If Adventists were deliberately and vigorously dividing churches on the mission field," he granted, "then cooperation with

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<sup>1</sup>W. R. M. [Walter R. Martin], letter to the editor, *Eternity*, March 1957, 29.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

them would be difficult.” However, he asserted that “Adventists do have the right to witness for their special truths.”<sup>1</sup>

The second critical letter printed in the March issue of *Eternity* was sent by D. Lyons of Hackensack, New Jersey. Lyons’s letter was a response both to the articles by Barnhouse and Martin and to Francis Bush’s letter printed in the December issue. In that letter, Bush, an Adventist, had “wished that [evangelicals] might see things as [Adventists] do.”<sup>2</sup> Lyons used this statement as proof that Adventists did not “see things as evangelicals,” i.e., Adventists did not consider themselves as evangelicals, contrary to what *Eternity* had claimed. In response to the articles by Barnhouse and Martin, Lyons wrote that the Adventist teaching on the scapegoat resulted in “cruel distortion” of “scriptural truth to which SDAism has no answer.”<sup>3</sup>

Though not revealed in the printed portion of her letter, Lyons was an ex-Adventist who harbored bitterness toward her former denomination. Around this time Lyons also exchanged personal correspondences with Reuben Figuhr, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and Donald Grey Barnhouse in which she wrote strong condemnations of Adventism.<sup>4</sup>

The third and final letter printed in this issue was by A. Welch of Toronto, Canada. Welch echoed the sentiment expressed in Van Avery’s letter in the January

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Francis F. Bush, letter to the editor, *Eternity*, December 1956, 54.

<sup>3</sup>D. Lyons, letter to the editor, *Eternity*, March 1957, 29.

<sup>4</sup>R. R. Figuhr to D. Lyons, 1 April 1957, personal collection of Larry Christoffel, Loma Linda, CA.

issue. Though Adventists had “beliefs we do not agree with,” he pointed out, “so do other denominations which we do not exclude. . . .” He then concluded that “more love” was needed among evangelicals.<sup>1</sup>

Thus concluded *Eternity*'s printing of readers' responses to the articles by Barnhouse and Martin. Though superficially represented due to the abbreviated nature of the “Letters to the Editors” section, the eleven letters contained three distinct reactions: (1) evangelicals critical of *Eternity*'s new position on Adventism; (2) evangelicals approving of the position; and (3) Adventists appreciative of the position. Evangelical discussions on Adventism in the following decade would pit the first two groups—the first much, much larger than the second—against each other in a lively debate.

#### **Barnhouse's Responses to the Letters**

As he cut off the debate from the pages of *Eternity*, Barnhouse did not leave the subject without restating his convictions and giving a response to the bitter attacks that were being mounted on him. In the March 1957 issue Barnhouse wrote two articles that shed significant light on the issue.

The first article was the cover article of that month's issue, entitled “We Are One Body in Christ.” Though Barnhouse did not mention Seventh-day Adventism by name in any part of the article, this article provided a glimpse into the thinking that undergirded his new view of Adventism. Barnhouse opened the article with a condemnation of the divisiveness that denominationalism fostered and called for deeper fellowship among Christians of different denominations. Recalling his New Year's Day 1953 resolution of

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<sup>1</sup>A. Welch, letter to the editor, *Eternity*, March 1957, 29.

entering into fellowship with other born-again Christians who did not necessarily share the same beliefs, Barnhouse testified that he experienced transformation in his ministry in “learning to enjoy the fellowship of true believers.” He stressed that all Christian bodies belong to the same “catholic” body of Christ, thus genuine fellowship with “born-again” Christians of different denominations was not only possible but desirable. “The Episcopalian needs the Pentecostal Christian,” he wrote, “and the Pentecostal needs the Episcopalian Christian. . . . The Southern Baptist needs the Presbyterian; the Presbyterian needs the Methodist; the Methodist needs the Baptist, and the Lutheran needs the Presbyterian. And so we all need each other.” Barnhouse was certainly not advocating an “organic union of churches.” But he believed it was possible for Christians of different denominations “to work together in great spiritual causes, and to be united in many efforts despite secondary points of difference.” The standard of fellowship for Christians, then, was allegiance to Jesus Christ and adherence to the orthodox doctrine of Christology, according to Barnhouse. He concluded that the uniting spirit that Christians of all denominations must exhibit was that of love.<sup>1</sup>

Barnhouse’s second article in the March 1957 issue was a more direct response to the attacks that had come his way since September 1956. This article came in the form of an editorial entitled “Prejudice.” In it Barnhouse decried the attacks by certain evangelicals on *Eternity* and on Adventism, calling them the “saddest of all the prejudices” that he had seen in recent days. As an example, he cited the case of Louis Talbot, the editor of *The King’s Business* and president of the Bible Institute of Los

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, “We Are One Body in Christ,” *Eternity*, March 1957, 4, 5, 39-43.

Angeles who was waging a war against *Eternity* and the Adventist church. Not only had he directed the bookstore of the Bible Institute to remove *Eternity* from its premises, but he had also mailed an anti-Adventist flyer entitled “Is Barnhouse Right?” to thousands of people. Additionally, he had also published articles against Adventism based on sources that Adventists had clearly repudiated. In light of such militant opposition to Adventism, Barnhouse charged that Talbot’s actions were based on deep prejudice which “imperiled his editorial honesty.”<sup>1</sup>

Barnhouse then appealed to Talbot as well as to his readers to dissolve prejudice from their hearts. Such prejudice, he wrote, was “a direct violation of the principles of love set down” in 1 Corinthians 13, and “the maintenance of prejudice is proof that love is not reigning in the heart.” Such a line of reasoning by Barnhouse echoed not only his earlier article in the same issue, but also the attitude held by those evangelicals who sent in favorable responses to *Eternity*. As long as Adventists—or any group for that matter—held to orthodox teachings on the person of Christ and salvation by faith, Barnhouse was resolved to treat them with the same love and tolerance that he extended toward other evangelical Christian groups.<sup>2</sup>

In the following months, however, Barnhouse’s resolve was challenged as subscriptions for *Eternity* fell significantly as readers voted with cancellation orders.<sup>3</sup> Though, according to Hopkins, 70 percent of the readers who responded to the articles on

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<sup>1</sup>[Donald Grey Barnhouse], “Prejudice,” *Eternity*, March 1957, 8, 9.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage*, fourth quarter 1977, 44.

Adventism had written favorably, there must have been a significant number of readers who had been offended by the magazine's new stance on Adventism. However, neither Barnhouse nor the staff of *Eternity* showed any sign of wavering from their position. By the following year, perhaps with the help of new subscriptions from Adventists, *Eternity* regained and exceeded the number of subscribers that it had in early 1957.<sup>1</sup>

### Reactions in *Our Hope*

#### Letters to *Our Hope*

As was the case in *Eternity*, Martin's article in the November 1956 issue of *Our Hope* provoked strong responses. During 1957, *Our Hope* printed twelve letters on the topic. Nine appeared in January and one each in March, July, and September. Out of these, eight were negative and four positive in their assessment of *Our Hope*'s new position on Adventism.

The first of the eight critical letters was written by Betty Bruechert of Los Angeles. She saw Martin's article as "a heavy blow" to efforts at helping those "entangled" in Adventism. She could not agree with Martin's position because in her view Adventists had been "so unjust in their dealings with [Christ]." Relating her experience with an Adventist friend of hers who "had no assurance of salvation" and held fast to "the necessity for keeping the law as a means of her salvation," Bruechert wrote that she could not have any fellowship with Adventists lest she "be found fighting against God."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Betty Bruechert, letter to the editor, *Our Hope*, January 1957, 445.

The second critical letter was written by a Baptist minister named Chalmer D. Rummel. Rummel, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Brandford, Illinois, was “amazed” that *Our Hope* would choose to print Martin’s article. “It isn’t a case of the Evangelicals turning to [Adventists],” he wrote, “but the Adventists turning to the Bible as their sole guide.” He was willing to grant that the information in Martin’s article “may be very true” and that Adventists may be saved people. However, because he still found Baptists and Adventists to be “poles apart,” he “could not think of taking [Adventists] into . . . fellowship.”<sup>1</sup>

Rummel’s letter is interesting in that he employed a different set of criteria for fellowship than Barnhouse, Martin, or English. Whereas affirming Christ and what Martin called the “cardinal doctrines” of Christianity was sufficient for the latter three, Rummel required more. For him believing in any doctrine that he considered to be unbiblical was a sufficient reason not to engage in fellowship. Thus, for Rummel, the admission of Adventism into the evangelical fold was an act of “letting down of the bars of all that is evangelical.”<sup>2</sup>

The third critical response was sent in by another Baptist minister. Lehman Strauss of the Calvary Baptist Church in Bristol, Pennsylvania, wrote the longest and the most nuanced of all the negative responses to Martin’s article in *Our Hope*. He agreed with Martin that evangelicals should not “blast [Adventists] as heretics,” nor “put them in the same category as Jehovah’s Witnesses.” He based this conclusion on his observation

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<sup>1</sup>Chalmer D. Rummel, letter to the editor, *Our Hope*, January 1957, 445.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

that Adventists shared “some basic tenets of historic Christianity” and that there are “some fine Christians” among Adventists. At the same time, Strauss identified several Adventist teachings as insurmountable barriers to fellowship. He pointed to three major areas in particular: conditional immortality and annihilation of the wicked, the heavenly sanctuary and the scapegoat as Satan, and the seventh-day Sabbath. He wrote, for example, that “the doctrine of conditional immortality and annihilation upsets completely the entire eschatological position of evangelical Christians.” Thus Strauss concluded that “the difference between the Adventists and Evangelicals is still too great” for evangelicals to condone and encourage membership in the Adventist church. As was the case with Rummel, Strauss intimated that sharing the cardinal doctrines of historic Christianity and being in a saving relationship with Christ was not enough for genuine Christian fellowship. Adventism had to rid itself also of those peculiar doctrines that most evangelicals deemed unbiblical.<sup>1</sup>

The fourth letter criticizing English and Martin came from Marion S. Gates. Gates’s letter disagreed with Martin’s main assertion that Adventists were orthodox in the cardinal doctrines of orthodox Christianity. The objections put forth by this letter centered on two issues: Ellen White and the deity of Christ. If Adventists held Ellen White to be inspired in any way, this correspondent wrote, they were not upholding “the complete authority of the Bible *as the sole rule of faith and practise [sic].*” Also, the Adventist belief in the possibility of Christ to sin constituted a denial of Christ’s deity.

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<sup>1</sup>Lehman Strauss, letter to the editor, *Our Hope*, January 1957, 446, 447.



Thus Adventism, in Gates's mind, was a "legalist, grace-denying group" with whom evangelicals should "never fellowship in any way."<sup>1</sup>

The rest of the negative responses were short letters with non-theological content. One was written by Thomas MaGowan, manager of the campus bookstore on the campus of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. The entire printed text of MaGowan's letter was: "We have returned *Our Hope* for November. We can have no part in this deception."<sup>2</sup> This response—which *Eternity* also received—shows the degree of intensity with which many responded negatively to Martin's article. The second letter, written anonymously from Cleveland, Ohio, made a personal attack on Schuyler English for printing Martin's article. It was a sign that English was "an unfit leader among the Lord's people."<sup>3</sup> The third letter, by Frances Bogard of Los Angeles, chastised English for "turning to Seventh-day Adventism."<sup>4</sup> To this, English responded that "the report of the Editor's defection to Seventh-day Adventism is completely false." Then he narrated briefly the reason why he found Adventism to be Christian—with "many errors"—but not a cult.<sup>5</sup> The fourth, by W. E. Sturdivant of La Habra, California, expressed his disappointment with *Our Hope*, particularly its position on Adventism, and requested the cancellation of his subscription.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Marion S. Gates, letter to the editor, *Our Hope*, January 1957, 447, 448.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas MaGowan, letter to the editor, *Our Hope*, January 1957, 448.

<sup>3</sup>Anonymous, letter to the editor, *Our Hope*, March 1957, 576.

<sup>4</sup>Frances Bogard, letter to the editor, *Our Hope*, July 1957, 63.

<sup>5</sup>[E. Schuyler English], letter to the editor, *Our Hope*, July 1957, 63.

<sup>6</sup>W. E. Sturdivant, letter to the editor, *Our Hope*, September 1957, 192.

Martin's article also elicited four positive responses, all printed in the January issue of *Our Hope*. Two of the four responses were brief letters showing appreciation for Martin's article. Robert E. Zannoth, Sr., from Ferndale, Michigan, commended Martin for his "open minded discussion,"<sup>1</sup> while A. R. Yielding, pastor of Grace Church in Ontario, Canada, lauded the editor for his "amazing courage" in printing the article. "No doubt you will be greatly criticized," he wrote, but "by a few, praised."<sup>2</sup>

The other two letters provided lengthier and more substantive comments. First, L. W. King of South San Gabriel, California, applauded the editor for taking "the favorable stand on the Adventist question." He stated that it was "strange" for Christians to classify "one another into categories of acceptance based on doctrinal differences." While denominations and doctrinal differences exist for legitimate reasons, he asserted, Christians should not "reject any believer and place him in a second class category just because of an honest interpretation of the Holy Scriptures." He asked poignantly, "Did you ever consider whether the Adventists would accept you into their full fellowship without any surrender of your convictions on doctrinal matters where you differ from them?"<sup>3</sup>

Next, W. K. Harrison, lieutenant general and commander in chief of the Caribbean Command of the United States Army, wrote in support of *Our Hope's* stand on Adventism. He believed that "as a matter of Christian justice" the magazine's position

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<sup>1</sup>Robert E. Zannoth, Sr., letter to the editor, *Our Hope*, January 1957, 445.

<sup>2</sup>A. R. Yielding, letter to the editor, *Our Hope*, January 1957, 446.

<sup>3</sup>L. W. King, letter to the editor, *Our Hope*, January 1957, 445, 446.

was correct. Harrison held that while there were “some serious theological errors” in Adventist beliefs, evangelicals must recognize the orthodoxy of Adventist doctrines pertaining to salvation and consider Adventists as belonging to Christ. He then chided evangelicals for adopting “an air of self-righteous criticism” toward Adventists and other Christians who “differ on points of theology which are not directly essential to salvation.”<sup>1</sup>

In summary, responses to Martin’s article in *Our Hope* ran along the veins of thought that were similarly exhibited by the respondents to the articles by Barnhouse and Martin in *Eternity*. Those who were critical of Martin’s article disagreed with Martin on two fronts. First, some did not accept Martin’s assertion that Adventist teachings were orthodox. Pointing particularly to the perceived effects that the teachings on Ellen White and salvation had on average Adventist believers, they rejected the contention that Adventism was orthodox in the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. Second, others who recognized the orthodoxy of Adventist teachings on the Bible and salvation argued that orthodoxy on those issues did not automatically mean fellowship. They saw the distinctives of Adventism as posing too great a barrier to fellowship.

On the other hand, the positive responses to Martin’s article in *Our Hope* all centered on the theme of tolerance. Having recognized the orthodoxy of Adventist teachings on the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, these respondents could not find any reason to bar Adventists from the fellowship of evangelicals. They called for tolerance

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<sup>1</sup>W. K. Harrison, letter to the editor, *Our Hope*, January 1957, 447.

and generosity toward Adventists on the part of evangelicals—the same attitude the latter held among themselves.

### Articles by Donald M. Hunter

Between February and August 1957, *Our Hope* carried several articles by Donald M. Hunter that were designed to point out erroneous teachings of Seventh-day Adventism as well as to provide a counterpoint to Martin's article in the November 1956 issue.

Hunter was an American missionary in Japan sent by the Pilgrim Fellowship who was back in the United States on furlough. Upon English's request, Hunter wrote the seven-part series on the doctrines on which evangelicals and Adventists disagreed. The titles of the articles were as follows: "Eternal Punishment" (February), "Intermediate State" (March), "The Cleansing of the Heavenly Sanctuary" (April), "The Two Goats of Leviticus 16" (May), "The Sinless Human Nature of Christ" (June), "The Grace of Our Sovereign Lord" (July), and "The Sabbath Question" (August).<sup>1</sup>

Hunter's first two articles dealt with issues surrounding the after-life. Though commissioned to write in response to Martin's article, Hunter interestingly did not make any mention of the article or Adventism in these two articles. Rather, they could very well have been stand-alone articles that attempted to explain from Scripture the beliefs of eternal punishment and immortality of the human soul. All that these two articles did by

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<sup>1</sup>Donald M. Hunter, "Eternal Punishment," *Our Hope*, February 1957, 463-473; idem, "The Intermediate State," *Our Hope*, March 1957, 527-541; idem, "The Cleansing of the Heavenly Sanctuary," *Our Hope*, April 1957, 597-609; idem, "The Two Goats of Leviticus 16," *Our Hope*, May 1957, 665-672; idem, "The Sinless Human Nature of Christ," *Our Hope*, June 1957, 717-729; idem, "The Grace of Our Sovereign Lord," *Our Hope*, July 1957, 21-25; idem, "The Sabbath Question," *Our Hope*, August 1957, 77-90.

way of response was to briefly point out that some religious groups taught the annihilation of the wicked and “soul-sleep.” Written in dispassionate, scholarly language, the articles presented the author’s arguments in a methodical manner, free from any apparent prejudice against Adventism.

It was only in the third article of the series that the first mention was given, by way of editorial introduction, as to the purpose of the series—i.e., “to refute all the major teachings of the Adventists that [the author and the editor] believe to be without proper Scripture foundation.” The introduction explained also that no mention was made of Adventists in the first two articles because Adventists were not the only group that adhered to the doctrines of annihilationism and soul-sleep.<sup>1</sup>

Now, as Hunter began addressing doctrines that were unique to Adventism, he engaged in more direct polemics. In the third article, he argued that the Adventist teaching on Christ’s heavenly sanctuary ministry was based on misinterpretation of Scripture and had the effect of negating the all-sufficiency of Christ’s offering on the cross. Also, he faulted the year-day principle, a key interpretive tool that undergirds not only the heavenly sanctuary teaching but also the entire Adventist eschatology, as “non-scriptural” and “anti-scriptural and, when espoused, always does great harm to truth.”<sup>2</sup>

In the fourth article, Hunter conducted a verse-by-verse analysis of passages in Leviticus 16 that pertain to the two goats. After arriving at the conclusion that both goats represented the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, he wrote that the Adventist interpretation on

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<sup>1</sup>Donald M. Hunter, “The Cleansing of the Heavenly Sanctuary,” *Our Hope*, April 1957, 597.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 597-609.

Azazel as a type of Satan was “unfortunate” and “of an equivocal nature.” Though he did recognize the Adventist belief that “Jesus Christ alone is the Sin-Bearer,” he expressed “hope that Seventh-day Adventists will come to the place where they will renounce the mistaken notion that the scapegoat represents Satan.”<sup>1</sup>

In the final three articles of the series, Hunter made presentations on the teachings of the human nature of Christ, grace, and the Sabbath. On Christ’s human nature, he contended that “Deity cannot co-exist with a sinful human nature” and that “the humanity of Christ was untainted by original sin.” Thus, he wrote, “We believe that the most serious error held by the Seventh-day Adventists is their belief that ‘on His human side, Christ inherited just what every child of Adam inherits—a sinful nature’ (*Bible Readings for the Home Circle*, p. 174).”<sup>2</sup> He then appealed to Adventists “to reconsider prayerfully their views” on the human nature of Christ.<sup>3</sup> Hunter’s following article on grace was the least polemical of all his pieces as it merely expounded on the principles of God’s grace and sovereignty as illustrated in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Matt 20:1-16). Hunter did not make any reference to Adventism. The article may have been designed to be a counterpoint to the Arminian view of grace and salvation. But no mention was made anywhere in the article of Arminianism. Certainly the article was too tame to be

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<sup>1</sup>Donald M. Hunter, “The Two Goats of Leviticus,” *Our Hope*, May 1957, 665-672.

<sup>2</sup>Donald M. Hunter, “The Sinless Human Nature of Christ,” *Our Hope*, June 1957, 721. Hunter did not provide the edition year. It must have been a pre-1949 edition as the phraseology quoted here was deleted in 1949. For a discussion on the history of this phraseology in *Bible Readings*, see Knight, *A Search for Identity*, 155, 156.

<sup>3</sup>Donald M. Hunter, “The Sinless Human Nature of Christ,” *Our Hope*, June 1957, 721, 722.

considered a polemic against Adventism.<sup>1</sup> Finally, in the last article of the series Hunter delved into the question of the Sabbath. After surveying the history of the Sabbath in Scripture, he asserted that in the Christian era there is no longer the requirement to observe the seventh-day Sabbath, but only to “devote one day in seven to God.” He stated that insisting on the seventh day (“the day symbolic of old creation, the day on which our Saviour lay silent in the grave”) would be to “step back into the era of pre-Christian Judaism.” He acknowledged that there were “sincere Christians who believe that it is Saturday which should be devoted wholly to the Lord,” but he found it problematic when these Christians would “persist in seeking to entangle others with the yoke of bondage.”<sup>2</sup>

While the content of Hunter’s criticisms toward Adventism was not novel in any way, his tone and approach were unlike those taken by past critics. Hunter made a positive presentation of his own beliefs the primary thrust of his articles, rather than attacking Adventism. Hence, the majority of the content was devoted to the interpretation of Scripture and to persuading his readers of the rightness of his position, rather than of the error of Adventism. Even as he criticized Adventism, he maintained a tone of respect and civility—a far cry from the anti-cult writings of the previous half-century, or his contemporaries, such as Louis Talbot and M. R. DeHaan, whose polemical writings will be examined later in this chapter.

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<sup>1</sup>Donald M. Hunter, “The Grace of Our Sovereign Lord,” *Our Hope*, July 1957, 21-25.

<sup>2</sup>Donald M. Hunter, “The Sabbath Question,” *Our Hope*, August 1957, 77-90.

*Reactions in Christian Life*

The December 1956 issue of *Christian Life* printed seven responses to the interview with Martin that the magazine's October issue had carried. In contrast to *Eternity* and *Our Hope*, letters printed in *Christian Life* were uniformly negative. The most significant letter among the seven was submitted by E. B. Jones, an ex-Adventist who was waging an anti-Adventist campaign. Writing from Minneapolis, Minnesota, Jones opened his letter by attacking the interview as doing "a distinct disservice to the Christian Church." He found it "astonishing" that Martin was "so gullible as to be hoodwinked" by Adventist leaders. What Martin saw in his interactions with Adventist leaders was merely "the *appearance* of a sound evangelical denomination," he wrote. He warned that Adventism was in reality a "counterfeit system" and a "false and dangerous religion."<sup>1</sup>

In support of his charges, Jones quoted several statements by Ellen White that, according to him, had "never [been] openly repudiated." The five quotations dealt with Christ's human nature, Azazel, law and grace, the Sabbath, and the mark of the beast—traditional areas of disagreement between evangelicals and Adventists. "Unless all these errors . . . are completely renounced," Jones insisted, "the sect can never be welcomed into the fellowship of true Christian evangelicalism." However, Jones saw the renunciation of these beliefs to be impossible since they were held and propounded by White. Any disavowal of these teachings or "alterations . . . supposedly made by SDA leaders" would mean disavowing White, which would lead to the collapse of the

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<sup>1</sup>E. B. Jones, letter to the editor, *Christian Life*, December 1956, 7.



movement itself. Thus for Jones, Adventism was caught in an inescapable circle of heresy and error which condemned it forever as an “anti-Christian” and “unscriptural” system.<sup>1</sup>

The six other letters were one- or two-sentence statements that charged Adventism of possessing self-contradiction,<sup>2</sup> employing “two-faced” tactics in relation to other Christians,<sup>3</sup> and holding “strange, illogical and unbiblical views.”<sup>4</sup> Two of the writers openly questioned Martin’s understanding of “evangelicalism” and insinuated that his definition was too liberal and lenient toward unorthodox views.<sup>5</sup>

#### Reactions by Louis Talbot

One of the first evangelical responses apart from the letters printed in the three above mentioned magazines came from Louis Talbot, president of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. Talbot was one of the individuals with whom LeRoy Froom had been corresponding in order to reverse the negative view of Adventism that he held. In 1956 Martin visited him in Los Angeles to ascertain in-depth his position on Adventism. However, none of these overtures seemed to have made a difference in Talbot’s thinking

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Mrs. Fred Stewart, letter to the editor, *Christian Life*, December 1956, 7; Betty Bruechert, letter to the editor, *Christian Life*, December 1956, 7.

<sup>3</sup>Raymond Cox, letter to the editor, *Christian Life*, December 1956, 7.

<sup>4</sup>Paul C. Green, letter to the editor, *Christian Life*, December 1956, 7.

<sup>5</sup>Vernon C. Lyons, letter to the editor, *Christian Life*, December 1956, 7; Carl G. Conner, letter to the editor, *Christian Life*, December 1956, 7.

as he responded in strongly negative terms to Barnhouse and Martin in articles published in two different outlets—*Herald of His Coming* and *The King's Business*.

### ***Herald of His Coming***

Talbot's initial response was published in the January 1957 issue of *Herald of His Coming*, an evangelical newspaper published in Los Angeles. Here he voiced his strong opposition to Adventism and its "persistent attempt . . . to secure the endorsement of Evangelicals upon their teachings and work." Though neither the Adventist-evangelical conferences nor the recent articles by Barnhouse and Martin were mentioned by name, it is clear what the target of Talbot's short article is. It refers to the "extensive correspondences" exchanged between Adventist leaders and certain evangelical leaders which, according to him, sought to persuade evangelicals that "now the cult has given up its old heresies . . . and therefore should be received into the Evangelical fold." Talbot pointed out, however, that there was "not one iota of proof of any such decision or intention" on the part of Adventists. He insisted that in order for Adventism to "take its place beside orthodox Christianity," it "will have to repudiate publicly, and in print, all the other characteristic heresies." He then listed the "heresies" that must be abandoned: conditional immortality, annihilation of the wicked, the seventh-day Sabbath ("with its sidelines of 'the mark of the beast' for the first-day-of-the-week keepers" and the "'seal of the living God' for sabbath [*sic*] observers"), the scapegoat, and the heavenly

sanctuary. Elsewhere in the article he also faulted Adventists for continuing their “full endorsement of their false prophetess, Ellen G. White.”<sup>1</sup>

This terse, unsophisticated reaction by Talbot was simply a reiteration of previous anti-Adventist writings, including his own. It did not matter for Talbot what conclusions other evangelical leaders were arriving at or what Adventist leaders were saying. His demand for complete repudiation of the “heresies” of Adventism seems to have been made without a serious examination of the evidences brought forth by Barnhouse and Martin.

### ***The King's Business***

Talbot's second, much-lengthier response appeared in the April, May, and June 1957 issues of *The King's Business*, a magazine published by the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. The three-part series was once again written in response to *Eternity's* articles on Adventism, which Talbot saw as “espousal of a system so full of heresy.” The objective of this series was to show that Barnhouse and Martin were “utterly wrong, both in their methods and in their conclusions.”<sup>2</sup>

Talbot's first issue with *Eternity's* methods was its decision to make a public statement in favor of Adventism before the latter made any public announcement

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<sup>1</sup>Louis Talbot, “Is Seventh Day Adventism Evangelical?” *Herald of His Coming*, January 1957, [page number unknown]. The page number is unknown due to the fact that I found this article only as a newspaper clipping among the personal papers of Roy Allan Anderson housed at the Center for Adventist Research at Andrews University (C 152, box 42, fld 15, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU). I have not been able to discover an entire extant copy of the January 1957 issue of *Herald of His Coming*.

<sup>2</sup>Louis T. Talbot, “Why Seventh-day Adventist Is *Not* Evangelical [part 1],” *The King's Business*, April 1957, 24.

showing changes to its emphases and doctrines that it was purported to be making.

Talbot asked, “Why should not the published statements regarding promised alterations in its creed come first from the official heads of the sect?” He argued that the more proper course of events would have been for Adventist leaders to make a clear public statement on the beliefs of Adventism, which then would need to be ratified by “the hundreds of individual Adventist churches.” Then, and only then, could any “changes” occur to the representative beliefs of Adventism. It would then fall upon evangelicals to make an evaluation of Adventism as to its evangelical orthodoxy. Because that had not taken place, Talbot asserted, the editors of *Eternity* were “utterly wrong” in their method of attempting to introduce Adventism into the evangelical fellowship.<sup>1</sup>

A much greater portion of the series was devoted to criticisms of Adventist teachings. Talbot indicated that he could “*not* extend the hand of fellowship” to Adventists because of the following “terrible heresies” they taught:

- 1) That the Lord Jesus Christ in His incarnation assumed a sinful, fallen human nature
- 2) That the atonement was not finished on the cross of Calvary
- 3) That Christ is at present conducting an “investigative judgment” of the records of all who have taken upon themselves the name of Christ, upon which investigation *their immortality is conditioned*
- 4) That the spirit of the believer does not go immediately into the presence of Christ at death but instead “sleeps” in the grave until the resurrection
- 5) That souls who reject Christ do not really “perish” (that is, endure eternal punishment)
- 6) That Satan as “the scapegoat” has some part in the bearing away of our sins
- 7) That we are not saved by grace alone, apart from works of any kind
- 8) That the seventh day Jewish Sabbath is God’s test and seal.

Talbot stated that he found each of these teachings to be “false and unscriptural, as well as other Seventh-day Adventist views about the coming of Christ and the millennium in

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

heaven, and dietary restrictions, Mrs. White's prophetism, etc." "These heresies," he continued, "when considered in the light of God's holy Word, each and every one of them, *make fellowship impossible.*" Therefore, "in order for Adventists to enjoy fellowship with evangelicals," he concluded, "they must repudiate every single heresy" mentioned above.<sup>1</sup>

In the articles, Talbot sharply criticized each of those eight "most destructive" heresies of Adventism. First, he denounced Adventism for teaching a heretical view of Christ's human nature. He found heretical Adventist statements that spoke of Christ taking "sinful nature" and having had the possibility of sinning while on earth. "The Adventist heresy in regard to the nature of Christ grows out of their complete misunderstanding of His humanity," he wrote. "His humanity was just as perfect as His deity. His humanity was just as sinless as His deity. His humanity was wholly unique."<sup>2</sup> In this criticism, however, Talbot failed to address the question of Christ's sin-affected physical nature—one that Adventists were attempting to take into account in describing his human nature.

Second, Talbot chose to attack the claim by Barnhouse and Martin that Adventism had changed its teachings on various points such as Christ's human nature and salvation by grace vs. works. He pointed out that the Adventist church had not made any formal repudiations of former "errors." Instead, he found Adventist publications of recent

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 25, 26; Louis T. Talbot, "Why Seventh-day Adventism Is *Not* Evangelical [part 2]," *The King's Business*, May 1957, 23.

<sup>2</sup>Louis T. Talbot, "Why Seventh-day Adventism Is *Not* Evangelical [part 1]," *The King's Business*, April 1957, 26-28.

months and years repeating the same “heresies.” Furthermore, he contended that if there indeed were changes in doctrines, it would mean disavowing many teachings of Ellen White, whom he considered to be the very foundation of Adventism. Thus, in Talbot’s mind, Adventism was trapped in a situation in which maintaining its distinctive doctrines would mean forever being consigned to heresies while revising those doctrines would mean the demise of the movement. Throughout the three articles, Talbot himself seems to have been trapped in this dualistic view of Adventism which colored all his evaluations.<sup>1</sup>

Third, Talbot attacked what he called “the sanctuary heresy.” He saw the twofold heavenly sanctuary ministry of Christ as taught by Adventists as robbing from the completeness of Christ’s atonement on the cross. He found support for his charges in Adventist publications where the writers indicated that Christ’s work of atonement did not finish on the cross.<sup>2</sup> Writing from his characteristically Calvinist perspective, he had no appreciation for the Adventist belief that the *complete* atonement that Christ provided on the cross was not and will not be *completed* until the very end of time. For Adventists, believers of free will, the work of atonement could not be completed before everyone who is to make a decision has made the final decision about God. This differentiation was lost in the mind of Talbot as he leveled his attack on Adventism.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 28-30; Louis T. Talbot, “Why Seventh-day Adventism Is *Not* Evangelical [part 2],” *The King’s Business*, May 1957, 24, 25.

<sup>2</sup>Louis T. Talbot, “Why Seventh-day Adventism Is *Not* Evangelical [part 2],” *The King’s Business*, May 1957, 25, 26.

The fourth Adventist doctrine Talbot was concerned with was the investigative judgment teaching. He found this teaching to be “completely arbitrary” and one that robs believers of the joy and assurance of salvation. Instead, the teaching would result in uncertainty over the status of one’s salvation and in a state of bondage to insecurity and self-doubt. This is an evidence of Adventists’ “innate legalism,” which, Talbot wrote, was “part and parcel of their system.” He further stated that the investigative judgment doctrine is a proof that “Adventism is a system of probation” and that “one’s sins can be held over his head as a threat even after he has believed.”<sup>1</sup> Because he interpreted the investigative judgment teaching solely in negative, judgmentalistic terms, Talbot discounted the positive, grace-oriented aspects of the teaching that Adventists also claimed to hold.

The fifth Adventist “heresy” that Talbot examined in this series was the scapegoat teaching. He considered this teaching as another arbitrary conclusion “based upon a marginal reading of Leviticus 16:8 where the word *scapegoat* is identified as ‘Heb. *Azazel*.’” Talbot felt that the Adventist interpretation of Azazel as Satan, and his eternal banishment at the very end of time, could not be part of the gospel as it would run counter to Christ’s unique role as the only sin-bearer. Rather, he wrote that Azazel must be understood as “the blessed effect of the work of Christ, that the sins of the people are forever out of sight.” Though he himself admitted that “the etymology of the word is not

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 26-28.

absolutely certain,” Talbot remained unequivocal about its interpretation, not choosing to give Adventism the right to favor an alternate interpretation.<sup>1</sup>

The sixth Adventist doctrine to come under attack in Talbot’s series was the “three angels’ messages,” particularly the last of the three. In this section Talbot made an unusual choice to quote at length Ellen White’s statements on the three angels’ messages from *Early Writings* with little analysis or criticism. However, it is clear what he considered problematic in this teaching—that “the sect still believes itself to be *the* remnant church.” He found the remnant teaching to be “contrary to the Word of God” and “divisive.”<sup>2</sup>

The seventh and by far the most extensive criticism of Adventist beliefs in this series centered on the seventh-day Sabbath teaching. Spanning six pages, this section contained the history of seventh-day Sabbath-keeping among Adventists and their arguments for the Sabbath. Talbot then presented his rebuttal, arguing that the Sabbath was only for Israel, that the commandment to keep the Sabbath was not given again in the New Testament, and that in fact the “keeping of the Sabbath [was] discouraged.” Furthermore, he accused Adventists of making the Sabbath issue “a life and death matter,” a “question of receiving or rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ as one’s personal Saviour.” He asked whether Adventists’ regard for the Sabbath amounted to “a worship of a *day* instead of a *Person*.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 28, 29.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 29, 30.

<sup>3</sup>Louis T. Talbot, “Why Seventh-day Adventism Is *Not* Evangelical [part 3],” *The King’s Business*, June 1957, 24-29.



Eighth and lastly, Talbot gave a brief mention of the Adventist teachings on “annihilation, soul-sleep [and] conditional immortality.” He flatly rejected them by stating that “none of these teachings are to be found in the gospel message of the Word of God. . . . The Word of God clearly reveals that man was created an immortal soul.” Unfortunately, he did not go beyond such sweeping statements and did not provide any explanation for the Adventist teachings on death and the after-life. He merely asked the rhetorical question: “How then can anyone who is evangelical approve a sect which teaches them?”<sup>1</sup> One might have asked Talbot: “Why not?”

Talbot then concluded his three-part series on the eight “heresies” of Adventism by quoting at length from E. B. Jones. Jones, an ex-Adventist self-supporting minister, was active in anti-Adventist circles and had written the controversial *Forty Bible Reasons Why You Should Not Be a Seventh-day Adventist* in 1942.<sup>2</sup> It seems that Talbot was greatly influenced by Jones’s treatise in the composition of these articles as his line of reasoning parallels *Why You Should Not Be* in a striking manner. However, no direct attribution to Jones was made until the concluding paragraphs, in which Talbot quoted ten paragraphs from Jones which stated how Adventist teachings could be made to conform to the teachings of evangelicalism. These “correctives” recommended that Adventism essentially rid itself of all its distinctives and embrace the Calvinistic brand of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 29, 30.

<sup>2</sup>E. B. Jones, *Forty Bible Reasons Why You Should Not Be a Seventh-day Adventist* (Minneapolis: E. B. Jones, 1942).

evangelicalism. For Talbot, as it was for Jones, Adventism needed to cease to be Adventist in order to become accepted by evangelicals.<sup>1</sup>

An interesting, one-page “personal message” to Seventh-day Adventists followed Talbot’s article in the June 1957 issue of *The King’s Business*. Written by Lloyd Hamill, managing editor of the magazine, the message opened with the author’s “*personal* opinion that the *average* Seventh-day Adventist is a sincere, God-fearing person.” He wrote that he did not want to “make any value judgment whatever on [the Adventist] faith.” But he also surmised that the average Adventist needed “double assurance” and had a twofold requirement for salvation: (1) faith in Jesus and (2) obedience to “Old Testament moral law.” This, he found, was “perfectly reasonable” but not biblical. Thus he appealed to Adventists to “test God’s Word” by reading Galatians fourteen times—once a day for two weeks. He implored Adventists to “just read” and “be honest.” Presumably, after the fourteen readings, average, God-fearing Adventists would see the errors of their ways and cease to be preoccupied with what Hamill saw as the second requirement of salvation. This appeal was patronizing, condescending, and full of “value judgment” on Adventist soteriology, though the author declared his own article to be free of “value judgment.”<sup>2</sup>

In summary, Talbot’s reactions to Barnhouse and Martin were essentially a restatement of the anti-Adventist writings of E. B. Jones and many others who preceded

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<sup>1</sup>Louis T. Talbot, “Why Seventh-day Adventism Is *Not* Evangelical [part 3],” *The King’s Business*, June 1957, 30.

<sup>2</sup>Lloyd Hamill, “A Personal Message to Seventh-day Adventists,” *The King’s Business*, June 1957, 31.

him in criticizing Adventism. Though presented with a new and different perspective on Adventism by his evangelical colleagues, Talbot was unconvinced about the necessity to change his appraisal of Adventism. Perhaps in response to the charges by Martin that other critics of Adventism had not gone to the Adventist sources, he produced a few lengthy quotes from Adventist writings. However, his consistent application of his Calvinist perspectives in evaluating Adventist doctrines led to the same conclusion as before.

#### Reactions in *Christian Truth*

Among evangelical periodicals, *Christian Truth* was the first to publish a full-length article in response to the writings on Adventism in *Eternity*, *Our Hope*, and *Christian Life*. Published by the Bible Truth Publishers in Oak Park, Illinois, the magazine's March 1957 issue devoted its entire "Editor's Column" to a response to the articles in the three magazines.<sup>1</sup>

From the outset Paul Wilson, the editor, was clear in his disapproval of the conclusions reached by Barnhouse and Martin. He called their efforts a "gigantic whitewash engineered by a few self-appointed leaders." He saw their move as having a potentially devastating effect upon evangelicals. He wrote, "It may well shake the whole structure of fundamentalism to its very foundations, and probably make a rift which will never be healed." He also saw "this capitulation to Adventism" as a "mark of the time of the end." Therefore, he wrote, "many true-hearted, devoted Christians simply cannot and

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<sup>1</sup>[Paul Wilson], "Editor's Column," *Christian Truth*, March 1957, 75-84.

will not go along with such fellowship of light [evangelicalism] with darkness [Adventism].”<sup>1</sup>

In the rest of the article Wilson unfolded his reasons for continuing to regard Adventism as “a false system.”<sup>2</sup> First, he questioned the claim by Barnhouse and Martin that Adventists had made corrections to the unorthodox views of their early years. He charged that Adventists believed in the same erroneous teachings of the past and had not changed. As proof he cited the October 2, 1956, issue of the *Signs of the Times* where he found the Adventist magazine gloating over the “vindication” that had finally come through Barnhouse and Martin after “a century of slander.”<sup>3</sup> If Adventists feel vindicated, he concluded, Adventists could not have changed their views. Rather, it was Barnhouse and Martin who had “changed” through their interaction with Adventists.<sup>4</sup>

Second, Wilson contended that the teachings identified as heterodox by Barnhouse and Martin were in fact heresies. Having made the a priori assumption that these teachings were in error, he wrote that these doctrines were symptomatic of the “Christ-dishonoring systematized error” that had infected the entire system of Adventism. To illustrate, he focused on Ellen White. Barnhouse and Martin had questioned the prophetic role of Ellen White but had acknowledged the right of Adventists to recognize White as a prophetic messenger. For Wilson, however, the very fact that Adventists

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 75.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 76.

<sup>3</sup>Arthur S. Maxwell, “Adventists Vindicated,” *Signs of the Times*, 2 October 1956, 3, 4.

<sup>4</sup>[Paul Wilson], “Editor’s Column,” *Christian Truth*, March 1957, 76.

recognized a woman as their most recognized teacher went directly against the guidance of Scripture, which, in his view, did not give women the right to speak in the church (1 Cor 14:34) or the privilege to claim authority over men in any way (1 Tim 2:11, 12). Thus he concluded that “Adventism cannot be of God when a woman is their greatest teacher and leader.” As such, the matter over Ellen White could not be a “minor” problem.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, Wilson engaged in a lengthy assault against the Adventist teaching on the human nature of Christ. Through this he sought to demonstrate that Adventists were still teaching the erroneous beliefs of the past and that Ellen White could not be a messenger from God. Quoting from the *Desire of Ages* where White wrote that Christ “partook of man’s sinful fallen nature at the incarnation” and that “Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity . . . with all its liabilities,” Wilson interpreted White as teaching the incarnate Christ as purely human and completely sinful, totally stripped of divinity. For him even the view that Christ bore the sins of humanity throughout his life was repugnant since he believed that the sins of the world were placed on Christ only during the three hours of darkness on the cross.<sup>2</sup> He found further fodder for attack in Milton Kern’s *Bible Reasons Why You Should Be a Seventh-day Adventist*,<sup>3</sup> which was published in 1945 as a response to E. B. Jones’s *Forty Bible Reasons Why You Should*

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 77, 78.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 78-82.

<sup>3</sup>Milton E. Kern, *Bible Reasons Why You Should Be a Seventh-day Adventist: An Answer to the False Teachings of E. B. Jones* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1945).

*Not Be a Seventh-day Adventist*. He wrote that Kern's support of White's teachings on the nature of Christ provided proof that Adventists continued to believe in the same heretical, "blasphemous" teaching.<sup>1</sup>

As was the case with Talbot, Wilson repeated the same charges made against Adventism by previous writers, such as D. M. Canright and E. B. Jones. But he went further by allowing his personal convictions to be the yardstick for his appraisal of Adventism. However, some of his convictions, such as on women's role in the church and Christ's bearing of sin only on the cross, were on issues that were debated even within evangelicalism. Most likely, he did not condemn his evangelical peers who disagreed with him on these issues. But, according to this editor, Adventists were to be denounced for those disagreements.

#### Reactions by James F. Rand

In April 1957, James F. Rand wrote a brief reply to Martin's *Eternity* articles in *Bibliotheca Sacra*. Rand, a member of the journal's editorial staff, commented that "wide controversy" had been stirred up by the recent articles on Adventism in *Eternity* and *Our Hope*. While he conceded that Adventism had always been "more orthodox than such cults as Jehovah's Witnesses, Unity, Mormonism, and Theosophy," Rand charged that Adventism's "soteriological concepts of the heavenly sanctuary and the scapegoat as well as its adherence to conditional immortality and annihilationism and the seventh-day

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<sup>1</sup>[Paul Wilson], "Editor's Column," *Christian Truth*, March 1957, 83, 84.

Sabbath”—the teachings judged “heterodox” by Martin—continued to make Adventism highly “suspect” in the minds of evangelicals.<sup>1</sup>

If Adventism indeed wants to be considered evangelical, Rand wrote, its leaders must publicly repudiate those heterodox teachings, even if it means to disavow parts of Ellen White’s teachings. Otherwise, he stated, such articles by Barnhouse and Martin would only add to the confusion that exists among many. Then he added, “If Seventh-day Adventists should be admitted into evangelical fellowship,” so should “Roman Catholicism which is staunch in its adherence to basic Christian doctrine.” The only way Barnhouse and Martin could accept Adventism into the ranks of evangelical fellowship, Rand wrote, was “to push aside the peculiar doctrines of this cult.” As such, he could only conclude that Adventism was a cult and a non-Christian system.<sup>2</sup>

#### Reactions by Jan Karel Van Baalen

In 1958 Van Baalen reprised his role as the arch-critic of Adventism by allocating a chapter to the movement in his book, *Christianity Versus the Cults*. This book was a newly written digest of the teachings and practices of twelve different religious movements that the author judged to be cultic. In contrast to the author’s popular *The Chaos of Cults*, this work was much more concise in its presentation. Though published in 1958, *Christianity Versus the Cults* bore only reactions to the articles in *Eternity* and

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<sup>1</sup>James F. Rand, “About Seventh-day Adventism,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 114 (April 1957): 189.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 189, 190.

the dialogues. It appears that *Questions on Doctrine* had not yet been released to the public at the time that this book was being written.

As he opened his chapter, Van Baalen lamented the divisions caused within evangelicalism “over the question whether it, Seventh-Day Adventism [*sic*], is to be reckoned as belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ.” Confessing that he himself had been “in a quandary for some time” over this question, Van Baalen argued strongly for retaining Adventism in the “cult” category. He pointed out that the decisive issue was not over the similarities between the major doctrines of Adventism and historic Christianity, but “whether S.D.A. alongside its confession of cardinal Christian doctrines holds to other teachings that offset its evangelical creed.”<sup>1</sup>

Van Baalen’s primary objection to Adventism in this chapter was the same that he had expressed since the first printing of *The Chaos of Cults* twenty years earlier. According to him, it was the legalistic teachings and tendencies that Adventism fostered that was the most problematic. No matter how many orthodox doctrines Adventists may hold, he argued, they could not become part of the Christian church due to their emphasis on commandment keeping, especially the Sabbath commandment. Van Baalen asserted that Adventists believe that “the Sabbath commandment must be kept in order to be saved,” and not “*because we have been saved.*” He claimed that while evangelicals were of the latter type, Adventists clearly belonged to the former—seeking salvation by human

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<sup>1</sup>Jan Karel Van Baalen, *Christianity Versus the Cults* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), 101, 102.



effort. He believed that legalism infected the Adventist system so much that none of the Adventist affirmations of evangelical orthodoxy could be taken at face value.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, for Van Baalen, Adventism continued to be a cultic system that could not be admitted into the evangelical fold. Notwithstanding his softened attitude toward Adventism in the 1948 edition of *The Chaos of Cults*,<sup>2</sup> Van Baalen returned to the harsh rhetoric of his earlier years. As he concluded the chapter, he warned evangelicals against the deceptions of Adventism, which to him was a bait of Satan and the “Babylon of Ellen G. White” (“a neurotic and a hysterical woman”).<sup>3</sup>

In the end, Van Baalen saw the Adventist-evangelical dialogues of 1955-1956 as a misguided and futile effort by Adventists to bring their church into acceptance by evangelicals. He saw absolutely no merit in these dialogues as they had only divided evangelicals into opposing camps on the issue. He insinuated that the pro-Adventist figures such as Barnhouse, Martin, and English were deluded by the devil and that these individuals had not conducted a thorough examination of Adventism. As a result, they arrived at a superficial and erroneous understanding of Adventism.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 102-107.

<sup>2</sup>Jan Karel Van Baalen, *The Chaos of the Cults* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 164-189. See pp. 17-21 in chapter 1 of the present study for a discussion on Van Baalen’s earlier descriptions of Adventism.

<sup>3</sup>Van Baalen, *Christianity Versus the Cults*, 107, 108.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 100-102.

## Summary

Initial evangelical reactions to the new findings on Adventism by Barnhouse and Martin and their statements appearing in *Eternity*, *Our Hope*, and *Christian Life* were overwhelmingly negative. Although there were a few letters sent to the three magazines welcoming the change in attitude and calling for tolerance toward Adventism, the overwhelming majority of letters and articles that appeared in the three magazines and other evangelical publications showed strong disapproval of the new position and voiced continuing condemnation of Adventism.

The main point of contention between Martin's party and the critics of Adventism was whether or not those teachings identified as "heterodox" by Martin stood in the way of Christian fellowship. Whereas the pro-Adventist camp argued that those teachings did not detract from Adventists' commitment to the historic orthodoxy, particularly their faith in the all-sufficiency of Christ's atonement, the anti-Adventist camp felt those teachings resulted in a non-Christian, legalistic belief system. Thus, for the critics of Adventism, complete repudiation of those "heterodox" elements needed to occur in order for a right hand of fellowship to be extended. Since they saw no evidence of such a change, they regarded the new stance taken by Barnhouse and Martin as a gross mistake and continued to classify Adventism as a non-Christian cult.

Interestingly, all the published reactions came from the conservative, evangelical wing of Protestantism. No mention of either the Adventist-evangelical dialogues or the controversies that ensued appeared in the magazines representing the liberal wing of Protestantism (such as *Christian Century*). This was the case not only in the immediate aftermath of the dialogues and *Eternity* articles, but also throughout the rest of the 1950s

and 1960s. It seems that the question of defining cults and orthodoxy was a concern for conservative Protestants, i.e., evangelicals, whereas liberals were apparently impervious to the controversy on the status of Adventism. This is not surprising, though, since liberals were moving toward a pluralistic (and even syncretistic) view of religion. For the liberal press, the debate between evangelicals and Adventists may have seemed like another doctrinal quibble between different shades of conservative Christianity.

### **Initial Reactions to *Questions on Doctrine* (1957-1959)**

Reactions by Donald Grey Barnhouse

After *Questions on Doctrine* was published in the fall of 1957, one of the first reactions issued by evangelicals came from Donald Grey Barnhouse. In the November 1957 issue of *Eternity*, Barnhouse wrote an article entitled “Postscript on Seventh-day Adventism.” The article served to put forth both a response to *Questions on Doctrine* and a renewed call to accept Adventism as Christian.

Barnhouse was obviously pleased with *Questions on Doctrine*, since he opened his article with a ringing endorsement of the book. “The long-awaited *Answers to Questions on Doctrine*,” he wrote, “is the vindication of the position we have taken in recent months and will soon be recognized as such by all fair-minded Christians.” Because this book was now “a definitive statement that lops off the writings of Adventists who have been independent of and contradictory to their sound leadership and effectively refutes many of the charges of doctrinal error that have been leveled against them,” Barnhouse considered all the writings against Adventism as “now out of date.” “From now on,” he declared emphatically, “anyone who echoes these criticisms must be

considered as willfully ignorant of the facts or victims of such prejudice that they are no longer to be trusted as teachers” of Christian history and doctrines.<sup>1</sup>

As proof of the “vindication” that he was talking about, Barnhouse pointed to the chapter in which Adventist leaders outlined where Adventism stood in common with evangelicals, held minority views, or espoused unique, distinctive positions. The rest of the book, he stated, was “an expansion of the answer” given in this section.<sup>2</sup>

Barnhouse acknowledged that many “will not want to believe” the book to be representative of Adventism, and he stated that he himself continued to “heartily disagree with the Adventists on many of the doctrines.” But he found particular satisfaction in the book’s positions on two doctrines. First, he praised the book’s unequivocal commitment to the Protestant principle of sola Scriptura, which placed Ellen White’s writings squarely beneath the Scriptures. Second, he lauded the book’s recognition of the sinless human nature of Christ, which he found to result in the nullification of “the most serious charge ever made against the Adventists”—namely, that they believed in the fallen, corrupted nature of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

In the same article Barnhouse announced the publication of Martin’s book by Zondervan Publishing House (eventually released in 1960), which would include “appraisal and criticism of the Adventist position” presented in *Questions on Doctrine*. Barnhouse predicted that this forthcoming work would render “obsolete every other non-

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, “Postscript on Seventh-day Adventism,” *Eternity*, November 1957, 22.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 22, 23.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 47.

Adventist book” that had been written in criticism of Adventism—much like what he expected *Questions on Doctrine* to do. “This double publication” would be an unprecedented feat in modern church history in which “two parties with sharp differences have prayed and talked with each other and come finally to a complete understanding of the areas of agreement and disagreement.”<sup>1</sup>

In retrospect, Barnhouse was not far from the truth in his bold claim that the two books would supplant and render obsolete all other works on Adventism by non-Adventists. The double publication did represent the beginning of the end of anti-Adventist literature as they knew it. Though many publications would still be released over the following decade repeating old charges against Adventism, the evangelical image of Adventism as presented in the double publication ultimately prevailed, though Barnhouse himself, who died in November 1960, would not live to see it.<sup>2</sup>

However, Barnhouse was less than correct about his assessment of the role that *Questions on Doctrine* played within Adventism. Though he insinuated that the book would have the effect of eliminating variant views, Adventists would experience mixed results on this front. As history unfolded, *Questions on Doctrine* did have mainstreaming effects on certain areas of Adventist belief, but it proved also to be a source of fragmentation in other areas. This was particularly true regarding the human nature of Christ as described in *Questions on Doctrine*—a key point that Barnhouse saw as providing grounds for vindication of his new view of Adventism. Within Adventism, that

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>“Synopsis of the Life of Donald Grey Barnhouse,” *Eternity*, March 1961, 5.

teaching would become the most controversial and divisive portion of the book. On this issue, instead of “lopping off” the writings of Adventists who disagreed with it, *Questions on Doctrine* spawned a plethora of publications into the twenty-first century whose lineage can be traced back to 1957.<sup>1</sup>

#### Reactions by M. R. DeHaan

The March 1958 issue of *The King's Business* carried the first full review of *Questions on Doctrine* in an evangelical publication. Written by M. R. DeHaan (known to be a critic of Adventism) of the Radio Bible Class in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the article stood squarely against the position taken by Martin and Barnhouse. DeHaan wrote early in the article that *Questions on Doctrine* was full of “double talk and flagrant contradictions.” He said he had been “assured repeatedly by certain friends” of Adventism (presumably Barnhouse, Martin, and English) that the book “would be a turn-about-face of the old Seventh-day Adventist position and a repudiation of many of their objectionable doctrines.” But he found the volume to be merely a “restatement” of the views of Adventism which he and many other evangelicals had long considered to be heretical.<sup>2</sup>

DeHaan provided numerous reasons for his conclusion that *Questions on Doctrine* continued to take the “old stand.”<sup>3</sup> After all, the book itself declared that it was not to be

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<sup>1</sup>Chapter 4 of this study contains a fuller discussion on these and other issues within Adventism.

<sup>2</sup>M. R. DeHaan, “Questions on Doctrine,” *The King's Business*, March 1958, 19.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

taken as “a new statement of faith, but rather an answer to specific questions” on Adventist beliefs.<sup>1</sup> Though colored in his analysis by the notion that Adventism was a cult, he was mostly correct in perceiving that Adventist leaders intended no substantive changes to their traditional teachings and that they were simply adopting “new terminology in propagating their position.” As such, he saw much to attack in the book.<sup>2</sup>

In DeHaan’s judgment *Questions on Doctrine* was written to provide: (1) “a defense of the distinctive beliefs of the SDAs”; (2) “a vindication of their inspired prophetess, Ellen G. White”; and (3) evidence that the Adventist church constitutes “the one true remnant church of the end time.” He then went on to raise objections to each of these perceived purposes of the book. The distinctive doctrines of Adventism taught in the book, he wrote, were the same errors and heresies that stood in the way of fellowship with evangelicals in the past. He accused the book of containing “double talk,” “inconsistencies,” “contradictions,” and a “confusing maze of fantastic interpretations,” all designed to trick evangelicals into accepting Adventism as a Christian church. He warned against such deception and stated that the entire book was “just a justification of their unaltered position and a defense of Mrs. Ellen White, their prophetess.” “Seventh-day Adventism has not changed,” he declared. “It is still the same bigoted movement of error and clever deception.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 8.

<sup>2</sup>M. R. DeHaan, “Questions on Doctrine,” *The King’s Business*, March 1958, 19.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 19-25.

Then how was it that Barnhouse and Martin had come to a different conclusion? DeHaan charged that Adventists, in an “attempt to receive the blessing and endorsement of the ‘evangelicals,’” were engaging in “the tactics of the Trojan Horse.” He insinuated that the Adventists had deceived Barnhouse and Martin into embracing them as evangelical and and were now “using the endorsement of these evangelicals to proselytize folks into their own ‘remnant church.’” *Questions on Doctrine* is merely a sly attempt at “infiltration for the purpose of proselytizing,” he asserted. Then he concluded by quoting Matthew 24:4, “‘Take heed that no man deceive you by any means.’”<sup>1</sup>

DeHaan struck again a year and a half later in his October 1959 article in the same magazine. With the “sincere desire and prayer” that readers be awakened to the true nature of Adventism, a “religion of bondage,” DeHaan unloaded a barrage of denunciations in over seven pages. After pointing out that Adventism sprang from the Millerite Movement, which he called “a comedy of errors,” he narrated the sequence of events that led up to the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*. He emphasized along the way that a promise had been made to other evangelicals by Barnhouse and Martin, as well as Adventist leaders, of a change in doctrine to be effected in the upcoming book. He stated that he was greatly dismayed by the lack of doctrinal revision which reconfirmed his original assessment of the Adventist movement as “false,” “dangerous,” and even “deadly.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 25.

<sup>2</sup>M. R. DeHaan, “What Do Seventh-day Adventists Believe Today?” *The King’s Business*, October 1959, 28-30, 33.



The rest of the article focused on eight unchanged doctrines of Adventism. The eight were: (1) Ellen White; (2) the remnant; (3) the Sabbath; (4) the sanctuary and the investigative judgment; (5) soul-sleep; (6) annihilation of the wicked; (7) salvation as understood from the Arminian perspective; and (8) the scapegoat. Criticisms against these teachings were essentially a repetition of DeHaan's own and other evangelicals' earlier attacks on Adventism. He, along with many other critics of *Questions on Doctrine*, rejected the book's claim that those distinctive doctrines did not compromise the fundamentals of evangelical Christianity. For DeHaan, accepting the premise and argument of the book was akin to taking "poison . . . in a solution of sweet syrup to disguise its presence." As such, *Questions on Doctrine* was "even more dangerous" than any of Adventism's previous propaganda pieces.<sup>1</sup>

#### Reactions in *Christianity Today*

The first mention of the publication of *Questions on Doctrine* by *Christianity Today* is found in the March 3, 1958, issue. John Gerstner, writing in the "Review of Current Religious Thought" section, focused on the subject of the "church" and the "sect." He wrote that in order for a group to qualify as a "church," it must be "evangelical . . . holding to evangelical or fundamental principles, especially the deity of Christ and his atonement." Meanwhile, a "sect" or a "cult" is a "Christian denomination not regarded as evangelical."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 33.

<sup>2</sup>John H. Gerstner, "Review of Current Religious Thought," *Christianity Today*, 3 March 1958, 39.

With this as the lead, Gerstner acknowledged that there was a “controversy concerning the classification of the Seventh-day Adventists.” He announced that he had just received *Questions on Doctrine* and introduced the book as “the 720-page Adventist answer to the question of whether it ought to be thought of as a sect or a fellow evangelical denomination.” He made no substantive comment on the book but announced that Harold Lindsell of Fuller Theological Seminary would soon be writing on this question in *Christianity Today*.<sup>1</sup>

### **Reactions by Harold Lindsell**

Harold Lindsell’s article in *Christianity Today* appeared just four weeks after Gerstner’s announcement. Designed as a two-part series for the March 31 and April 14 issues, the articles represented the first serious treatment of Seventh-day Adventism on the pages of what was fast becoming the flagship periodical of American evangelicalism, though still only in its second year of publication.

In the March 31 article, Lindsell made some significant concessions to Adventists while revisiting old charges. He agreed with Martin that it would not be right to classify Adventism in the same category with Christian Science or Jehovah’s Witnesses, since Adventists do not deny the absolute deity of Christ or reject his atoning sacrifice (the two key criteria for admission to evangelicalism according to John Gerstner). Lindsell also stated that “the term ‘evangelical’ is not to be bestowed on the basis of acceptance or rejection of such concepts” as “conditional immortality, annihilation of the wicked dead,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

soul sleep and foot washing”—signaling a considerable departure from the stance taken by such individuals as Louis Talbot and M. R. DeHaan.<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, Lindsell was averse to welcoming Adventism into the evangelical fellowship. Lindsell’s primary concern was with the status of Ellen White’s writings within Adventism. He insisted that the Adventist attitude toward White, as exemplified in such writings as Francis D. Nichol’s *Ellen White and Her Critics*, was basically that of belief in the “immaculate nature of Mrs. White’s teaching and life.” He wrote that Adventists believe in “a native inerrancy” of White’s writings since they conclude that White’s writings are always in harmony with Scripture. Regardless of what *Questions on Doctrine* may suggest, Lindsell wrote that this type of supreme regard for a leader’s writings is different from that which is given to Calvin, Luther, or any other Protestant leaders.<sup>2</sup>

In the second article, dated April 14, Lindsell continued his criticism of Adventism, especially in the area of soteriology. He questioned whether Adventism, like Roman Catholicism, stood squarely in line with the Reformation theology of “salvation by faith as opposed to salvation by faith plus works.” After presenting various extracts from Adventist writings on the importance of Sabbath-keeping and the mark of beast, he concluded that Adventism could not be evangelical because it mixed works, particularly Sabbath-keeping, with grace. In addition, he attacked Adventism for its adherence to Arminianism—though he did not mention the ideology by name. Since Adventists teach

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<sup>1</sup>Harold Lindsell, “What of Seventh-day Adventism? Part I,” *Christianity Today*, 31 March 1958, 8, 9.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 9, 10.

that “men can and do lose their salvation,” and since this loss must come from commandment breaking, Lindsell reasoned, Adventists must obey the law “to prevent their being lost.” If this is the case, “then grace is no more grace,” he declared. As such, he concluded, Adventism is essentially a legalistic system much like Roman Catholicism which “is not evangelical and never will be” until its legalism is abandoned.<sup>1</sup>

It is highly interesting that Lindsell chose to limit his criticism to the two issues of Ellen White and the Sabbath as they related to salvation—while absolving Adventism from the charges of heresies on many other fronts. Even on these two fronts, however, he might have been led to different conclusions had he taken at face value the statements expressed in *Questions on Doctrine*. While the book clearly presented Ellen White as a non-canonical prophet whose writings and ministry were found to be in harmony with Scripture, it did give room for individual Adventists to dissent from her writings or even to reject her writings in toto. Also, the book made a rather compelling case for the legitimacy of the Arminian perspective in Christian soteriology—at least as an alternate view to Calvinism, if not the view biblically mandated.<sup>2</sup> Had he made a more considered appraisal of these points raised in *Questions on Doctrine*, Lindsell may have reached the same conclusion as Barnhouse and Martin in embracing Adventism as evangelical.

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<sup>1</sup>Harold Lindsell, “What of Seventh-day Adventism? Part II,” *Christianity Today*, 14 April 1958, 13-15.

<sup>2</sup>*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 96-98, 402-422.

### Reactions by Herbert S. Bird

The second major reaction to *Questions on Doctrine in Christianity Today* was given by Herbert S. Bird, a missionary in eastern Africa with the American Evangelical Mission. Bird's first reaction came in the form of a letter printed in the April 14 issue (where Lindsell's second article also appeared). In the first half of the letter, Bird narrated the early history of Seventh-day Adventism beginning with the Millerite Movement and showed how some of the distinctive teachings of Adventism developed. This segment of his letter was presented in a dispassionate, non-critical fashion, as criticisms were reserved for the second half of the letter. The main bulk of his criticisms were directed at Ellen White. He found the Adventist assertion that White's writings are in the same class with the non-canonical prophets of the Bible to be at odds with the sola Scriptura claim. He deemed these two claims to be contradictory because he considered the non-canonical prophets of the Bible to have the same authority as the written Word. For him, placing White in the same category with the non-canonical prophets meant giving her the same authority as Scripture. In addition, Bird found the extra-biblical details found in White's writings, such as the "various details of the boyhood of Jesus," and White's role in confirming and correcting doctrines to be tantamount to placing her authority on the same level as the Bible itself. All these provided Bird with "a sufficient reason for regarding the movement as having departed quite radically from a soundly Christian position."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert S. Bird, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 14 April 1958, 25, 26.

Two weeks later, a full-fledged article by Bird was printed under the title, “Another Look at Adventism.” Bird did acknowledge here that evangelicals had much to learn from Adventists. First, he challenged evangelicals to learn from the commitment that Adventists have to their distinctive teachings and high standards for membership. Adventists, he wrote, have demonstrated that it is wrong to think that “high standards are in themselves an impediment to the growth of a church.” Second, he challenged evangelicals to learn from the “astonishing” zeal with which Adventists—clergy and lay alike—approach ministry. “Adventists have grasped, to a degree which few others have,” he noted, “the scriptural principle that every member is a witness, and have implemented that principle with remarkable success.”<sup>1</sup>

Bird’s assessment of the theological system of Adventism, however, was much less respectful. In spite of many positives that Adventism possesses, he concluded, the view that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is “just another evangelical denomination is mistaken, and cannot help but bring about greater confusion in the Christian world than exists already.” Bird’s primary concern in this article had to do with the issue of legalism. He linked the Adventist teachings of the investigative judgment and lifestyle standards and faulted Adventism for advocating “salvation by character.” “In Adventism,” he charged, “at least one stitch in the saint’s celestial garment shall be of his own making. . . . And if it is thus, then grace is no more grace.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert S. Bird, “Another Look at Adventism,” *Christianity Today*, 28 April 1958, 16, 17.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 14, 15.

Bird's assessment of the legalistic elements of Adventism, however, was different from many of his evangelical predecessors in that he did not include the Sabbath teaching in this criticism. In fact, he parted ways with many of his peers in stating that the Adventist "affirmation of the perpetual and universal validity of the moral law as the standard of conduct which is pleasing to God" "is not legalism at all." This, he insisted, "is no reason for barring them from evangelical fellowship." What was deeply problematic for him concerning the Adventist teaching on the Sabbath was not their insistence on keeping the seventh day holy, but the eschatological exclusivism that the teaching fostered by condemning all Sunday-keepers as apostates in the making.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Rebuttal by Frank H. Yost**

In the July 21, 1958, issue, *Christianity Today* provided space for Frank H. Yost, a retired professor from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, to respond to the criticisms made by Lindsell and Bird. The inclusion of this article in *Christianity Today* proved to be a major landmark in Adventist-evangelical relations in that it was the first full-length article appearing in an evangelical publication written by an Adventist in defense of his beliefs.

The article echoed the format of presentation employed in *Questions on Doctrine*, with the magazine providing the questions and Yost the answers. There were eight

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 15, 16.

questions in all, ranging from the authority of the General Conference, the Sabbath, Ellen White, prophetic interpretation, lifestyle, to evangelistic method.<sup>1</sup>

After vouching for the representative authority of both the General Conference and *Questions on Doctrine*, Yost engaged in a defense of specific beliefs of Adventism. He defended the Adventist assertion that the Sabbath has been kept by many Christians throughout Christian history, including in the New Testament period. In response to the question on Sabbath-keeping as a form of legalism, Yost reiterated the assertion made in *Questions on Doctrine* that Adventists held to the Reformation belief in salvation by grace. At the same time, he stated, Adventists believe in the empowerment of the Spirit which leads the saved to keep the law. To prove that such a teaching is not unique to Adventism, he referred to chapter 13 of *A Handbook of Christian Truth*, written by Harold Lindsell and Charles J. Woolridge, where the authors dealt with the relationship of the Christian to the Decalogue. “All Seventh-day Adventists can subscribe to this statement,” Yost wrote.<sup>2</sup> This final counterpoint was particularly trenchant as it turned Lindsell’s own words against him on the matter of commandment keeping.

In response to the question on Ellen White, Yost strongly denied the suggestion that Adventists regard her as “immaculate.” Neither White herself nor the denomination at large has ever claimed her to be “verbally inspired” or “infallible,” he wrote. With regard to the extra-biblical details included in White’s writings (a point raised by Bird to attack Adventists’ equating White’s authority with the Bible’s), Yost wrote that “she

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<sup>1</sup>Frank H. Yost, “A Seventh-day Adventist Speaks Back,” *Christianity Today*, 21 July 1958, 15-18.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 16.



would have been a needless if not impertinent repetition of biblical revelation” without the additional details. However, those details are “always consonant . . . with biblical revelation, and they are, at her repeated insistence, always to be tested by Scripture.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Letters to *Christianity Today***

The articles by Lindsell, Bird, and Yost in *Christianity Today* engendered “a tidal wave of correspondence”<sup>2</sup> that filled the letters section of the magazine. Those responses were printed in four issues published in 1958: May 12, May 26, July 21, and August 18. The printing of letters on Adventism ceased when the editor announced the “end to the discussion of Adventist and Evangelical differences” in the August 18 issue.<sup>3</sup>

In the first three issues, negative evangelical reactions to the articles by Lindsell and Bird outnumbered overwhelmingly those that were positive. Numerically, more pro-Adventist than anti-Adventist letters were printed in these issues—29 to 17. However, such a ratio of responses could hardly be taken as representative of the balance of opinions among the evangelical readers of the magazine. It appears that most, if not all, of the pro-Adventist letters were composed by Adventists themselves—some of them prominent (or later to be) figures within Adventism, such as Francis D. Nichol of the *Review and Herald* magazine, Theodore Carcich of the Central Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Edwin Thiele of Emmanuel Missionary College, and Ralph Larson of the Hawaiian Mission of Seventh-day Adventists.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>2</sup>Editor, “Eutychus and His Kin,” *Christianity Today*, 12 May 1958, 23.

<sup>3</sup>Editor, “Eutychus and His Kin,” *Christianity Today*, 18 August 1958, 25.

The pro-Adventist letters that argued against Lindsell and Bird focused on the two writers' treatment of Ellen White and the seventh-day Sabbath. Regarding White, Nichol asserted that neither he nor Adventism as a whole viewed her as "immaculate," as Lindsell had accused him of attempting to demonstrate in *Ellen White and Her Critics*. While Adventists would strenuously object to unfounded criticisms of White, Nichol suggested that they had not and would never argue for her infallibility.<sup>1</sup> Larson followed suit by stating that had Nichol not defended White, Lindsell would have charged that Adventists are willfully leaving difficult questions unanswered. "There appears," Larson argued, "to be no way of satisfying such a prejudiced mind."<sup>2</sup> In addition, a couple of writers pointed out that the Adventist belief in the continuing gift of prophecy and the recognition of that gift in Ellen White cannot, in and of itself, provide a ground for exclusion from evangelical fellowship.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, another correspondent pled with Lindsell to at least read *The Desire of Ages* which would lead him to understand that all other books on Christ are "chaff in comparison."<sup>4</sup>

The Sabbath question generated many more responses, though the letters were heavily edited down to a handful of lines or so. While some used rather strong language to attack Lindsell for "deliberate misrepresentation"<sup>5</sup> and "trying to hoodwink the

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<sup>1</sup>F. D. Nichol, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 12 May 1958, 23.

<sup>2</sup>Ralph Larson, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 26 May 1958, 17.

<sup>3</sup>Gerald M. Reynolds, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 26 May 1958, 17; David L. Bauer, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 26 May 1958, 17.

<sup>4</sup>John G. Issler, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 12 May 1958, 23.

<sup>5</sup>Elwood Boyd, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 26 May 1958, 17.

ignorant and unthinking”<sup>1</sup> and his articles as an “unscholarly contribution”<sup>2</sup> and “about as bold a display of antinomianism as . . . ever seen,”<sup>3</sup> most focused on the Adventist affirmation of the Ten Commandments as the primary basis of their defense of Sabbath-keeping. Their common sentiment on this matter was succinctly expressed by Alfred E. Holst of San Gabriel, California, who asked: “Could it possibly be that to qualify as an evangelical one must have a conscience that will permit him to knowingly disobey one of God’s Ten Commandments?”<sup>4</sup> Invoking the names of “John Wesley, Martin Luther, John Knox, and D. L. Moody” as support, one of the writers asserted that “the law of God written on two tables of stone will [remain in effect] through . . . eternity.”<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, for some of the respondents the criticisms on Ellen White and the Sabbath by Lindsell and Bird provided more evidence that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was the prophetic remnant of the end-time. Citing Revelation 12:17, they saw the two-pronged attack on the Sabbath and Ellen White as “making war” with the remnant who keep the commandments of God (particularly the Sabbath commandment) and have the testimony of Jesus (which Adventists believed that they had through the “Spirit of Prophecy” ministry of Ellen White).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Frances Taylor, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 26 May 1958, 17.

<sup>2</sup>E. A. Crane, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 26 May 1958, 17.

<sup>3</sup>Samuel W. Stovall, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 26 May 1958, 17.

<sup>4</sup>Alfred E. Holst, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 26 May 1958, 16.

<sup>5</sup>R. Spangler, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 26 May 1958, 16.

<sup>6</sup>Brian Pilmoor, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 26 May 1958, 17; C. C. Morlan, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 26 May 1958, 17.

Anti-Adventist responses to Lindsell and Bird, on the other hand, echoed largely the articles' content and commended the authors for their writings. Most of the substantive responses centered on the Sabbath. "The SDA position on the Sabbath observance is utterly hopeless," wrote one correspondent. Only, he wrote, when Adventism comes around to the truth by "junking its errors," such as the Sabbath, could the group "find a place with other Christian communities." If Adventists were to be truly consistent, wrote another, they would need to practice circumcision and follow all the laws of the Old Testament. Another sought to invalidate the Adventist insistence on seventh-day Sabbath-keeping by asking whether it was possible to prove that the weekly cycle had never been broken.<sup>1</sup>

There were also other criticisms of Adventism among these letters. One protested Lindsell's statement that it was possible for one who believes in soul sleep to be a genuine Christian. He asked how one "who disbelieves what the master said to the dying thief" could be a genuine believer.<sup>2</sup> Others faulted Adventists for using "slander" and "all manner of deceit" to win new converts, and of being unwilling to enter into fellowship with other Christians.<sup>3</sup> Another—Donald E. Mote, an ex-Adventist who was publishing

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<sup>1</sup>John F. Como, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 26 May 1958, 16; Frank B. Headley, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 26 May 1958, 16; Eaton R. Burrows, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 26 May 1958, 17; Howard E. Mather, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 21 July 1958, 21;

<sup>2</sup>D. J. Evans, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 26 May 1958, 16.

<sup>3</sup>Paul J. Coblentz, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 21 July 1958, 26; Richard G. Wallace, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 21 July 1958, 26.

an anti-Adventist magazine called *The Gathering Call*—singled out the sanctuary and investigative judgment teachings as “delusion.”<sup>1</sup>

The last of the letters written in reaction to the *Christianity Today* articles was composed by Herbert Bird. This letter was written in direct response to Frank Yost’s article in the July 21, 1958, issue. In fact, this was the only response to Yost that the magazine printed. In this lengthy letter, Bird highlighted four areas of Adventist beliefs that he felt compelled to criticize once more. The first area was “clean and unclean foods.” He argued here that making “diet a matter of ecclesiastical ordinance” was unacceptable. Second, Bird pointed out that all early Christian observances of the Sabbath found in Acts took place at a Jewish synagogue. As such, he argued that they should be viewed as apostles using the venue and occasion to evangelize the Jews, rather than keeping the Sabbath. Third, he attacked the Adventist stance on the inspiration of Ellen White as “equivocation” and “quibble.” Speaking from his apparent inerrantist view of Scripture, he contended that the Adventist insistence on Ellen White’s writings as inspired but not infallible was mere mincing of words. If Ellen White was inspired, then her words ought to be considered infallible since God speaks infallibly to his prophets. Since Adventism does believe that White was inspired, “it must be adjudged of the sin of adding to Holy Scripture.” Finally, Bird attacked the Adventist teachings on the sanctuary and the investigative judgment as those that link commandment keeping to salvation. As such, no matter how much Adventists claimed to believe in justification by

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<sup>1</sup>Donald E. Mote, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 21 July 1958, 26.

faith, he viewed them to be “involved in a legalism of the deepest dye,” and inculcating “autosoterism scarcely less patent than the Galatian Judaizers’ own.”<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

Initial reactions to *Questions on Doctrine* on the pages of *Christianity Today* showed greater tolerance for the distinctive teachings of Adventism, though the overall verdict of “cult” remained. Departing from the stance taken by his forebears and contemporaries in evangelicalism, Lindsell removed the doctrine of conditional immortality from the list of Adventist teachings that stand as obstacles to fellowship with evangelicals. Meanwhile, Bird had no problems with Adventists insisting on seventh-day Sabbath-keeping based on the Ten Commandments. Still, the two writers saw enough heresies in Adventist teachings to label Adventism a cult. The inclusion of Frank Yost’s article into the debate signaled the magazine’s openness for dialogue with Adventism. Yost countered criticisms made by the two evangelical writers and sought to invalidate their arguments that Adventists were legalistic in their Sabbath-keeping and heretical in their position on Ellen White.

The articles by Lindsell, Bird, and Yost spawned numerous reactions from the readers of *Christianity Today* in the following months. Though many letters critical of Lindsell and Bird were printed, they were composed mostly by Adventists defending their church. Most evangelical respondents were supportive of the two evangelical writers’ attack on Adventism.

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert S. Bird, letter to the editor, *Christianity Today*, 18 August 1958, 25.

All in all, the initial evangelical reactions in *Christianity Today* were negative toward Adventism. However, there also were some positive signs as the magazine showed a greater openness and respect toward Adventism. In contrast to other more hostile media, such as *The King's Business*, *Christianity Today* showed a willingness to dialogue with Adventists and approach the cult question in a more even-handed manner.

#### Reactions by Walter Martin

Walter Martin's first published reaction to *Questions on Doctrine* came in the form of a series of four articles in *Eternity* between April and July 1958. On the surface the four articles were not presented as a direct reaction to the book. They were straightforward doctrinal pieces on conditional immortality, the Sabbath, the law, and the judgment. In these articles, Martin focused exclusively on the doctrines per se, with very few references to Adventism and no reference to the controversy that he and Barnhouse had generated. However, given the historical context, the articles must be viewed as an extension of his earlier articles on Adventism and a response to arguments set forth in *Questions on Doctrine*.

In the four articles Martin reiterated the mainline Protestant views on the state of the dead and the final destiny of the wicked, the Sabbath, the law, and the judgment. In the first article he argued that the ideas of "soul sleep" and annihilation of the wicked are based on a misunderstanding of the Bible that stand contrary to the plain teachings of Scripture.<sup>1</sup> The second article was written to show that "from the ascension of Christ on,

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<sup>1</sup>Walter R. Martin, "The Christian and the Soul Sleep," *Eternity*, April 1958, 26-28.

the early church has observed the first day of the week as the Lord's Day" and that "these first Christians did not think that the seventh-day Sabbath was a binding commandment of God for the Church." Here Martin took the position that the specific requirements of the Ten Commandments, along with all the laws in the Pentateuch, were abolished by Christ as they were fulfilled by love among Christians. Thus it was unnecessary to keep the seventh-day Sabbath.<sup>1</sup> Martin's third article continued the line of reasoning begun in the preceding article. He rejected the "dual-law theory" that Adventists and many other Protestants, including the reformers, followed. A position also held by Herbert Bird in his response to *Questions on Doctrine in Christianity Today*, the dual-law theory emphasized the need for keeping the moral law (i.e., the Ten Commandments), but not the ceremonial law. Martin advocated the view that all laws, including the Decalogue, were abolished on the cross and met their fulfillment in love.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the last article in the series focused on the doctrine of judgment. Martin accused Adventists of not accepting the "clear-cut teaching of judgment in the Word of God." But "instead," he wrote, "they have introduced what they term 'an investigative judgment.'" This teaching, he charged, runs contrary to the biblical teaching that the believer "shall not come into judgment" (John 5:24).<sup>3</sup>

This series of articles by Martin was an elaboration of his November 1956 and January 1957 articles in *Eternity* in which he identified and critiqued many of the

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<sup>1</sup>Walter R. Martin, "The Christian and the Sabbath," *Eternity*, May 1958, 20-23.

<sup>2</sup>Walter R. Martin, "The Christian and the Law," *Eternity*, June 1958, 17-19, 36.

<sup>3</sup>Walter R. Martin, "The Christian and the Judgment," *Eternity*, July 1958, 30-32.



distinctive doctrines of Adventism. This new set of articles, however, carried a different purpose. While the thrust of the articles of 1956-1957 was to show how the doctrinal differences were not severe enough to warrant the label of cult for Adventism, the articles of 1958 were ostentatiously polemical in nature with a view to point out the error in each Adventist teaching treated there. Though not presented as a direct response to *Questions on Doctrine*, these articles were clearly designed to show the major areas of dispute between evangelicalism and Adventism—and perhaps to show unequivocally where Martin himself and *Eternity* stood vis-à-vis Adventism.

#### Book Reviews of *Questions on Doctrine*

Although it was widely distributed among evangelicals across North America, *Questions on Doctrine* was hardly reviewed in their periodicals. Three journals reviewed the book in 1958 and 1959. Out of the three, two were decidedly negative in their assessment of Adventism, while one took a cautiously positive stance.

#### *The Sunday School Times*

*The Sunday School Times* may have been the first to review *Questions on Doctrine*. The review appeared in the March 22, 1958, issue. The unnamed reviewer's displeasure with *Questions on Doctrine* is clear from the title of the review, "A New Book of Old Errors." Apparently the reviewer had been led to believe that the book would signal a major change in Adventist theology, especially in the areas of dispute between evangelicals and Adventists. The review faulted the book for its failure to make a "clear-cut renunciation of any Gospel-denying tenets" that Adventism was "universally known" to hold. It maintained that the book gave conflicting statements on these

tenets—categorically denying them in one portion of the book, and endorsing them in other portions. Such a practice is “double talk,” the review declared, and no real “alterations of any significance” can be found “in any of the false doctrines that have marked the Seventh-Day [*sic*] Adventist movement from its rise.” It further quoted unnamed evangelical leaders who purportedly saw the book as ““full of evasions, equivocations, double talk, and deceptive statements,”” and also ““a clever attempt to cover up their [the Adventists’] traditional position, without any attempt to change whatsoever.””<sup>1</sup>

As evidence of the book’s heresies, the reviewer cited several distinctive teachings of Adventism that the book continued to teach—such as the seventh-day Sabbath, conditional immortality, annihilation of the wicked, and Ellen White as an inspired messenger of God. In the end, the review declared, persistent adherence to these beliefs in *Questions on Doctrine* reveals that “the Seventh-Day [*sic*] Adventism of today is precisely the same as the Seventh-Day [*sic*] Adventism of the past. It is—as ever—contrary to Scripture, soul-deluding, and soul-enslaving.” Having pre-determined that no genuine Christian could believe in those distinctives of Adventism, the reviewer found no reason to recognize Adventism as Christian.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Religion in Life***

In its Winter 1958-59 issue, *Religion in Life* published a review of *Questions on Doctrine* by Frank S. Mead, editor-in-chief of the Fleming H. Revell Company. Mead’s

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<sup>1</sup>“A New Book of Old Errors,” *The Sunday School Times*, 22 March 1958, 16, 17.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 17.

review of the book was decidedly more sympathetic than any of the previously published writings on the book. He hailed it as “one of the ablest and most comprehensive books available in the field of denominational doctrine” and one which was “refreshing in its clarity and candor.” Commending the book for its readability even for lay people, he predicted that the book would “correct many an error and unenlightened criticism on the part of those who have never quite understood what it is all about,” adding that it was for these people that the book was written.<sup>1</sup>

In comparison to other reactions to the book, Mead’s criticisms of *Questions on Doctrine* were mild and innocuous. His only real criticism of the book had to do with its explanation of Ellen White’s role as “neither prophet nor prophetess but a ‘messenger’ with the gift of the Spirit of prophecy.” He found this assertion to be a confusing and doubtful explication. With regard to the book’s lack of change in doctrine, he approached it in a matter-of-fact manner, stating that the authors of the book never intended it.<sup>2</sup>

Standing against the wave of overwhelming antagonism toward *Questions on Doctrine*, Mead’s review of the book presents a refreshingly positive perspective. It offers a view of the book and the controversy surrounding it that is unconditioned by historical prejudices. Unfortunately for Adventists, Mead was still very much in the minority in the larger scheme of things.

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<sup>1</sup>Frank S. Mead, review of *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine, Religion in Life* 28 (Winter 1958-1959): 157-158.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

*Bibliotheca Sacra*

Written by J. F. Walvoord, a noted Calvinist/dispensationalist scholar, the review of *Questions on Doctrine* published in the January 1959 issue of *Bibliotheca Sacra* found insufficient reasons in the book to welcome Adventism into the fellowship of evangelicals. While conceding that the book did “set right many common misapprehensions,” Walvoord concluded incorrectly that “*all* the essential Seventh-Day [*sic*] Adventist doctrines which have prompted their [Adventists’] exclusion in the past from the fold of evangelicalism still remain.”<sup>1</sup> At least one doctrine was clearly repudiated in *Questions on Doctrine*. The book had made it clear that Adventism in 1957 did not support either the semi-Arianism or anti-Trinitarianism of many nineteenth-century Adventist leaders for which the denomination had been charged with heresy.<sup>2</sup> Actually, the book had gone further by downplaying seriously the extent of semi-Arianism and anti-Trinitarianism among early Adventists and by arguing inaccurately that Adventists had “always believed in the deity and pre-existence of Christ.”<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, in response to evangelical criticisms, *Questions on Doctrine* had declared that Christ possessed a sinless nature during his incarnation (though this might not have been a proper representation of the Adventist thinking on the issue).<sup>4</sup> Thus, it was incorrect for

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<sup>1</sup>J. F. Walvoord, review of *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 116 (January 1959): 79. Emphasis supplied.

<sup>2</sup>*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 29, 30, 35-49, 641-646.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 50-65, 647-660.

Walvoord to state that all of the teachings that had caused evangelicals to attack Adventists were retained in *Questions on Doctrine*.

Walvoord did correctly observe in his review that *Questions on Doctrine* represented an attempt by Adventist leaders to “tone down points of difference and emphasize points of agreement with evangelicalism.” But he interpreted this effort as an uncanny attempt at lulling evangelicals “into the conclusion that the differences between Seventh-Day [*sic*] Adventists and others are not of great importance,” one that Adventist leaders themselves would strongly dispute. Spotlighting Adventist teachings on Ellen White, conditional immortality, the scapegoat, and the rejection of the Sabbath as the end-time mark of the beast, Walvoord strongly cautioned evangelicals that they cannot “work freely with them [Adventists] at home and on the mission field.” As long as Adventism held on to the batch of errors he listed in the article, Walvoord would continue to see Adventism as a cult. Along with many of his evangelical peers, he saw no other option for Adventism than to drop “all the essential . . . doctrines” that evangelicals found objectionable.<sup>1</sup>

#### Summary

Initial evangelical reactions to *Questions on Doctrine* in 1957-1959 were predominantly negative. As expected, Barnhouse and Martin came to the defense of the book on the pages of *Eternity*. They hailed the book as showing Adventism in its full evangelical color, though not without several “heterodox” doctrines that they believed

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<sup>1</sup>J. F. Walvoord, review of *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 116 (January 1959): 79.

were out of line with the Bible. They believed that these doctrines did not detract from the evangelical core that existed within Adventism. Frank Mead, in reviewing the book, did not find cause to continue to label Adventism as a cult, but rather conceded it to be a part of “orthodox Protestantism.”<sup>1</sup> These writers’ sentiments were echoed by some who declared that the doctrinal differences were not serious enough to bar Adventists from evangelical fellowship. Naturally, Adventists who responded to the articles in *Eternity* and *Christianity Today* also agreed.

The positive reactions of Barnhouse, Martin, and Mead were clearly outnumbered by the negative reactions voiced in many of the major evangelical publications. M. R. DeHaan, Harold Lindsell, and Herbert Bird were among those who found the book to merely echo old errors in new packaging. Though many recognized that the book helped to correct some of the old misconceptions held by evangelicals, they declared the book as a failed attempt at presenting the case of Adventism as evangelical. Despite the book’s strenuous assertions to the contrary, they saw the distinctive teachings of Adventism as stripping away and severely compromising the fundamentals of the Christian faith. They rejected the claim made by *Questions on Doctrine* that it was possible to hold on to all the distinctives of Adventism while remaining faithful to Christian orthodoxy. For these reviewers and respondents, the choice was clear-cut between Calvinist, fundamentalist orthodoxy and Adventist heresy. There was no middle ground.

In spite of the apparent deadlock in positions that *Questions in Doctrine* seems to have brought about among evangelicals, the book accomplished several feats. First, it

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<sup>1</sup>Frank S. Mead, review of *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine, Religion in Life* 28 (Winter 1958-1959): 158.

provided an updated understanding of Adventist theology that had the effect of clearing away significant obstacles that stood in the way of Adventism's acceptance into evangelical fellowship. The most important doctrinal clarifications had to do with the doctrines of the Trinity and the divine and human natures of Christ. In this book, Adventist leaders presented the church as having always been squarely within historic Christian orthodoxy on the doctrines of the Trinity and Christ, albeit through misleading statements on the extent of the anti-Trinitarian and semi-Arian views held by Adventist pioneers. The book also helped project the picture of Adventism as belonging to the prelapsarian camp on the human nature of Christ, though this issue was still unresolved within Adventism.<sup>1</sup>

Second, by clearing up several theological misunderstandings, the book defined clearly the areas of disagreement between evangelicals and Adventists. Almost immediately, confusion over what constituted the official position of Adventism receded. Rather, both evangelicals and Adventists now focused on how those differences ought to be interpreted. Many evangelicals would continue to interpret Adventist doctrines in ways that Adventists disavowed. However, the doctrinal and semantic clarification that the book provided gave room for friends of Adventism to offer interpretations that were favorable to Adventism.

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<sup>1</sup>This point would become the most contentious issue within Adventism as a result of the position taken by *Questions on Doctrine*. Thanks to the book's unequivocal presentation of Christ as possessing a "sinless," "pre-fall Adamic" nature while on earth, Adventists freed themselves from a potentially fatal blow to their hard-earned evangelical standing with Barnhouse, Martin, and other supportive evangelicals. However, because of the position taken by the book, the issue would flare up into a firestorm of debate among Adventists in the years to come. For a fuller discussion, see pp. 319-342 of the present study.

Third, through its unprecedentedly broad circulation and by aggressive advertising on its behalf (and helped by the controversy engendered by Barnhouse and Martin), *Questions on Doctrine* caused a significant stir in the evangelical world, forcing many to react to its declarations and reconsider Adventism's position vis-à-vis evangelicalism. The interest created by the book was so strong that major evangelical media outlets felt compelled to acknowledge and appraise the positions promoted by the book.

If Adventist leaders ever expected *Questions on Doctrine* to bring about an instant change of views toward the positive among evangelicals, such hopes were dashed by the overwhelmingly negative reactions. It seems that the lasting value of the book lay not in the initial reactions but in the correction of misconceptions and clarification of terms and concepts that paved the way for a deeper and more informed dialogue that would ensue over the following decade and beyond.

### **Extended Reactions (1960-1970)**

The decade between 1960 and 1970 brought forth a new wave of evangelical reactions to the Adventist-evangelical dialogues of 1955 and 1956 and the publications they spawned. Triggered by the publication of Walter Martin's *Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*<sup>1</sup> in 1960, several book-length critiques of Adventism (as well as Martin's book) appeared in the evangelical world.

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<sup>1</sup>Walter R. Martin, *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960).



Reactions by Walter Martin in *The Truth  
about Seventh-day Adventism*

Martin's long-awaited *Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* was finally published in 1960, four years after *Eternity's* initial announcement of its publication by Barnhouse.<sup>1</sup> The book was published by Zondervan, for whom Martin had been working as the director of cult apologetics while at the same time serving as a contributing editor for *Eternity*. It was endorsed by several well-known figures in evangelicalism, such as Wilbur M. Smith, Merrill C. Tenney, Lloyd A. Kalland, W. A. Criswell, E. Schuyler English, Andrew W. Blackwood, and Vernon C. Grounds. These individuals' glowing comments graced the front inside jacket and back cover of the book.

Though its 248 pages were merely one-third the length of *Questions on Doctrine*, Martin's book provided a comprehensive overview of Adventist theology and a thoughtful analysis of those Adventist doctrines with which evangelicals had had deep reservations. The book opened with three preliminary essays by Donald Grey Barnhouse, Martin himself, and H. W. Lowe, chairman of the Biblical Study and Research Group of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Barnhouse's "Foreword" reiterated his endorsement of Adventism as a Christian group, though he continued to object strongly to some of its distinctive teachings. He then lauded Martin's work as "a milestone in Christian apologetics" in the way it was produced. He pointed out that all the participants of the Adventist-evangelical conferences "talked and prayed together,

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, "Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians?" *Eternity*, September 1956, 7.

assessed each other's position and agreed to disagree while still obeying the Lord's command to love one another."<sup>1</sup>

In the "Preface" to his book, Martin quickly narrated the journey that he took to arrive at the completion of the book. In this he included a brief description of *Questions on Doctrine* and presented the volume as "*the primary source upon which to ground an evaluation of Adventist theology.*" He then appealed to his evangelical readers to approach Adventists with a love that leads to unity in the Body of Christ. "If Seventh-day Adventists are in basic agreement with their fellow Christians on all the foundational Christian doctrines regarding the salvation of the soul and growth in the Christian life, give evidence of life in Christ and manifest Christian love," Martin wrote, "then they are *part of that one body, indwelt by that one Spirit, called by that one hope, ruled by the same Lord, partakers of the same faith, recipients of the one baptism, and servants of the one God and Father of all who confess the Son of God as Lord and Saviour.*"<sup>2</sup> The rest of the book would provide credence for his claim.

The last of the preliminary essays was a one-page Adventist response to the book. Lowe vouched for the accuracy of Martin's description of Adventist doctrines, but took exception to the criticisms Martin made regarding Ellen White and the Adventist understanding of immortality. Despite these and other disagreements, Lowe testified that

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, foreword to Walter R. Martin, *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960), 8.

<sup>2</sup>Martin, *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*, 14.

Martin earned the “gratitude and respect” of Adventists through an “attitude of Christian brotherhood” and his efforts to correctly represent Adventist positions.<sup>1</sup>

The main body of *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* was divided into two major sections, entitled “An Introduction to Contemporary Seventh-day Adventism” (chapters 1-4) and “An Examination of Seventh-day Adventist Theology” (chapters 5-9). The two sections roughly split the book in half. They were followed by the tenth and final chapter entitled “The Problem of Fellowship—A Great Controversy.”

The first section provided a description of Adventist teachings as presented in *Questions on Doctrine*, the most updated declaration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church released by “the source of authority, in this case the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.”<sup>2</sup> After narrating a brief history of Adventism and some psychological factors that he found to be helpful in understanding Adventism, Martin arrived at the crux of this section in a chapter entitled “The Heart of Adventist Theology.” In this chapter Martin described sixteen key teachings and practices of Adventism as taught in *Questions on Doctrine*. The sixteen were Adventist positions on: (1) the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures; (2) the Godhead; (3) the nature of Christ; (4) the atonement; (5) the resurrection; (6) the second coming; (7) the plan of salvation; (8) the spiritual nature of man; (9) the punishment of the wicked; (10) the sanctuary and the investigative judgment; (11) the scapegoat; (12) the Sabbath and the mark of the beast; (13) unclean foods; (14) the remnant church; (15) relationship to past positions and

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<sup>1</sup>H. W. Lowe, “A Statement,” in Walter R. Martin, *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960), 15.

<sup>2</sup>Martin, *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*, 47, 48.

conflicting literature; and (16) world missions program. Martin presented each of these teachings in the form of direct quotations from *Questions on Doctrine* without any comment.<sup>1</sup>

In the second section, entitled “An Examination of Seventh-day Adventist Theology,” Martin gave attention to five major “heterodox” teachings of Adventism and identified aspects which he deemed erroneous and unbiblical. He devoted a chapter to each of these teachings: (1) soul-sleep and the destruction of the wicked; (2) the Sabbath; (3) the sanctuary, investigative judgment, and the scapegoat; (4) law, grace, and salvation; and (5) the remnant church.

Martin’s key arguments in the two sections can be grouped into three major clusters of comments on the distinctive features of Adventism. These clusters represent the primary thrust of this book. The three, as presented below, dealt with Adventist views on (1) the human nature of Christ and the atonement; (2) Ellen White; and (3) the soul, the Sabbath, the sanctuary, salvation, and sectarianism.

### **On the Human Nature of Christ and the Atonement**

Before concluding the chapter entitled “The Heart of Adventist Theology,” which consisted almost entirely of quotations from *Questions on Doctrine*, Martin included a segment on Christ’s human nature and the atonement. Noting that “almost all critics of Seventh-day Adventism contend that Seventh-day Adventists believe Christ possessed a sinful human nature during the incarnation,” Martin went on to show that such a

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 47-89.

contention was based on statements that had been either fully repudiated by *Questions on Doctrine* or misunderstood by critics. Martin explained that when Ellen White, for example, wrote of Christ taking a “fallen nature,” she meant “the physical properties of the race, which degenerated since the time of Adam,” and not “a sinful, carnal, or degenerate human nature.”<sup>1</sup>

Martin also made a point to defend Adventism from the charge that “inherent in SDA theology is the unbiblical teaching that ‘the atonement was not finished on the cross of Calvary.’” Martin explained that “this concept has been repudiated by the SDA denomination,” though individual Adventists did teach such a concept in the early years of the movement. Hence, he argued that “the current position of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination—not the opinions of a few scattered writers over a hundred-year period—should be considered in judging this charge of ‘incomplete atonement.’” Then, what was the current Adventist teaching on the atonement? Citing once again Ellen White and *Questions on Doctrine*, Martin stated unequivocally: “Current Adventist writings teach that the atonement was completed on the cross. . . .”<sup>2</sup>

### **On Ellen White**

Though friendly (and even protective) toward Adventism in several ways, Martin was at the same time highly critical of many aspects of Adventist beliefs. The first of such criticism was directed at Ellen White. After providing significant excerpts from *Questions on Doctrine* to show what Adventists themselves believed regarding White,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 86-88.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 88, 89.

Martin analyzed criticisms against Ellen White throughout history as well as Adventist claims about her. He concluded that “the inspiration for 90 per cent of the *destructive* personal criticisms leveled against Mrs. White is found in the writings of Dudley M. Canright,” an ex-Adventist minister who wrote *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced* and *Life of Mrs. E. G. White*. While he found some of Canright’s charges to be “irrefutable,” Martin noted that many of Canright’s criticisms “have been neatly undercut by contemporary evidence unearthed by F. D. Nichol,” an Adventist editor who wrote *Ellen White and Her Critics*. However, Martin did not specify in this chapter or anywhere else in the book as to which of Canright’s charges were “irrefutable” or which were “neatly undercut” by Nichol.<sup>1</sup>

Martin’s continuing analysis of criticisms toward Ellen White led him to the question of plagiarism. After comparing White’s *Sketches from the Life of Paul* to *The Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul* by Conybeare and Howson, and also *The Great Controversy* by White to *History of the Waldenses* by J. A. Wylie, Martin concluded that White was guilty of “unmistakable plagiarism.” “Mrs. White should have been more careful, and her proofreaders should have been more alert,” he wrote. According to Martin, White’s plagiarism showed that she was “altogether human and prone to make mistakes,” even “indefensible” ones. Martin also examined the “extremely serious charge” against Ellen White relating to the question of whether “she was under influences other than the Spirit of God.” After examining two examples in which White provided

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 97-100.

apparently conflicting statements, he concluded that White was strongly influenced by people surrounding her even as she gave testimonies that were presumed to be inspired.<sup>1</sup>

In the final analysis, Martin determined that White could not have been divinely inspired or been given the gift of prophecy. Nonetheless, he acknowledged her as “a sincere Christian” and “a regenerate Christian woman who loved the Lord Jesus Christ and dedicated herself unstintingly to the task of bearing witness” for God. However, he argued that the weight of the evidences prevented him and his evangelical peers from accepting the claim that she had been shown visions and given messages directly from God.<sup>2</sup>

Then what of White’s own claim of divine inspiration? Could a truly sincere, regenerate Christian make false claims? Who was showing her visions and dreams when she claimed “I was shown”? Could she have been mistaken and even deluded in believing and writing that she was receiving visions from God? To answer these questions, Martin turned to White’s husband, James White, who in his 1847 work, *A Word to the “Little Flock,”* quoted a fellow Adventist’s doubts about the divine origins of the visions: “I think that what she and you regard as visions from the Lord are only religious reveries in which her imagination runs without control upon themes in which she is most deeply interested.”<sup>3</sup> Martin’s final conclusion, as seen in this quote, is clear. He believed that White—and by extension the Adventist church—was deluded in

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 100-111.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 111, 112.

<sup>3</sup>James White, *A Word to the “Little Flock”* (Brunswick, ME: [James White], 1847), 22, quoted in *ibid.*, 111.

believing that her visions came from God when in fact they were mere flights of fancy triggered by her religious devotion.<sup>1</sup>

### **On the Soul, the Sabbath, the Sanctuary, Salvation, and Sectarianism**

In the second half of *Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*, Martin focused his attention on problems that he considered to be more serious. In chapters 5 through 10, he examined the Adventist teachings with which he strongly disagreed—human nature, the state of the dead, and the ultimate fate of the wicked; the Sabbath and the mark of the beast; the Sanctuary, the investigative judgment, and the scapegoat; the relationship between law, grace, and salvation; the meaning of the remnant church; and the meaning of Christian fellowship. Martin's treatment of these issues did not yield any fresh insights, however. They were basically a reiteration of the analyses and criticisms that had been made both in his own published writings and in other publications.

The substance of Martin's arguments on each of these teachings was not much different from the writers who had criticized Adventism throughout the first half of the twentieth century. What set Martin apart from those critics, however, was the amicable tone with which he approached the subjects and his conclusion that disagreements over these non-cardinal teachings could not prevent evangelicals from having Christian fellowship with Adventists. As such, these chapters were as much defenses of Adventism as they were criticisms. Even while attacking each of these Adventist teachings as unbiblical, Martin either accorded Adventists the right to dissent from the majority of

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<sup>1</sup>Martin, *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*, 110-114.



Christendom or defended Adventism by stating that no heterodox doctrine of Adventism was “a deviation from the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith which are necessary to salvation.”<sup>1</sup> This position was illustrated clearly in his analysis of the Adventist teaching on “soul sleep.” After proclaiming that disagreement over the nature of the soul does “not affect the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith, or the salvation of the soul,” Martin relegated the whole discussion as “merely” a “theological debate,” having “no direct bearing upon any of the great doctrines of the Bible.”<sup>2</sup> Similarly, on the issues of the mark of the beast, the scapegoat, and salvation, he defended Adventism’s right to a different interpretation.<sup>3</sup>

Martin discussed the problem of fellowship between evangelicals and Adventists in the final chapter of his “Examination of Seventh-day Adventist Theology.” He faulted Adventists for having “pointedly ignored [Ellen White’s] numerous recommendations that they seek fellowship with Christians of other denominations” and having been “unfortunately divisive” and lacking “love and tolerance” in their presentation of their distinctive beliefs. “In a word,” he wrote, “Seventh-day Adventists have discouraged fellowship with Christians of other communions because they have overemphasized their so-called ‘special truth.’”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 229.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 130.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 172, 173, 187, 188, 209-211.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 223, 224.

Fortunately, noted Martin, such attitudes have begun to disappear from the ranks of Adventists. He asserted that readers of *Questions on Doctrine* would see that “Seventh-day Adventists today eagerly desire and encourage fellowship with” other Christians. “Seventh-day Adventists, far from opposing Christian fellowship, are apparently in favor of it,” Martin wrote, “and are willing to co-operate [*sic*] in any way short of compromising their principles, to effect the proper relationship with their fellow Christians.” Given the eagerness for fellowship and the affirmation of cardinal doctrines of orthodox Christianity displayed by Seventh-day Adventists, particularly in *Questions on Doctrine*, Martin appealed to his fellow evangelicals to abandon their former prejudices based on misinformation and misinterpretation and enter into a fellowship of Christian love with Adventists.<sup>1</sup>

### **Summary**

In *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*, Walter Martin sought to present in a clear and unbiased manner the basic tenets of Adventist theology, to provide an objective analysis of the “heterodox” concepts among those tenets, and to propose a new evangelical perspective on Adventism that remains sharply critical of its “heterodoxy” yet accepting of its essentially evangelical character. Martin concluded that the facts gathered in the course of his research and interactions with Adventism showed “conclusively . . . the right of Adventists to be called Christians [and] a unified picture of a Christian denomination. . . .” This new view, Martin hoped, would “usher in a new era

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 224, 225.

of understanding and spiritual growth in the Church at large, which according to the Scripture, is ‘Christ’s Body.’”<sup>1</sup>

As Martin anticipated, a new era of Adventist-evangelical relations was indeed ushered in with his book. However, initially it was not exactly the type that Martin hoped for. Triggered by this book, a new wave of publications on Adventism would storm out of evangelical publishers throughout the 1960s, adding to the controversy of the 1950s. These new publications, beginning with reviews of Martin’s books and running to book-length treatments on Adventism, sought mostly to counter Martin’s analyses and conclusions. In the end, however, Martin’s vision for a new era did come about as his *Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* prevailed and came to impact how evangelicals viewed Adventism much more than all the others works of the 1960s combined.

#### Immediate Reactions to *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*

##### Reactions by John W. Sanderson

John W. Sanderson’s review of Martin’s *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* in the *Westminster Theological Journal* was among the first published reactions to the book. Sanderson, a professor at the Westminster Theological Seminary, maintained a dispassionate tone throughout the review, primarily adhering to describing the book. He lauded the book as “a fine addition to the study of a significant movement” in America

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 239.

and commended its avoidance of the “argumentative, condemnatory spirit” found in many books of polemics.<sup>1</sup>

Sanderson’s most serious concern with Martin’s book and the Adventist movement dealt with definitions of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, including Martin’s delineation of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. For example, he questioned Martin’s classification of the doctrine of the eternal punishment of the wicked as non-cardinal. He asked, “Granted the distinction between primary and secondary doctrines, is not eternal punishment of the essence of Christianity?” This disagreement led Sanderson to question whether Martin had “fully grasped the meaning of ‘heterodoxy’” and to wonder out loud, “How can Seventh-day Adventism be guilty of heterodoxy and still have an orthodox structure?” These questions revealed that there were objections not only to Martin’s evaluation of individual distinctive doctrines of Adventism, but also to the foundational premises upon which Martin built up his arguments, especially the classification between cardinal and non-cardinal doctrines of Christian orthodoxy.<sup>2</sup>

### **Reactions by Merrill Tenney**

In reviewing Martin’s book for *Eternity*, Merrill Tenney of Wheaton College raised another question on Martin’s approach and conclusions. After commending the book for its “unusual combination” of friendly yet critical treatment of the Adventist belief system, Tenney questioned whether it was advisable to acknowledge as evangelical

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<sup>1</sup>John W. Sanderson, review of *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*, by Walter R. Martin, *Westminster Theological Journal* 23 (1960): 92-94.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

“a movement which in the past has harbored teachings that could not be reconciled with the Scriptures.” Then he asked, “Is the doctrinal platform of Seventh-day Adventism determined by what a few of its scholars defined, or by what the majority of its followers believe and practice?” Citing Adventist practices of proselytism and “devious means of winning converts” in the mission field, Tenney insinuated that Martin may have failed to give sufficient consideration to the movement’s actual practices, leading perhaps to a hasty conclusion about Seventh-day Adventism.<sup>1</sup>

### **Reactions by Frank A. Lawrence**

Frank Lawrence, in reviewing Martin’s work for *Christianity Today*, recognized the importance of the book’s publication but provided no substantive commentary or criticism of the book. Lawrence, a Presbyterian pastor in Pennsylvania, found it significant that Martin uncovered and reported theological changes and corrections within Adventism, particularly the way Adventism viewed other churches. He then reported erroneously that Adventists had “*abandoned* the concepts of the sinful nature of Christ, the ‘Mark of the Beast’ for Sunday keepers, the infallibility of Ellen G. White, the vicarious nature of the scapegoat transaction, the law as necessary to salvation, and Satan carrying away the guilt of our sins.”<sup>2</sup> To say that Adventists had “abandoned” these teachings would mean that Adventists had taught all of them at one point as official doctrines. It would have been more correct to state that Adventists repudiated those

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<sup>1</sup>Merrill C. Tenney, review of *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*, by Walter R. Martin, *Eternity*, May 1960, 40.

<sup>2</sup>Frank A. Lawrence, review of *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*, by Walter R. Martin, *Christianity Today*, 4 July 1960, 36.

charges and had never officially taught these teachings, though many Adventists indeed had.

Lawrence's only problem with the book was Martin's claim that early Adventists were rejected by the evangelicals "because they were premillenarian." Lawrence rebutted this assertion with a counter-claim that "premillenarians have always been within the fold of the Church." What really led to evangelical opposition of Adventism, he wrote, was Ellen White who "attacked [evangelicals] as false churches, false shepherds, and followers of the Pope in Sunday observance."<sup>1</sup>

Lawrence concluded his review with a lighthearted prediction that this book "will be 'kicked around' in evangelical and Adventist circles until the Southern Baptists appoint an envoy to the Vatican."<sup>2</sup> This prediction would prove to be false on both counts. The book itself would cease to be "kicked around" by the early 1970s. By then, Adventism was receiving general acceptance as an evangelical denomination. And, as might be expected, the Southern Baptists have yet to appoint an official envoy to the Vatican.

### **Summary**

All three major reviews of Martin's *Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* appraised the book as a positive and important contribution to the understanding of Adventism. None disputed Martin's description and analysis of Adventist doctrines. At the same

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

time, none showed positive responses to his appeal to bring Adventism into evangelical fellowship, but rather raised some serious questions concerning Martin's conclusions.

Of the three, Lawrence gave the most positive review in that he did not raise any serious concerns, except to offer an alternate reason for early evangelical reaction to Adventism. Sanderson and Tenney, however, were more critical. Sanderson questioned Martin's criteria for dividing primary and secondary doctrines and wondered if the doctrine of eternal punishment should not be included in the first category (which then would lead to continuing classification of Adventism as a cult). While Tenney seemed willing to accept Adventism as evangelical if the declarations of its leaders in *Questions on Doctrine* were believed and practiced throughout the movement, he expressed doubt as to whether the teachings and attitudes promulgated in *Questions on Doctrine* were indeed representative of the entire Adventist church. Hence, he seemed to think that Martin's verdict was premature and misguided.

The three reviewers were merely the initial ripple of the wave of publications that quickly ensued in reaction to both *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* and *Questions on Doctrine*. Ensuing publications, however, would take much stronger stances against Martin's work as well as against Seventh-day Adventism.

Reactions by John Gerstner in *The Theology  
of the Major Sects*

John H. Gerstner's book on ten major non-Christian sects and cults, *The Theology of the Major Sects*, was released in the same year as Martin's *Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*. Gerstner chose to treat Seventh-day Adventism as the first of the ten, which included Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, Christian Science, and Spiritualism, among

others. In his introduction Gerstner commented briefly on “the controversy concerning the classification of the Seventh-day Adventists,” which he found to be “the most interesting thing presently occurring in the world of churches and sects.” He stated that reading *Questions on Doctrine* did not persuade him and many other evangelicals “of Seventh-day Adventists’ adequate creedal orthodoxy.”<sup>1</sup>

As he began his chapter on Adventism, Gerstner acknowledged that “there may be a difference of opinion as to whether the Seventh-day Adventists are to be classified as a sect. . . .” He then referred readers to the forthcoming book by Martin of which he apparently had read an advance copy. He went on to explain in this chapter his reasons for including Adventism in his volume on cults.<sup>2</sup>

Despite his clear awareness of *Questions on Doctrine*, Gerstner made no reference to the book as he unfolded his objections to Adventist theology. Instead, he used the “Fundamental Principles” of Seventh-day Adventism drafted in 1931 and the books by Francis Nichol and critics of Adventism such as Jan Karel Van Baalen and William E. Biederwolf. As such, Gerstner’s objections to Adventism did not reflect many of the clear statements about particular points of Adventist belief that *Questions on Doctrine* provided. Rather, this chapter was highly reflective of the negative tone found in the writings of Biederwolf and Van Baalen.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Gerstner, *The Theology of the Major Sects*, 9, 10.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 19.

<sup>3</sup>See *ibid.*, 19-28.



Gerstner's primary objections to Adventism dealt with its teachings on Ellen White, the atonement, the Sabbath, sanctification, the remnant church, and the end-time—particularly “soul sleep” and the investigative judgment. Gerstner did not advance any new arguments against Adventist teachings. But he did repeat several of the old charges that were clearly repudiated in *Questions on Doctrine*. For example, he intimated that Adventists hold White's writings “virtually” in the same place as the Bible, though *Questions on Doctrine* clearly stated otherwise. Likewise, he continued to fault Adventists for teaching an incomplete atonement on the cross, though once again *Questions on Doctrine* affirmed unequivocally that Adventists believe in the completeness of Christ's atonement of the cross.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, in the appendix where he outlined the major doctrines of each sect, Gerstner repeated the charge that “Adventists teach that Christ [had] a polluted human nature”<sup>2</sup> by quoting from Ellen White's *Desire of Ages*<sup>3</sup> and the 1915 edition of *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*.<sup>4</sup> However, statements made in *Questions on Doctrine* that explain the former statement and repudiate the latter were curiously left unconsulted in this section.<sup>5</sup> Even while referring to Adventists' “latest official statement,” Gerstner quoted only the fundamental principles

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 22-28.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 127.

<sup>3</sup>White, *The Desire of Ages*, 117.

<sup>4</sup>*Bible Readings for the Home Circle*, 1915, 115.

<sup>5</sup>*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 50-65, 647-660.

included in the denomination's 1957 *Year Book* but not *Questions on Doctrine* published the same year.<sup>1</sup>

It remains a puzzle as to why Gerstner chose not to deal directly with the most recent statement put forth by the Adventist church in this chapter on Adventism. Lack of reaction to *Questions on Doctrine* and mere repetition of older works by anti-cult writers made this chapter a poor and inadequate examination of Adventism.

Reactions by Herbert S. Bird in *Theology  
of Seventh-Day Adventism*

Published in 1961, *Theology of Seventh-Day Adventism* by Herbert S. Bird was the first major book-length response to *Questions on Doctrine* issued by an evangelical other than Walter Martin. Interestingly, the book made absolutely no direct reference to either Martin's articles in *Eternity*, or his book, *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*. Just a handful of indirect references to them are scattered in different parts of the book. Neither was there any mention of the dialogues of 1955-1956. Bird's focus in this book was solely on Adventism as presented in *Questions on Doctrine*.<sup>2</sup>

Bird divided the 137 pages of content in this book into eight chapters. After the initial chapter that surveyed the historical roots of Adventism, six different doctrines of Adventism—which are “either peculiar to itself or sufficiently distinctive to warrant inclusion in this study”—were analyzed in the order of the Word of God, man, the person of Christ, salvation, the Sabbath, and Christian conduct. The final chapter, entitled

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<sup>1</sup>Gerstner, *The Theology of the Major Sects*, 127.

<sup>2</sup>Herbert S. Bird, *Theology of Seventh-Day Adventism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961).

“Seventh-day Adventism and Evangelical Faith,” served as the conclusion to the book. This chapter made an overall evaluation of Adventism as measured by the author’s criteria for inclusion into evangelicalism.

According to Bird’s introduction, the book was written to offer “an evaluation of Seventh-day Adventism which differs in some important aspects” from previous assessments. He found extant criticisms to be either unnecessarily scornful of Adventism’s literalism (coming from liberal critics who were also opposed to evangelicalism in general) or mistaken in condemning Adventism “for affirming the perpetual and universal validity of the Ten Commandments” (which some fundamentalist critics considered to be a sign of legalism).

True to his promise, Bird’s examination of the six selected doctrines did not merely reiterate old arguments, but presented results of analyses of Adventism’s newest doctrinal treatise, *Questions on Doctrine*. First, on the doctrine of the Word of God, Bird could accept *Questions on Doctrine*’s affirmation of the canon of Scripture “only in a very limited sense” since he found the interpretation of canon to be effectively controlled by Ellen White’s writings. This results, he argued, in the elevation of Ellen White to a position equal to or higher than Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

Second, as for the Adventist teaching on man’s nature, the condition of the dead, and the eternal destiny of the wicked, Bird deemed the conclusions found in *Questions on Doctrine* to be unsupported “by the use of sound exegetical principles.” He argued that the Adventist teaching on the destiny of the wicked, in particular, softened “the stern

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 18-41.

realities of which Scripture speaks” and was a misguided attempt at justifying “the ways of God before finite and sinful intellects.” He urged Adventists to yield to the testimony of Scripture and to accept its teaching on this matter, regardless of how unreasonable it may seem.<sup>1</sup>

Third, Bird expressed appreciation of *Questions on Doctrine* for its affirmation of “the sinlessness of the human nature of Christ.” However, he insightfully questioned whether the book was indeed reflecting “the real Adventist position on the subject.” He complained that there are too many statements in the church’s literature “which distinctly teach that Christ had a sinful, fallen nature.” They could not, he contended, all have “crept in” from “fringe groups,” as *Questions on Doctrine* suggests. What Adventism is suffering from at this juncture is “an apparent contradiction,”—“a contradiction of a most serious kind.” In order for Adventism to be truly evangelical and become part of “Christological orthodoxy,” he wrote, “an airing of these materials [contradictory to *Questions on Doctrine*] and a repudiation of the ideas which they propagate ought to be forthcoming.”<sup>2</sup>

Fourth, on the question of salvation, Bird judged as unsatisfactory *Questions on Doctrine*’s expositions on salvation by grace and obedience to the law based on the denomination’s general adherence to Arminianism. Particularly, he found the teaching on the sanctuary and the investigative judgment to be in essence “another gospel” which robbed the power of Christ’s atonement on the Cross. Ultimately, he remarked,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 42-63.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 64-71.

Adventism is a system that promulgates “a kind of ‘justification by character.’” As such, he had no choice but to label Adventism a legalistic and cultic system.<sup>1</sup>

Fifth, Bird’s treatment of the Sabbath appropriately involved areas of Adventist theology well beyond the seventh-day Sabbath teaching. It included discussions on the moral law, the three angels’ message, the mark of the beast, and the identification of the remnant. As alluded to in the introduction, Bird provided a perspective on the moral law that was different from some of the other critics of Adventism, who tended to reject the concept of the perpetuity of the moral law. He agreed with Adventists that the moral law will always be valid. However, he argued that the Bible shows a change of the Sabbath day from the seventh day to the first day. Thus, he contended, Adventism’s insistence on the seventh-day Sabbath is based on misinterpretation of the Bible.<sup>2</sup>

Bird continued his critique with the contention that a greater problem with the Adventist teaching on the Sabbath lay in the remnant teaching that is connected to the Sabbath. He found hardly acceptable the explanations provided in *Questions on Doctrine* that many of God’s saved people exist outside the boundaries of Adventism and that the stamping of the mark of the beast is yet in the future.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, Bird turned to a discussion on Christian lifestyle, with a particular emphasis on diet. After pointing out a few verses from the New Testament in which he found early Christians to consume meat, both clean and unclean, he warned Adventists of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 72-92.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 93-112.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 112-118. See *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 179-202.

making people feel “obliged to refrain from the use of some articles [which] Holy Writ does not forbid. . . .” Because Adventism has taken “into its hands the prerogative of legislating the advisability of eating or not eating, and, in the case of the ‘unclean’ meats, make ‘not eating’ a condition of membership,” Bird asserted, the movement “places itself in flagrant opposition to the plain teaching of the Word of God” and stands in “condemnation” of God.<sup>1</sup>

In his conclusion, Bird identified two teachings out of the six problematic areas of Adventist theology examined in the book “which no amount of modification, indeed, which nothing short of complete abandonment, can make to comport with even the most impoverished variety of Biblical Christianity.” The two were the teachings on the Spirit of Prophecy and the sanctuary. Bird observed that Adventism undeniably shares many doctrines with Christian orthodoxy, that its teaching on the Sabbath is “not necessarily inconsistent with evangelical belief,” and that the doctrine of the nature of Christ could be cleared up as was being done through *Questions on Doctrine*. However, regarding the teachings on Ellen White and the sanctuary, he declared that it was “impossible that they could be modified without the movement losing much of its distinctive character.”<sup>2</sup>

In one of his few allusions to the recent work by Barnhouse and Martin, Bird stated that “it is next to useless” to reach a conclusion about a religious group “by the mathematical route—by computing the points on which, formally, at least, it measures up to evangelical doctrinal standards.” Even one detail, he argued, in an area of vital truth

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<sup>1</sup>Bird, *Theology of Seventh-Day Adventism*, 119-126.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 129.

can subvert the gospel. As such, in Bird's view, the two doctrines constituted "deadly error" and "a serious corruption of the gospel" which led to the disqualification of Adventism from evangelical fellowship.<sup>1</sup>

Though it cannot be ascertained as to whether or not Bird's book was written with the knowledge of *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*, it serves as an excellent counterpoint to Martin's book. Written with the highest degree of friendliness as can be expected from one who would choose to label Adventism as a cult, the book joins *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* in rectifying past misunderstandings of Adventist teachings, while remaining highly critical of several of Adventism's distinctive teachings.

The conclusions that the two writers reached betrayed contrasting approaches to Adventism in general and *Questions on Doctrines* in particular. The differences emerged clearly in their analyses of the Adventist claims on Ellen White, the sanctuary and the investigative judgment, and the remnant. Martin tended to be more accepting of statements in *Questions on Doctrine* at face value, whereas Bird tended to be skeptical and less inclined to trust the statements, often rejecting some of the specific claims of the book.

Reactions by Norman F. Douty in *Another  
Look at Seventh-day Adventism*

Norman F. Douty's *Another Look at Seventh-day Adventism* was published in 1962 to meet his "personal need" of answering questions arising in his parish. He stated in his foreword that the book was not written as "A Reply to Martin," as the main bulk of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 127-132.

the book had been written prior to his reading of Martin's book. Rather than countering that "interesting and well-meaning—though, on the whole, disappointing" work, Douty chose, as he originally had conceived, to respond primarily to *Questions on Doctrine* throughout his book. His purpose would be "to ascertain, not whether Seventh-day Adventism subscribes to a large body of Scriptural truth—no doubt it does—but whether, at the same time, it subscribes to a large body of belief that is not Scriptural." As he proceeded with this task, he remarkably pledged that he would (1) "steer clear of all misrepresentation"; (2) "avoid . . . the use of invalid argument"; (3) "refrain from attributing to Seventh-day Adventism those fallacies that logically flow from its expressed declarations"; (4) "forbear all abuse"; (5) "exclude . . . the criticisms which others have made" of Adventism; and (6) "avoid writing something merely negative." To his credit Douty indeed worked within these self-imposed restrictions as he unfolded his arguments throughout the book.<sup>1</sup>

Douty's 224-page book consisted of twelve chapters in its body with an introduction at its beginning and a conclusion and additional materials at its end. The content of the twelve chapters consisted of the teachings on inspiration, man, death, Christ, salvation, the Sabbath, prophecies, the final atonement, the investigative judgment, the last things, the fate of the wicked, and Ellen White.

Though much of his work repeated old charges against Adventism, Douty added some original responses to *Questions on Doctrine* and, to a lesser extent, *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*. The first of his original responses is found in Douty's analysis of

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<sup>1</sup>Norman F. Douty, *Another Look at Seventh-day Adventism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962), 1, 9-13.



the Adventist belief on inspiration. He took issue with the Adventist claim that while Ellen White was fully inspired by God, her authority was subservient to that of the Bible. Douty believed that there could not be any degrees of authority or inspiration. Since Ellen White maintained that she received visions from God, he noted, she was in essence laying a claim “to an inspiration that is not a whit below the level of the Scriptures themselves.” This claim alone, for Douty, was sufficient to place Adventism outside of Protestantism. Therefore, he declared, “Adventism must make a choice . . . between Mrs. White’s having no inspiration or having one equal to the Bible’s.” The former choice, however, would be “costly,” as Adventism will cease to be Adventism if it surrenders the inspiration of Ellen White. He strongly disagreed with Martin, who saw the possibility of Adventism existing without having to appeal to the inspiration of White.<sup>1</sup>

Second, in his discussion on the human nature of Christ, Douty made an interesting charge that “the Christ of Adventism is the Christ of Apollinarianism.” Just as Apollinaris the heretic taught in the fourth century that Christ took “only the material body and its vitalizing principle,” Douty argued that Adventists teach Christ as having taken only the physical body and its life force. He based this assertion on the explanation for the incarnation put forth by *Questions on Doctrine*. In its harmonizing of Ellen White’s “fallen nature” and “sinless nature” statements, *Questions on Doctrine* had

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 15-25.

explained that the “fallen nature” wording by White referred only to taking of the human flesh.<sup>1</sup> Douty interpreted that explanation as Apollinarianism.<sup>2</sup>

Douty further took issue with the defense made in *Questions on Doctrine* and *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* regarding the charge that Adventism taught Christ’s human nature as sinful. Noting M. L. Andreasen’s protest of this segment of *Questions on Doctrine* and numerous statements made by Ellen White and contemporary Adventist writers, Douty questioned whether there was not a serious contradiction within Adventism. Thus he remarked, “The reader will find it hard to see how all of these statements of Mrs. White’s can be reconciled with the quotations made from her in *Questions on Doctrine* . . . . I have read efforts at harmonization on the part of a prominent Adventist, but they do not carry conviction.”<sup>3</sup> Along the same vein, he rejected Martin’s explanation that White referred merely to “the physical properties of the race.”<sup>4</sup> Douty concluded that White’s statement could not be harmonized but remained inconsistent and self-contradictory. This, he declared, has resulted in propagation of the “stupendous error” of the sinful nature of Christ within Adventism.<sup>5</sup>

Third, on the subject of salvation, Douty charged that Adventists negate their own teaching on salvation by grace alone and add obedience as another de facto requirement

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<sup>1</sup>*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 60.

<sup>2</sup>Douty, *Another Look at Seventh-day Adventism*, 48-50.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 52-64. See also *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 647-660.

<sup>4</sup>Martin, *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*, 87.

<sup>5</sup>Douty, *Another Look at Seventh-day Adventism*, 64.

of salvation. Citing various quotations from *Questions on Doctrine*, he asserted that Adventists teach eternal life as a gift that is promised but not received by a converted individual. He remarked that in the Adventist understanding of the process of salvation, the individual must still perform good works to remain in Christ. This is much more works-oriented than traditional Arminianism, he wrote. In fact, as adduced from Ellen White's writings, Adventists "are required to develop a perfect character, and thus, and only thus, may they become eligible for salvation." Thus, he warned that the Adventist teachings of "provisional pardon," "deferred possession of eternal life," and "absolute perfection" must not be "confounded with the traditional Arminian view that one who has been saved can be lost again."<sup>1</sup>

Fourth, Douty disputed the explanations of the concept of the atonement given in *Questions on Doctrine* and *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*. Citing numerous Adventist authors extending from Ellen White to M. L. Andreasen, he pointed out the lack of consistency and unanimity in the use of the term "atonement." He argued that it is not possible to sort through the various Adventist uses of "atonement" and neatly attribute all references to "atonement" between the completed atonement on the cross and the application of the benefits of the atonement from 1844. "We see, then," he concluded, "that sometimes the word 'atonement' is used in Adventism to denote both the provision and application of redemption, and that at other times, it refers exclusively to a special aspect of its application (though not always the same one). . . ."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 65-71.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 104-117.

For Douty, however, using the term “atonement” much more broadly than evangelicals in and of itself was not a major issue (whereas for Martin it may have been). What was important was the value that Adventists placed on Christ’s sacrifice on the cross—regardless of how they expressed it. Though he faulted Adventists for using the term “atonement” differently from its common usage among evangelicals, hence “guilty of confusing the public mind,” Douty did recognize that “in no case does Adventism formally deny the perfection of Christ’s sacrifice for sin” and that “Mrs. White’s doctrine of the atonement was that Christ’s death on the cross fully satisfied the demands of God’s law against all sinners, and that on its ground they may be both forgiven and relieved of the very record of their sins.” Douty observed that the evangelical charge that Adventism teaches incomplete atonement on the cross stemmed from the “variations and looseness of language” employed by Adventist writers. Such a lack of finesse in theological expression, he commented, has prevented non-Adventist readers from gaining a clear understanding of the Adventist doctrine of the atonement. This confusion led to Adventism being “charged repeatedly with denying the redemptive efficacy of the cross[,] for the reader, not understanding the peculiar sense sometimes attached to the word ‘atonement’ by the Adventists, naturally deduces that if any atonement occurs subsequently to Calvary, then the atonement wrought there was incomplete.” Thus, if one were to understand that “peculiar sense” of the term used by Adventists, he suggested, it would be possible to see that Adventists, after all, do not deny “the redemptive efficacy of the cross.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 114-117.

In the other teachings of Adventism which he dealt with—the Sabbath, prophetic chronology, the investigative judgment, end-time events (including the fate of the wicked), and Ellen White—Douty largely repeated the criticisms of his forerunners. What distinguished him from them was that he thoroughly utilized *Questions on Doctrine* in his criticisms.

As he closed his examination, Douty summed up his characterization of Adventism in two ways. First, he declared that “Adventism is characterized by delusion” concerning the heavenly ministry of Christ and Ellen White’s visions. He rejected the attitude toward Ellen White taken by Barnhouse and Martin that portrayed her visions as “mere human aberrations” and largely harmless “religious reveries.” For Douty, the “delusions” contained in Adventism were the product of “Satanic deception.” As such he could not classify the movement as a Bible-based evangelical body.<sup>1</sup>

Second, he declared Adventism to be “characterized by heresy.” He stated that “Adventism denies a body of doctrine which the church as a whole has always declared, and declares another body of doctrine which the church as a whole has always denied.” So long as Adventism continues to dissent from consensus teachings of evangelicalism and teaches doctrines that are distinctive from “the church,” Douty continued, “it cannot be esteemed a Scriptural church.” However, for Adventism to deny its distinctives and correct its dissenting teachings would mean a “pulling down of the very framework of the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 182-184.

whole system. . . .” “As long as Adventism remains it must be repudiated,” he declared. “When it abandons its distinctive doctrines it will no longer be Adventism.”<sup>1</sup>

Douty’s analysis of Adventism was a major milestone in the continuing dialogue between Adventists and evangelicals in that it advanced several new arguments and reactions against Adventist theology. In many respects Douty displayed a surprisingly deep understanding of the nuances of Adventist doctrinal expression, even unmasking some of the cosmetic “makeup” placed upon Adventism by *Questions on Doctrine*. Like Bird, he dismissed as inadequate the methodology used by Barnhouse and Martin in declaring Adventism as evangelical. It was not sufficient that Adventism upheld the cardinal doctrines of historic Christian orthodoxy as outlined by Martin. It had to cease teaching all its distinctives and accept all the evangelical teachings it dissented from. For Douty, short of complete dismantling as a belief system, Adventism would remain a hopeless cult.

Reactions by Russell P. Spittler  
in *Cults and Isms*

Seventh-day Adventism was the second of “twenty alternates to evangelical Christianity” that Russell P. Spittler judged as threats to evangelicalism in his 1962 book, *Cults and Isms*. In this book he considered Adventism to be “the closest of the cults to evangelical Christianity.” However, he saw Adventism’s “inordinately high regard” for Ellen White’s writings, its insistence on Sabbath-keeping, its investigative judgment doctrine and “extreme Arminianism” that “opens itself to the charge of legalism,” and its

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 184-189.

stance on the state of the dead and the final fate of the wicked as impediments to admitting the movement into the evangelical fold.<sup>1</sup>

Though his conclusions were repetitions of charges made by such evangelicals as DeHaan, Talbot, and Van Baalen, Spittler showed cognizance and even respect for *Questions on Doctrine* as an overture toward evangelicals and for *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* as an important contribution to the evangelical understanding of Adventism. He stated that it would be “only fair” to evaluate Adventism by the teachings it now taught through *Questions on Doctrine*.<sup>2</sup>

Through the reading of the two books, Spittler recognized fully that Adventism taught the “unique inspiration of the Bible,” Christ’s full divinity, virgin birth, miraculous resurrection, and substitutionary sacrifice for the sin of humanity, forgiveness that comes through grace alone, and the imminent return of Jesus Christ. “On these points,” he stated, “they are orthodox; and that is why some [such as Barnhouse and Martin whom he had referred to earlier] accept them as fundamentally orthodox.”<sup>3</sup>

Notwithstanding his own recognition of these doctrines as orthodox, Spittler’s final assessment came out negatively against Adventism as he saw a handful of unorthodox doctrines that stood in fundamental antithesis to the core of evangelical orthodoxy. Ironically, it was the following definition of “cult” given by Martin that led Spittler to the conclusion that Adventism was a cultic movement:

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<sup>1</sup>Russell P. Spittler, *Cults and Isms: Twenty Alternates to Evangelical Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962), 29-38.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 33.

“By cultism we mean the adherence to doctrines which are pointedly contradictory to the orthodox Christianity and which yet claim the distinction of either tracing their origin to orthodox sources or of being in essential harmony with those sources. Cultism, in short, is any major deviation from orthodox Christianity relative to the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith.”<sup>1</sup>

On the one hand, Spittler recognized Adventism as adhering to the cardinal doctrines of orthodoxy. But, on the other hand, Adventism’s distinctive doctrines were seen as sufficiently offensive to its own orthodoxy to disqualify the movement as a whole from evangelicalism.

Reactions by J. Oswald Sanders  
in *Heresies and Cults*

In 1962 J. Oswald Sanders of Overseas Missionary Fellowship in England released a revised edition of his 1948 book, *Heresies: Ancient and Modern*, under the new title, *Heresies and Cults*. In this book, Sanders analyzed the teachings and practices of nineteen religious groups as heresies and cults.

When compared to the 1948 edition, in which he attacked Adventism for possessing “the recrudescence of first-century Judaism” and being marked by “subtlety and duplicity,”<sup>2</sup> Sanders’s chapter on Adventism in the 1962 edition was a completely re-written work that was much more tempered in tone and measured in the severity of its criticism.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Martin, *The Rise of the Cults*, 12, quoted in Spittler, *Cults and Isms*, 12.

<sup>2</sup>J. Oswald Sanders, *Heresies: Ancient and Modern* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1948), 63, 65.

<sup>3</sup>J. Oswald Sanders, *Heresies and Cults* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1962), 122-135.



Whereas several authors had questioned whether *Questions on Doctrine* could be truly representative of Adventist theology, Sanders opened his analysis with a statement that he was “accepting *Questions on Doctrine* as the authoritative teaching of the movement” and lauded the book for having “clarified many points on which considerable confusion existed” in the past. At the same time, he expressed regret for the inadequacy of the book “in retracting former statements of doctrine which were equivocal . . . and which have given rise to such grave misgivings among evangelical Christians. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Sanders’s greater concerns lay with several major doctrines of Adventism. He recognized that “Adventists affirm without equivocation that they stand with historic evangelical Christianity” on what Martin termed “cardinal” doctrines. Yet he held serious objections and questions concerning the teachings on the atonement and sanctuary doctrine, the scapegoat, the human nature of Christ, the “future state” of the human soul, justification, and the Sabbath. He felt especially that the Adventist doctrine of the Sabbath was “a negation” of salvation by grace which Adventists also taught.<sup>2</sup>

Though the tone and word choice had softened overall between the two editions, Sanders in the final analysis made few substantive changes in his criticism of Adventism. Like his American evangelical cohorts, Sanders did recognize that Adventism conformed to evangelical orthodoxy in all its major tenets. However, he also concluded that the distinctive teachings of Adventism diminished its own unequivocal affirmation to orthodoxy. In the end, all the favorable “changes” toward Adventism reflected in his

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 122, 123.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 126-135.

1962 edition were merely cosmetic—much like what he and many other evangelical critics viewed *Questions on Doctrine* to be doing.

Reactions by Jan Karel Van Baalen  
in *The Chaos of Cults*

Van Baalen's fourth revised and enlarged edition of *The Chaos of Cults*, released in 1962, carried once again a chapter on Adventism.<sup>1</sup> The substantive bulk of the chapter, however, included no meaningful reaction to either the *Eternity* articles or *Questions on Doctrine*. This chapter contained neither significant revision nor expansion of the author's past appraisals of Adventism. In fact, not a single reference was made to *Questions on Doctrine* throughout the chapter—except in the epilogue, where Van Baalen commented on the events of 1955-1957.

In the three-and-a-half page appendix to the chapter which he entitled “And So On, *Ad Infinitum*,” Van Baalen focused exclusively on *Questions on Doctrine* and its perceived deficiencies, while ignoring completely the arguments advanced by Barnhouse and Martin in *Eternity* and the latter's *Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*. Van Baalen wrote here that *Questions on Doctrine* had “a great deal of double talk, of granting with one hand and taking back with the other.” For example, he charged the book of mixing “the doctrine of free grace with the claim that some day . . . ‘The Church of the Remnant’ will consist of those who obey the Ten Commandments . . . and who adhere to the entire ‘Health Reform Program’ of S.D.A.; and that apart from this there will be no salvation.” Summarizing the objections of evangelical critics who opposed Adventism's inclusion

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<sup>1</sup>Jan Karel Van Baalen, *The Chaos of Cults*, 4<sup>th</sup> rev. and expanded ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 228-256.

among evangelical churches, Van Baalen found *Questions on Doctrine* to provide evidence that “S.D.A. has neither (1) denounced its pseudo-prophetess Ellen G. White, nor (2) recanted any of its false doctrines, nor (3) renounced its age-old exclusion from the Kingdom—whether now or ultimately—of all who do not accept its tenets.”<sup>1</sup>

It is unfortunate that Van Baalen chose not to analyze the merits and demerits of the arguments set forth in any of the publications produced from the Adventist-evangelical dialogues. It is not clear as to why he refrained from making any direct reaction to the writings of Barnhouse and Martin. As a widely recognized authority on cults, Van Baalen could very well have provided his readers a cogent analysis of the arguments set forth by his colleagues who took a differing stance. It seems odd that one who considered Adventism to be a “bait” of the devil would leave unchallenged the writings of others who endorsed Adventism as a Christian body.

Furthermore, it appears altogether irresponsible for him to have disregarded *Questions on Doctrine* in the course of his criticisms against Adventism only to finally acknowledge its existence as an apparent afterthought in the chapter’s appendix. Van Baalen’s criticism of *Questions on Doctrine* was barely a page long in a 29-page chapter which consisted of sweeping statements that were devoid of analytical force. Thus he responded to the Adventist-evangelical dialogues and the publications that sprang from them merely by rehashing his past arguments, ignoring the work of Barnhouse and Martin, and refraining from any meaningful analysis of *Questions on Doctrine*.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 253-256.

Reactions by Anthony A. Hoekema  
in *The Four Major Cults*

In 1963 Anthony A. Hoekema of Calvin Theological Seminary published a book categorizing Seventh-day Adventism as a cult in his influential book, *The Four Major Cults*. Written as a seminary textbook on cults, the book was “to set forth in a systematic way the doctrinal teachings of Christian Science, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormonism, and Seventh-day Adventism.” As was the case in the chapters on the other groups, the chapter on Adventism began with a brief history of the movement, followed by discussions of its sources of authority and doctrines presented in the order of God, humanity, Christ, salvation, the church, and the last things.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike Van Baalen, Hoekema made extensive use of *Questions on Doctrine* in his evaluation of Adventist beliefs. He remarked explicitly that he would “consider this book to be an authentic and reliable source of information about Seventh-day Adventist teachings.”<sup>2</sup> This chapter, therefore, was written as much as a reaction to *Questions on Doctrine* as a critique of Adventism.

Hoekema’s first problem with Adventism centered on its source of authority. Based on his reading of *Questions on Doctrine*, he noted that “Seventh-day Adventists agree with all conservative Protestants in accepting the Bible as the sole rule of faith and life, and as the ultimate source of authority.” He also noted that Adventists do not claim to “add any writings to the Sacred Scriptures.” But, he continued, “their use of Mrs.

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<sup>1</sup>Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), xi, xii.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 101.

White's writings and their avowed acceptance of her 'prophetic gift' are not consistent with this claim." Then he challenged the claims presented in *Questions on Doctrine* by showing examples from other Adventist writings that, in his appraisal, were evidences of placing "Mrs. White's writings above the Bible, even while claiming that they do not." "What is really determinative for their theological position is not careful, objective, scholarly, searching of the Scriptures," he wrote, "but the teachings and visions of Ellen G. White, which are, for them, the court of final appeal."<sup>1</sup>

Hoekema's survey of Adventist doctrines as presented in *Questions on Doctrine* yielded four additional reasons why he was "of the conviction that Seventh-day Adventism is a cult and not an evangelical denomination." First, he saw Adventism as denying justification by grace alone through its teachings on the investigative judgment and Sabbath-keeping. He found Adventists "theoretically agreeing" with the doctrine of justification by grace alone, while "teaching that one's forgiveness can be cancelled after it has been bestowed, and that forgiven sins are not immediately blotted out because subsequent deeds and attitudes may affect the final decision." He also faulted Adventists for teaching salvation "by faith plus works—specifically, the work of keeping the seventh-day Sabbath." Hoekema rejected the appeal to Arminianism for Adventism's emphasis on the law and its teaching on the investigative judgment as advanced in *Questions on Doctrine*. He recognized the Adventist teachings as indeed being Arminian,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 102-108.

then went on to discredit them as cultic. Thus in Hoekema's view, even Arminianism had no place in historic Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

Second, Hoekema further faulted Adventism for devaluing Christ. For him there remained "some ambiguity" on "the question of whether the atonement has been finished on the cross." In the investigative judgment teaching, he argued, "what is ultimately determinative for salvation is not Christ's work but man's work," which he saw as completing the work of atonement begun but not completed on the cross. As for the explanation provided in *Questions on Doctrine* that portrayed the investigative judgment as the act of applying Christ's complete atonement finished on the cross, Hoekema found it inadequate. From his Calvinist position, any notion that detracted from limited atonement and irresistible grace represented a devaluation of Christ and was outside the bounds of historic Christian orthodoxy.<sup>2</sup>

Hoekema's third objection to Adventism centered on Adventism's self-understanding as the remnant church. He found an irreconcilable tension between *Questions on Doctrine's* insistence that Adventists alone do not constitute the totality of the saved and the book's simultaneous claim that the Adventist church was the remnant church. This observation led him to conclude that "though theoretically granting that people outside their community can be saved, Seventh-day Adventists actually undermine that concession by their teaching on the remnant church." According to Hoekema, the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 109, 115, 123-128, 390-394.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 115-122, 394-396.

Adventist church's exclusivism and spiritual elitism led to its placement in the company of the cults.<sup>1</sup>

As an extension of the preceding objection, Hoekema's final criticism of Adventism dealt with the movement's "central role in eschatology." He found highly problematic the claim offered in *Questions on Doctrine* that presented Adventism as a movement raised up by God at the beginning of the end-time for the completion of the Protestant Reformation and the restoration of God's truth. Such a view of its own movement "in the very center of the eschatological drama," according to Hoekema, was characteristic of cults.<sup>2</sup>

Hoekema's reaction to the controversy over Adventism fell into what had become a predictable pattern among evangelical critics since the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*. Choosing to ignore Martin's book, he focused solely on *Questions on Doctrine* and found its arguments to be inadequate defenses for bringing Adventism into evangelical fellowship. In his eyes, *Questions on Doctrine* was a book of equivocations on major theological concepts that stood as barriers between Adventism and evangelicalism, namely, the teachings on Ellen White, salvation (as connected to the Sabbath and the investigative judgment), and the remnant. Though he stated in his final "appeal" to Adventists that he "would be the last to deny" that "there cannot be true

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 128-132, 396-400.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 400-403.

children of God among the Seventh-day Adventists,” he unequivocally pronounced Adventism as a non-Christian cult based on his interpretation of *Questions on Doctrine*.<sup>1</sup>

Reactions by Gordon R. Lewis  
in *Confronting the Cults*

The controversy over the proper place of Adventism in relation to evangelicalism continued as Gordon Lewis took up the subject by including Adventism in his 1966 book, *Confronting the Cults*. In this book Lewis examined six religious movements of American origin by pitting each against seven questions: (1) “Do you base your teachings on revelations or secret writings other than the Bible?”; (2) “Is your primary task preaching the gospel?”; (3) “Do you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the anointed one of God who has come in the flesh (I Jn. 4:1-3)? Is Jesus of Nazareth the eternal Word of God become flesh (Jn. 1:1, 14)?”; (4) “Do you believe that Christ’s shed blood is the only basis for the forgiveness of your sins?”; (5) “Do you believe that Jesus rose from the dead?”; (6) “Are you personally trusting Jesus Christ as your own redeemer and Lord?”; and (7) “Do you depend upon some achievements of your own for your salvation, or is your trust exclusively in the grace of God?” These questions, according to Lewis, were all “scripturally explicit tests” for determining the nature of a purported Christian movement.<sup>2</sup>

Lewis’s chapter on Adventism also applied the seven cult-identifying questions. However, the chapter was different from the others in that it began with a lengthy

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 403.

<sup>2</sup>Gordon R. Lewis, *Confronting the Cults* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966), 6, 7, 123.



overview of the developments in Adventist-evangelical interactions from 1955 to 1963, i.e., the initial Adventist-evangelical dialogues to the publication of Hoekema's *Four Major Cults*. Then, sifting through *Questions on Doctrine*, the work that he deemed the most representative of the Adventist belief system, Lewis sought to ascertain answers to the seven questions.

Lewis's examination of Adventism based on these questions yielded mixed results. On one hand, he concluded that Adventism was evangelical with regard to "statements about the priority of the gospel, the deity of the incarnate Christ, His substitutionary atonement, His resurrection from the dead and the necessity of personal faith in Christ," i.e., questions 2 to 6. However, he found Adventism to be less than fully evangelical with respect to the issues of authority (question 1) and salvation by faith alone (question 7), since the movement held to "an infallible source of truth in addition to Scripture (Mrs. White's writings), the doctrine of investigative judgment detracting from the completeness of Christ's atonement, and the necessity of law-keeping as a condition of justification."<sup>1</sup>

In his analysis of the statements in *Questions on Doctrine* on the role of Ellen White's writings, Lewis found many of them confusing and equivocal. He pointed out that Adventists make "strong affirmations of the supremacy and sufficiency of Scripture" on one hand, but show persistent "ambiguity" when it comes to the status of White's writings.<sup>2</sup> As evidence of such "ambiguity," he quoted different portions of *Questions on*

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 123.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 106.

*Doctrine* which held her writings in “highest esteem” and as “inspired counsels from the Lord,” though Adventists “have never equated them with Scripture,” nor have they considered them “as an addition to the sacred canon of Scripture.”<sup>1</sup> He concurred with Martin who had stated that such statements were “at best paradoxical and at times contradictory.”<sup>2</sup> Approaching the issue from the view that inspiration leads automatically to infallibility, Lewis took the Adventist view that White’s writings were inspired but not canonical as one of equivocation and confusion. He charged Adventism with believing in the practical infallibility and canonicity of White. For Lewis, this was sufficient to call Adventism a cultic system.<sup>3</sup>

On the question of salvation by faith alone, Lewis found statements in Adventist literature as well as in *Questions on Doctrine* once again to be self-contradictory and ultimately heretical. While he recognized many Adventist statements on faith and works as orthodox, he presented many other quotes from *Questions on Doctrine*, Ellen White, and other Adventist writers which he saw as having a negating effect on the orthodox statements found elsewhere. He rejected the argument found both in *Questions on Doctrine* and in *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* that the apparent inconsistency could be explained through appreciation of Adventism’s Arminianism. Lewis assessed that the distance between Adventism and evangelicalism on this issue was much greater than the “differences typical of those between Calvinists and Arminians within

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<sup>1</sup>*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 93, as quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup>Martin, *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*, 97, as quoted in Lewis, *Confronting the Cults*, 106.

<sup>3</sup>Lewis, *Confronting the Cults*, 106, 107.

evangelicalism.” He pointed out that other Arminians did not devise “a doctrine like that of the heavenly sanctuary or the investigative judgment compromising the completeness of Christ’s work at Calvary.” Neither did they “make any such legalistic use of the commandments as a whole or of the fourth commandment in particular.” Therefore, Lewis wrote, to take Adventism to be Arminian “seems too generous.” Echoing Harold Lindsell, he believed that Adventism should be placed in the same company with Romanism and Galatianism— systems that teach grace but depreciate it at the same time. This was another reason for viewing Adventism as a cultic and heretical system.<sup>1</sup>

In closing, Lewis posed a question that summed up his criticisms of Adventism. “If an Adventist will admit that Mrs. White was fallible, that no record in heaven could possibly bring a believer into condemnation, and that works of the law such as Sabbath-keeping are not necessary conditions of salvation,” he penned, “then, other things being equal, he should be acknowledged as an evangelical.”<sup>2</sup>

Reactions by Irvine Robertson  
in *What the Cults Believe*

The parade of the evangelical reactions to the Adventist-evangelical dialogues of 1955-1956, *Questions on Doctrine*, and *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* came to a close with Irvine Robertson’s *What the Cults Believe*, published in 1966. His short chapter on Adventism was a repetition of the same observations made by the critics of the previous decade. He listed them in five categories: sources of authority; the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 116-125.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 125.

atonement—heavenly sanctuary and investigative judgment; the Sabbath; conditional immortality and the annihilation of the wicked; and last-day events.<sup>1</sup>

Judging from his inclusion of Adventism in this book, Robertson undeniably considered the movement a cult. However, his portrayal of Adventism was a most benign and sympathetic one. Throughout this chapter, marked by its reserved and cautious tone, Robertson was careful not to make any definitive attacks on Adventist beliefs. Instead, he often qualified his criticisms with explanations from *Questions on Doctrine* that provided rebuttals. Rather than attacking Adventism for being cultic or heretical, Robertson for the most part described the beliefs of Adventism as presented in *Questions on Doctrine*.<sup>2</sup>

As was the case in Lewis's *Confronting the Cults*, Robertson's depiction of Adventism represented a more objective and dispassionate approach to Adventism. Using *Questions on Doctrine* as his primary point of reference, Robertson provided a simple narration of the major differences between Adventism and evangelicalism. Such a representation of Adventism, though in a book on cults, was a significant change from the practices of other critics.

Further Reactions by Walter Martin in  
*The Kingdom of the Cults*

Faced with the near-unanimous evangelical opposition to his position on Adventism, Walter Martin issued a response to the reactions in his book, *The Kingdom of the Cults: An Analysis of the Major Cult Systems in the Present Christian Era*, first

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<sup>1</sup>Irvine Robertson, *What the Cults Believe* (Chicago: Moody, 1966), 63-71.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

published in 1965. By the time the 443-page tome came out, Martin had been appointed as an associate professor of biblical studies at King's College in New York and had recently established what would become his lifelong ministry, the Christian Research Institute, an organization devoted to anti-cult polemics.

Seventh-day Adventism was not among the twelve major non-Christian cults that Martin identified and critiqued in *The Kingdom of the Cults*. However, he felt it was necessary to provide as an appendix a lengthy analysis of recent developments both within Adventism and in Adventist-evangelical relations because “for over a century Adventism [had] borne a stigma of being called a non-Christian cult system.” “Since the opposing view has had wide circulation over a long period of time,” Martin wanted to provide “a proper counter-balance,” letting his readers view Adventism “as the Adventists themselves believe it and not as many critics have caricatured it.” Though his position was not to be “construed in any sense . . . as an endorsement of the entire theological structure of Seventh-day Adventism,” he affirmed once again, as he first did publicly in 1956, that “it is perfectly possible to be a Seventh-day Adventist and be a true follower of Jesus Christ despite certain heterodox concepts.” It was these concepts that he discussed further in the rest of the densely printed sixty-three-page appendix entitled “The Puzzle of Seventh-day Adventism.”<sup>1</sup>

Martin divided this appendix into eight sections in which he discussed the history of Adventism, its psychological tendencies in relation to other churches, an outline of Adventist theology as expressed in *Questions on Doctrine*, and detailed analyses of five

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<sup>1</sup>Walter R. Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1965), 359.

major “heterodox” doctrines of Adventism—Ellen White and the Spirit of Prophecy, soul-sleep and the annihilation of the wicked, the Sabbath, the sanctuary and the investigative judgment, and law, grace, and salvation. Martin did not advance any new evidence or argument in comparison to *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*. In fact, this article was basically a condensation of the book, following its exact order and even the terminology used in its headings.

This article’s only significant departure from the 1960 book occurred in Martin’s reaction to Anthony Hoekema’s *Four Major Cults*, published three years after *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*. Martin found it strange that Hoekema would classify Adventism as a cult, while recognizing that the movement believed in the infallibility of Scripture, the Trinity, Christ’s full divinity, creation by fiat, God’s providence, the incarnation and resurrection of Christ, regeneration and sanctification through the Holy Spirit, and the second coming of Christ. “It is puzzling to me,” exclaimed Martin, “how any group can hold the above doctrines in their proper Biblical context which Dr. Hoekema admits the Adventists do and still be a non-Christian cult!” Returning to the issue later in the article, he declared that Hoekema’s position on Adventism could not be “justified by the Word of God, historical theology, or present-day practices in denominational Christianity as a whole.”<sup>1</sup>

Martin then proceeded to give rebuttals to Hoekema’s major contentions against Adventism. After reading *Questions on Doctrine*, Hoekema had accused Adventism of holding to an extra-biblical source of authority, denying justification by grace alone,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 369, 376.

devaluing Christ, and viewing itself as “the exclusive community of the saved” which will play a central role in the end-time.<sup>1</sup> In each case Martin argued that Hoekema had not given proper consideration to the statements in *Questions on Doctrine* that directly negated or denied his accusations. Martin charged that Hoekema had evaluated the beliefs of Adventists by “what he thinks they mean,” rather than “what the Adventists say they believe.”<sup>2</sup>

Particularly with regard to Hoekema’s criticism of the Adventist use of White’s writings, Martin noted that a similar argument could be made against the Calvinist use of Calvin. Martin argued that if Adventism is a cult due to the way it handles White’s writings, the same accusation could be made “against all devoted Calvinists who consider the Institutes [*sic*] and Calvin’s Commentaries every bit as much illumination and guidelines in the study of Scriptures as the Adventists do where Mrs. White’s writings are concerned.”<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, Martin pointedly observed that Hoekema made “his Calvinistic interpretation of theology the criterion [for determining cults] while ignoring the claims of the Arminian school and of semi-Arminian and semi-Calvinistic theologians.” If holding Arminian beliefs justifies the cult label given to Adventists, “why just to Adventists? . . . Why not to Pentecostals, Methodists, Anglicans, Episcopalians, Lutherans and others who accept the same Arminian premises,” pressed Martin. Hence,

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<sup>1</sup>See Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults*, 388-403.

<sup>2</sup>Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, 376, 377.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 377.

he concluded, “the implications and deductions which he draws from their Arminianism cannot be considered as evidence against the Adventists, since not only they, but the entire Arminian school of theological interpretation could argue vigorously for the principles which Adventists lay down.”<sup>1</sup>

Martin, while agreeing with Hoekema on many fronts, disagreed with him strongly in the criteria of cults and their application to Adventism. Martin accused him, on the one hand, of misunderstanding and misconstruing *Questions on Doctrine*, and, on the other hand, of rigidly yet inconsistently applying Calvinism as the measuring stick for cult classification. Because Hoekema’s interpretation of *Questions on Doctrine* and criteria for evaluation were faulty, Martin contended that his conclusion was also in serious error. In so doing Martin was once again challenging the long-held assumptions and argumentation that undergirded the evangelical assertion that had pegged Adventism as a cult.

### Summary and Conclusions

Evangelical responses to the Adventist-evangelical dialogues and the publications by the chief participants of the dialogues can be classified into two clear camps—one which believed that Adventism had sufficiently moved toward orthodoxy to be accepted as an evangelical church, and the other which saw Adventism as essentially a non-Christian system which still needed to make significant doctrinal changes to enter evangelical fellowship. From the mid-1950s through the 1960s, those belonging to the first camp were essentially limited to Barnhouse, Martin, English, and Mead who steadily

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 377, 378.



stood by their conclusions of 1956. Most evangelicals, meanwhile, belonged to the second camp, staunchly defending the status quo evangelical stance on Adventism.

In the end, this divide within evangelicalism centered primarily on how each side viewed and interpreted the doctrinal presentations in *Questions on Doctrine*. Can the book indeed be taken as the representative voice of Adventism? Is the historic Christian orthodoxy affirmed in the book sufficient for Adventism's entry into evangelicalism? And most importantly, are the distinctive doctrines of Adventism expressed in the book non-detracting features (at the very least) in relation to its orthodox teachings? Such were the questions that each evangelical who reacted to the Adventist-evangelical dialogues, the *Eternity* articles, and *Questions on Doctrine* ultimately had to wrestle with.

From their initial head-turning articles in *Eternity* to the aftermath of the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*, Donald Grey Barnhouse and Walter Martin did not waver in their new conviction that Adventism was not a cult, but was an evangelical church which affirmed all the cardinal doctrines of historic Christian orthodoxy. A key premise of their position was that the Adventist theology communicated to them throughout the Adventist-evangelical dialogues and in *Questions on Doctrine* was the church's representative position. To them Adventism of the 1950s was a far cry from that of the nineteenth century when the movement was indeed a non-Christian cult, and what validated their revised assessment was *Questions on Doctrine*—which they affirmed as a partly problematic but essentially evangelical document.

The pair's new conviction found its full expression in 1960 in *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* in which Martin put together a comprehensive analysis of Adventist beliefs as presented in *Questions on Doctrine*. Here Martin affirmed his

conclusion of 1956 that the “heterodox,” or distinctive, doctrines of Adventism in no way compromised its orthodox beliefs. Finally in 1965 he reaffirmed his findings of 1960 in a lengthy article included in the appendix of his *Kingdom of the Cults*. In this final work from this period, he disputed what he saw as unnecessarily rigid and inconsistent criteria for the definition of a cult employed by evangelical critics and argued against misrepresentation of Adventist beliefs and *Questions on Doctrine*, in particular.

On the other hand, all other evangelical reactions were negative toward Adventism and *Questions on Doctrine*. Most reviews of *Questions on Doctrine* revealed that the book had not succeeded in changing evangelical perspectives on Adventism. Though initial evangelical reactions to articles by Barnhouse and Martin had been nearly uniformly negative, Adventist leaders and Barnhouse and Martin had hoped that the book would force evangelicals to rethink their stance on Adventism. Most evangelicals, however, found the book to present ineffective and unconvincing arguments in favor of accepting Adventism among their ranks, though their reactions were expressed with greater sophistication and civility than were earlier criticisms.

Initially, evangelical critics held deep suspicion as to whether *Questions on Doctrine* provided an accurate presentation of Adventist beliefs. Several initial reactions tended to discount the book as a cover-up that sought to place a semantic plaster over some of the distinctive features of Adventism. They saw the book as a public relations effort that in essence was deceptive. Consequently, critics who assessed the book in this manner believed that Barnhouse and Martin had been duped into accepting Adventism as Christian. However, with the passage of time as the book received a wider reading among evangelicals, the initial misgivings held by some gave way to full acceptance of

the book as Adventism's representative doctrinal voice. Thus, by the time major book-length treatments of Adventism appeared in the 1960s, most critics no longer spent time questioning the authority of *Questions on Doctrine* but focused their attention on those teachings they found to be either problematic or inconsistent within the book.

As evangelical critics began taking seriously the beliefs expressed in *Questions on Doctrine*, they discovered, as did Barnhouse and Martin, that Adventists were adamantly repudiating several of the old charges leveled against them—such as charges that they denied the Trinity, the eternal pre-existence and divinity of Christ, the sinlessness of Christ, and salvation by faith. As a result of this realization, most critics came to agree with Barnhouse and Martin that Adventism indeed held to the doctrines thought to be central to historic, orthodox Christianity. At the same time, these critics were quick to point out that assent to those central teachings was inadequate. They argued that Adventism needed to either repudiate or reformulate its distinctive teachings if it wanted to be accepted as an evangelical denomination, though individual critics highlighted different distinctives as candidates for expurgation. The distinctives that received the greatest amount of attention were the Adventist teachings on Ellen White, the sanctuary and the investigative judgment, and the Sabbath and its place in the law of God, followed by the doctrines of the state of dead, the fate of the wicked, and the remnant.

Though the two camps disagreed on how Adventism as a whole should be viewed in relation to evangelicalism, they shared the same premises from which they pointed their criticisms toward Adventists. They were particularly united in the two clear presuppositions that found their roots in fundamentalism and Calvinism. First, the two evangelical camps' views on inspiration were squarely within the fundamentalist tradition

of inerrantism which severely limited human participation in the process of inspiration. Because of the inerrantist presuppositions of the evangelical critics, which equated inspiration with infallibility of the prophet and all aspects of prophetic writings, signs of fallibility in Ellen White's ministry and writings were interpreted as proofs that she was not inspired. Due to this bias, the Adventist position of dynamic, thought inspiration which allowed for human elements in the inspired writings was neither understood nor appreciated.

Second, the evangelical criticisms of the doctrines of the investigative judgment and the Sabbath showed a Calvinist bias. Operating with the Calvinist assertion that the cross event *completed* Christ's work of atonement, the critics interpreted the investigative judgment doctrine, which placed Christ's heavenly ministry as having atoning value, as superfluous and quirky (in the view of Barnhouse and Martin) and heretical (in the view of others). Because of such a punctiliar view of the atonement as taking place and being consummated on the cross, the evangelicals had little appreciation for the Adventist view which understood the atonement as a dynamic process taking place throughout human history.

Furthermore, in their treatment of the Sabbath and the role of God's law in Christian life, many evangelical critics betrayed their Calvinist belief in predestination that tended to diminish the role of the law in Christian living. They interpreted the Adventist insistence on the continuing validity of the seventh-day Sabbath as legalism and a works-oriented system of salvation, despite claims in *Questions on Doctrine* explaining the Arminian heritage of Adventism.

Thus, the debate among evangelical critics was certainly not on how much they disagreed with Adventists, as they were all united in this regard. The point of dispute between pro-Adventist evangelicals (Barnhouse, Martin, English, and Mead) and the anti-Adventist evangelicals (the rest of the evangelical world) was on whether or not the distinctive teachings of Adventism undermined its orthodox teachings. While Barnhouse and Martin viewed them as problematic and idiosyncratic (i.e., relatively harmless deviancies), most evangelical critics saw them as factors which severely undercut Adventism's claim to orthodoxy. For the former camp, Adventism's adherence to the cardinal doctrines of orthodoxy was sufficient for inclusion in evangelical fellowship, as long as those doctrines were not directly contradicted by the distinctive doctrines. But for the latter camp, the distinctives had the effect of subtly but fatally sabotaging the orthodox positions held by Adventists.

As if previously agreed upon, Martin's publication of *The Kingdom of the Cults* in 1965 and Robertson's *What the Cults Believe* in 1966 ushered in a moratorium on the debate over Adventism in evangelical circles. If a verdict were to be reached by sheer numbers, the critics of Adventism won the argument handily in the decade between 1956 and 1966. No other evangelical—other than Barnhouse, Martin, English, and Mead—publicly supported acceptance of Adventism as Christian, while at least a dozen major publications surfaced between 1956 and 1966 in opposition to such acceptance. Theologically, however, no clear solution or direction was reached during the decade-long debate. The two sides found themselves deadlocked between two very divergent views on Adventism.

This deadlock would remain unbroken throughout the rest of the 1960s and into the 1970s until the changing theological and cultural dynamics within American evangelicalism would lead to gradual acceptance of Adventism as Christian. The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences and the controversy that they stirred among evangelicals did not succeed in effecting any radical changes in the relations between the two groups. However, the evangelical discussions of 1956-1966—though fierce and highly discordant—would pave the way for the eventual recognition of Adventism as Christian. Exactly how and when that came about remains, however, the subject of another study.

## CHAPTER 4

### REACTIONS BY SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Just as evangelicals were split in their appraisals of the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences, *Questions on Doctrine*, and *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*, Adventists too were sharply divided in their reactions. On one hand, most administrators, pastors, and academics gave glowingly positive assessment of these events and presented *Questions on Doctrine* as a major accomplishment. On the other hand, some Adventist lay people, rallying around a retired theology professor, M. L. Andreasen, lodged vehement protests against *Questions on Doctrine*, decrying both the process through which the book was published and some of the theological content presented in it. The initial phase of the controversy that involved the original participants of the Adventist-evangelical dialogues drew to a close with the publication of LeRoy Edwin Froom's *Movement of Destiny* in 1971, the last public reaction by a major participant in the controversy.

#### **Preparatory Articles (1955-1957)**

Before surveying various Adventist reactions, it is important to note the articles that appeared in *Ministry*, *Signs of the Times*, and the *Review and Herald* that prepared and informed both the clergy and the laity of the Adventist church of the *Eternity* articles

that would be forthcoming. During the period from the summer of 1955 to the end of 1956, these magazines carried articles that discussed such key areas of concern in the Adventist-Evangelical Conferences and *Questions on Doctrine* as Christ's full divinity, Christ's sinless human nature, the complete nature of the atonement on the cross, and the need for greater tolerance and understanding toward other Christian denominations.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, several articles appeared in these magazines that sought to present Adventism as an orthodox Christian body.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Eric D. Syme, "Outstanding Religious Trends of 1955," *Ministry*, February 1956, 10-13; R[oy] A[llan] A[nderson], "The Trend to Tolerance," *Ministry*, February 1956, 18, 19; idem, "Human, Not Carnal," *Ministry*, September 1956, 12-15; idem, "Make It Plain," *Ministry*, October 1956, 13, 14; L[ouise] C. K[leuser], "Religious Groups in Our Evangelism: Part I," *Ministry*, May 1956, 22, 23; idem, "Religious Groups in Our Evangelism: Part II," *Ministry*, June 1956, 24-26; idem, "Religious Groups in Our Evangelism: Part III," *Ministry*, July 1956, 32, 33, 50; idem, "Religious Groups in Our Evangelism: Part IV," *Ministry*, August 1956, 33-35; idem, "Religious Groups in Our Evangelism: Part V," *Ministry*, September 1956, 30-33; Carlyle B. Haynes, "The Incomparable Christ," *Signs of the Times*, 28 August 1956, 5, 6; idem, "Christ's Oneness with God," *Signs of the Times*, 4 September 1956, 10, 11; idem, "Son of the Living God," *Signs of the Times*, 11 September 1956, 10, 11; idem, "God the Son: Divine Attributes of Jesus," *Signs of the Times*, 18 September 1956, 10, 11; idem, "The Name above All Names," *Signs of the Times*, 25 September 1956, 5, 6; D. A. Delafield, "What Is Christ-centered Preaching?" *Ministry*, August 1956, 38-40; Daniel Walther, "Interviews with Ecumenical Leaders," *Ministry*, September 1956, 4-7; LeRoy Edwin Froom, "The Atonement the Heart of Our Message," *Ministry*, December 1956, 12-14; Paul P. Felt, "Why I Am a Seventh-day Adventist," *Ministry*, December 1956, 7-11, 44, 45.

<sup>2</sup>LeRoy Edwin Froom, "The Truth about Seventh-Day [*sic*] Adventists: 1. Their Origin and History," *Signs of the Times*, 12 July 1955, 8, 9, 13-15; idem, "The Truth about Seventh-day Adventists: 2. Their Beliefs and Practices," *Signs of the Times*, 19 July 1955, 8, 9, 13-15; Francis D. Nichol, "Were the Advent Pioneers Fanatics?" *Signs of the Times*, 13 September 1955, 7, 15; idem, "Does the Advent Hope Breed Fanaticism?" *Signs of the Times*, 20 September 1955, 10, 11, 15; idem, "Did Adventists Wear Ascension Robes?" *Signs of the Times*, 27 September 1955, 8, 9, 14; idem, "Are Adventists Time Setters?" *Signs of the Times*, 4 October 1955, 8, 9; A[rthur] S. M[axwell], "New Reformation?" *Signs of the Times*, 20 December 1955, 3, 4.



Among the three publications, *Ministry*, a magazine for the Adventist clergy published by the Ministerial Department of the General Conference, was the most active in preparing its readers for the events about to unfold. In particular, the series of articles entitled “Counsels from the Spirit of Prophecy” presented quotations from Ellen White’s writings that supported the views that would be fully propounded in *Questions on Doctrine*. Compiled and organized under headings provided by anonymous authors (presumably Froom, Read, and Anderson), these articles provided *Ministry* readers with an advance look at how the issues of Christ’s divine and human natures and the atonement would be treated in *Questions on Doctrine*.<sup>1</sup> In fact, these articles would find their way into the book as one of the appendices when it was published in 1957.

These articles seem to have served at least three purposes. First, they demonstrated to the evangelical world that Adventists were indeed orthodox and evangelical in their core beliefs. The articles must have assured Barnhouse and Martin that the Adventist church—at least in its mainstream—stood in harmony with what they were being told by Froom, Anderson, and Read. Second, for their Adventist readers these articles clearly refuted teachings which were once held but later rejected by Adventists and reiterated the established orthodoxy of such teachings as Christ’s full divinity and his complete atonement on the cross. Third, the articles—particularly those on the human

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<sup>1</sup>“Counsel from the Spirit of Prophecy: The Summons of the Spirit of Prophecy,” *Ministry*, January 1956, 40, 41; “Counsel from the Spirit of Prophecy: Christ’s Place in the Godhead,” *Ministry*, May 1956, 26-29; “Counsel from the Spirit of Prophecy: Christ’s Nature during the Incarnation,” *Ministry*, September 1956, 17-24; “Counsel from the Spirit of Prophecy: The Atonement—Atoning Sacrifice and Priestly Application, Part I,” *Ministry*, December 1956, 18-24; “Counsel from the Spirit of Prophecy: The Atonement—Atoning Sacrifice and Priestly Application, Part II,” *Ministry*, January 1957, 39-43.

nature of Christ—were designed to steer the minds of the readers (particularly those of the clergy) to accept the teachings and attitudes that would soon be projected in *Questions on Doctrine*. In these ways, these articles—many of which were written by Froom and Anderson—set the stage for the release of the *Eternity* articles and *Questions on Doctrine* by helping their readers anticipate the upcoming publications.

### Reactions to the Conferences and the *Eternity* Articles

#### Reactions in *Signs of the Times*

The first published Adventist reaction to the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences and the articles in *Eternity* appeared as an editorial in the October 2, 1956, issue of *Signs of the Times*. Written by its editor, Arthur S. Maxwell, the editorial entitled “Adventists Vindicated” proclaimed Barnhouse’s article in the September issue of *Eternity* to be “one of the most epoch-making events in recent church history.” Writing approvingly of the “study and debate” that took place between evangelicals and Adventists over the two previous years, Maxwell likened the impact of Barnhouse’s article among evangelicals to a “hydrogen bomb” explosion. Lauding Barnhouse as a great and courageous man, he wrote that the evangelical leader’s article represented long-overdue “vindication” of Seventh-day Adventists after “a century of slander” by other Christians.<sup>1</sup>

This article, however, was the only noteworthy contribution that *Signs* made to the post-*Eternity* discussions within Adventism. As a magazine intended as much for non-

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<sup>1</sup>A[rthur] S. M[axwell], “Adventists Vindicated,” *Signs of the Times*, 2 October 1956, 3, 4.

Adventists as for Adventists, the magazine periodically printed articles that explained distinctive doctrines of Adventism, but none made references to the ongoing dialogues between evangelicals and Adventists. No more update or commentary on the unfolding Adventist-evangelical relations was reported in the magazine.

#### Reactions in the *Review and Herald*

Surprisingly, the *Review and Herald*, the Adventist church's official organ, carried only one direct response to the articles appearing in *Eternity* and the conferences that preceded them. But this single response came from the uppermost echelon of the General Conference—from President R. R. Figuhr himself. Figuhr opened his December 13, 1956, article, "A Non-Adventist Examines Our Beliefs," with a description of the conferences. He described the evangelical conferees as "fair and open-minded men" who took a "frank and Christian approach" to ascertaining the true beliefs of Adventism. Then he explained that a set of responses to the evangelicals was drafted and examined by "a large circle of representative preachers, teachers, and administrators, not only in North America but in other countries as well." "In framing the answers," he continued, "great care was exercised" so that there would not be "in any sense a modification or alteration of what Seventh-day Adventists proclaim to the world as their belief." In concluding his description of the conferences, Figuhr noted that "no objections or questions of any importance have been raised" by Adventist leaders who examined the responses.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Figuhr, "A Non-Adventist Examines Our Beliefs," *Review and Herald*, 13 December 1956, 3.

In his appraisal of the *Eternity* articles, Figuhr remarked that it was indeed a new and extraordinary experience to have Adventist beliefs explained by non-Adventists while being looked upon as true Christians. He stated that these evangelicals, in doing so, were “doing [Adventists] a very great favor, for which [Adventists] can never feel sufficiently grateful.” He went on to caution his readers that they should not be dismayed “if these friends state in their own words” or even criticize or misconstrue certain Adventist teachings. After all, he reminded them, “no non-Adventist can ever adequately and satisfactorily tell what Seventh-day Adventists believe.” If there were any inaccuracies in the *Eternity* articles that need to be corrected, Figuhr asked Adventists to “exercise Christian patience . . . until all of the articles now being written by our Christian friends have appeared,” lest any eager Adventist bombard *Eternity* with angry protests. Figuhr assured the readers that Barnhouse and Martin “have been so wonderfully Christian in their relationship with [Adventist leaders] and so open to any explanation” that he felt confident that inaccuracies would be promptly corrected.<sup>1</sup>

In closing, Figuhr announced that the evangelical questions and Adventist responses would be released soon for general circulation. He proclaimed that this yet-untitled volume which was still being edited “will prove of great value to [Adventist] workers and people generally as well as to sincere people who are inquiring concerning what Seventh-day Adventists believe.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 3, 4.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 4.

It is puzzling that the *Review and Herald* carried only one article that dealt directly with the Adventist-evangelical conferences and the *Eternity* articles. There were no further descriptions of the conferences that spanned eighteen months and no discussions on the merits and demerits of the articles by Barnhouse and Martin. Figuhr's article itself added no significant details on the conferences that had not already been revealed in *Eternity*. Thus, what Maxwell called "one of the most epoch-making events in recent church history"<sup>1</sup> that involved the Adventist church received only a three-and-a-half column mention in the official organ of the church. Though Figuhr had suggested that there will come a time to discuss and even debate the *Eternity* articles, no such treatment appeared in the *Review*. Thus, the general membership of the Adventist church remained in the dark as to the details of the conferences and lacked a forum in which to discuss the unfolding events.

#### Reactions in *Ministry*

Since *Ministry* was a magazine intended for church leaders, it became the main venue for providing more extensive reactions to the Adventist-evangelical conferences and the writings by Barnhouse and Martin. More than any other Adventist publication, *Ministry* carried articles that both directly and indirectly pertained to the ongoing discussions between Adventists and evangelicals.

After months of printing articles that related to the Adventist-evangelical discussions without revealing the circumstances that produced them, *Ministry* carried a

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<sup>1</sup>A[rthur] S. M[axwell], "Adventists Vindicated," *Signs of the Times*, 2 October 1956, 3.

three-page editorial by Roy Allan Anderson in its December 1956 issue that explained for the first time the chain of events that led up to the *Eternity* articles. Reflecting upon these events and articles, Anderson surmised that “there must be a divine purpose.” For him this purpose was to remove the theological “misunderstandings” which had been “a barrier between other Christian bodies and Adventists” and to clarify the teachings of Adventism to the world. “This,” Anderson wrote, “has called forth our deepest gratitude to God.”<sup>1</sup>

Anderson’s sentiment was echoed in the April 1957 editorial by his associate, Louise C. Kleuser. She shared the views of Maxwell, Figuhr, and Anderson in regarding the conferences and the publication of the *Eternity* articles as a “most profitable” experience that formed “a thrilling chapter in the history of Adventism.” “Adventists recognize such experiences as providences,” she wrote.<sup>2</sup>

In his narration of the course of events that led up to the *Eternity* articles, Anderson was quick to assure his readers, as did Figuhr, that the answers given to the evangelical conferees “represent the thinking of a large circle of [Adventist] preachers, teachers, and administrators.” Furthermore, he declared that “no attempt whatsoever has been made to add to, take from, or change our doctrines, but only to explain ‘those things which are most surely believed among us.’” What really changed, Anderson insisted, was the evangelicals’ understanding and attitudes toward Adventists. This change came

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<sup>1</sup>R[oy] A[llan] A[nderson], “Changing Attitudes toward Adventism,” *Ministry*, December 1956, 15, 17.

<sup>2</sup>L[ouise] C. K[leuser], “Adventism’s New Milestone,” *Ministry*, April 1957, 31.

“when they recognized that [Adventists] stand firmly with all true Christians on the great fundamentals of the Christian faith.”<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, Anderson admitted that Adventists themselves were to be blamed in part for the century-old “misunderstandings” held by evangelicals. He gave two reasons for this. First, he faulted the lack of clarity in doctrinal expressions. “It is very possible,” he wrote to his readers, “that we ourselves share in the responsibility of this misunderstanding, because of our failure to state clearly what we believe on these fundamental issues [i.e., the historic fundamentals of Christian orthodoxy] and our failure to place chief emphasis where it really belongs.” Second, he pointed out divergent individual viewpoints appearing in denominational publications as if they were the official positions of the church. However, he acknowledged that this latter problem had been unavoidable since Adventist preachers and writers had not been required to “state their convictions in any precise form” and since Adventists had “never developed a comprehensive systematic theology within the framework of [Adventist] doctrines” that clearly spelled out their beliefs.<sup>2</sup>

While Anderson chastised his fellow Adventists for their past failings, Kleuser gave the first published rebuttal to one of the points that Barnhouse and Martin made in their articles. In her April 1957 editorial, she responded to the charge that Adventists were exclusivist: “We question the accuracy of this appraisal,” she wrote. It is not that Adventists are being deliberately exclusive, she argued. Rather, the perceived

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<sup>1</sup>R[oy] A[llan] A[nderson], “Changing Attitudes toward Adventism,” *Ministry*, December 1956, 17.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 15.

isolationism of Adventism was the result of the evangelical intolerance toward the distinctiveness of Adventism. Likening the Adventist movement to the Protestant Reformation, she asserted that Adventists “have a right to startle fellow Christians with some distinctive views.” “So in our zeal for Protestant unity,” she urged, “let us leave room for diversity, allowing the other man also to exercise his conscience, provided he knows his Saviour.”<sup>1</sup>

As Figuhr did in his *Review* article, Anderson took two occasions during this period to announce the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*. In his December 1956 editorial, Anderson emphasized that this book’s projected value in presenting Adventism to other Christians was enormous. The volume would be “well documented,” he wrote, “so that . . . Christian friends of all denominational groups will be able to ascertain the features of our faith.”<sup>2</sup> Then, in his February 1957 editorial, Anderson added that the book was “something that no [Adventist church] worker can afford to be without.” In the same editorial, he promoted the upcoming publication of Martin’s *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* which would be “a forthright, up-to-date analysis of [Adventist] beliefs” and “a scholarly treatise on the history and effect of [Adventist] teachings.”<sup>3</sup>

Though direct reactions to the conferences and the *Eternity* articles ceased with Anderson’s February 1957 editorial, articles that dealt with the main theological issues

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<sup>1</sup>L[ouise] C. K[leuser], “Adventism’s New Milestone,” *Ministry*, April 1957, 32.

<sup>2</sup>R[oy] A[llan] A[nderson], “Changing Attitudes toward Adventism,” *Ministry*, December 1956, 17.

<sup>3</sup>R[oy] A[llan] A[nderson], “Bringing Ourselves up to Date,” *Ministry*, February 1957, 17.



arising from this new chapter in Adventist-evangelical relations filled the pages of *Ministry* for the rest of the year.<sup>1</sup> It was no coincidence that a new stream of articles on Christ's divine and human natures and the atonement appeared in *Ministry* during this period as these issues were quickly becoming primary areas of contention among Adventists reacting both to the evangelicals and to one another. From the perspective of Adventist leaders who were releasing these articles in *Ministry*, the theological commentaries, especially the compilations of Ellen White quotations, were not only to pave the way for the acceptance of *Questions on Doctrine*, but also to show Adventists that their church had always believed in the full divinity of Christ, his sinless human nature, and the completeness of his atonement on the cross.

#### Reaction by Raymond F. Cottrell

In addition to reactions published in denominational publications, another Adventist leader gave a major response to the articles by evangelicals in *Eternity* and *Our Hope* which deserves special attention. In November 1956, at the behest of the editorial committee of *Questions on Doctrine*, Raymond F. Cottrell, an associate editor of the

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<sup>1</sup>LeRoy Edwin Froom, "The Priestly Application of the Atoning Act," *Ministry*, February 1957, 9-12, 44; "Counsel from the Spirit of Prophecy: High Priestly Application of Atoning Sacrifice, Part I," *Ministry*, February 1957, 28-31, 36; E. Robert Reynolds, "Preaching a Christ-centered Gospel," *Ministry*, March 1957, 23, 26-28, 45; "Counsel from the Spirit of Prophecy: High Priestly Application of Atoning Sacrifice, Part II," *Ministry*, March 1957, 36-38; W. E. Read, "The Incarnation and the Son of Man," *Ministry*, April 1957, 23-26; R[oy] A[llan] A[nderson], "Uninhibited Evangelism," *Ministry*, June 1957, 13-16; Harry W. Lowe, "Thoughts on the Incarnation," *Ministry*, December 1957, 4-8; Mrs. Ernest W. Cox, "The Immaculate Christ," *Ministry*, December 1957, 9, 10; William G. T. Shedd, "The Theanthropic Nature of Christ," *Ministry*, December 1957, 11-14, 39; J. A. Buckwalter, "Wonders of the Incarnation," *Ministry*, December 1957, 15, 16, 33-35.

*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* which was being published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association at that time, wrote a sixteen-page evaluation of the articles by Martin, Barnhouse, and English.<sup>1</sup> A self-described “behind-the-scenes” participant of the Adventist-evangelical conferences, he had assisted Froom, Read, Anderson, and Unruh in biblical exegesis since none of the Adventist conferees was proficient in biblical languages.<sup>2</sup> Cottrell’s unpublished reactions were much lengthier and more incisive in their criticisms than those appearing in official publications. In this article written exclusively for General Conference leaders, Cottrell offered comments on five major features of these articles, culminating with general conclusions. The five features were: (1) change in Adventist theology; (2) Ellen G. White; (3) the remnant church; (4) Adventism in relation to other evangelical churches; and (5) the proposed book on Adventism by Martin. Each of the five segments of the article had three parts: quotations from the original articles, a summary of the main points, and the implications that the evangelicals’ conclusions had for Adventism.<sup>3</sup>

Cottrell dismissed as “a fundamental fallacy” the evangelicals’ assertion that Adventist theology had recently changed. Though he readily acknowledged that individual Adventists in the church’s official journals and books published by denominational publishers had expressed views which Martin called heretical, Cottrell

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond F. Cottrell, “An Evaluation of Certain Aspects of the Martin Articles,” November 1956, TMs, ADF 6200.02, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>Raymond F. Cottrell, “*Questions on Doctrine: Footnotes to History*,” 1989, TMs, fld 009590, AU.

<sup>3</sup>Raymond F. Cottrell, “An Evaluation of Certain Aspects of the Martin Articles,” November 1956, TMs, ADF 6200.02, LLU.

felt it to be a “gross misrepresentation of the facts” for the evangelicals to state that the entire denomination was once heretical. “Is the whole church to be blamed,” he asked, “for the incidental statements of individuals who were conscientiously looking for greater light?” Thus for Cottrell it was not fair to assert that Adventism had changed from heresy to orthodoxy in certain areas when the movement never officially taught these heresies. Furthermore, he felt that some of the supposed early Adventist heresies—such as the views that the atonement was not completed on the cross, that salvation is the result of grace plus works, and that Christ took the sinful nature of humanity—were only heretical as Martin defined such key terms as “atonement,” “works,” and “sinful.” Cottrell suggested that if Martin had fully understood the way these expressions were used by early Adventists, he would not have seen a change in Adventist theology. Rather, he would have affirmed early Adventists as adhering to orthodox teachings of Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

In the segment on Ellen White, Cottrell took issue with Martin’s declaration that Adventists did not consider her writings to be infallible or fully inspired in all her writings. Though he recognized that White never claimed infallibility, Cottrell argued that “there is no intrinsic difference between the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White as to degree of inspiration, infallibility, reliability, authoritative quality, or binding force upon the consciences and lives of Seventh-day Adventists.” He conceded that there indeed were “such things as historical inaccuracies, contradictions, and counsel that had limited application as to place or time” in White’s writings, but he claimed that these difficulties were “altogether identical in nature” to those encountered in the Bible. He

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

also noted that it was from White's writings that the Adventist doctrine of the investigative judgment was derived, adding that it was "certainly neither explicit nor clearly implicit in Scripture." This latter observation was, of course, one which Froom, Read, and Anderson had worked hard to debunk in their dialogues with Martin and Barnhouse. However, as far as Cottrell could see, the consensus thinking within Adventism was that White's writings were as inspired and infallible as Scripture and that those writings were a legitimate source and authority for doctrines.<sup>1</sup>

Cottrell's third group of comments dealt with the concept of the remnant church. For him the evangelicals' understanding that Adventists no longer lay exclusive claim to being the remnant church was an "absolute misconception as to [the Adventist] position on this point." He argued that the distinctions that Martin saw between the nineteenth-century and contemporary Adventist positions on this concept were not as sharp as he made them out to be. Cottrell stated that Adventists had "always considered themselves the 'remnant people' and their church the 'remnant church.'" Thus it was a gross misunderstanding on Martin's part to view Adventists as having changed their position on the remnant. Cottrell then hinted that fellowship with the evangelicals may need to be reconsidered if it depended on repudiation of the traditional Adventist teaching on the remnant church.<sup>2</sup>

In the fourth segment of his paper, Cottrell attacked Martin's proposal on the relationship between Adventists and evangelicals. Martin had highlighted to his

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

evangelical readers that Adventists were eager to fellowship with evangelicals and that they would neither urge upon evangelicals certain distinctive teachings and practices of Adventism nor make efforts to win evangelicals over to Adventism. But for Cottrell this meant requiring Adventists to “give up [their] distinct emphases” which would be too high a price to pay for membership in evangelicalism. “This is the basis,” Cottrell snarled, “on which he welcomes Adventists to the snobbish circle of ‘orthodox’ Christians to which he belongs!” Thus, “we are on probation,” he warned his fellow Adventist leaders, “and the test will be: (1) whether we have indeed relinquished our claim to being the ‘remnant church,’ (2) whether we persist in pressing the moral obligation of Sabbath observance upon other evangelical Christians, and (3) whether we continue our attempts to receive into fellowship members of other evangelical churches.” Furthermore, Cottrell declared that preventing Adventists from “proselytizing” other evangelicals was unreasonable as no church can prevent members from switching membership even between evangelical churches. He suggested that Adventist leaders be more discerning of the “unspoken hope” that each side had. For Adventists this hope was to “proselytize more successfully among the evangelicals whom [Martin] represents, and make Adventists out of them,” while for Martin it was to “denature Adventism, overcome it by a show of friendliness, and dissipate its influence among evangelicals.”<sup>1</sup>

Finally, Cottrell questioned whether Martin’s forthcoming book on Adventism would be as objective as advertised. Noting that Martin had considered Dudley M. Canright’s books on Adventism as objective critiques of nineteenth-century

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

Adventism—an assertion which an average Adventist in 1956 would strongly protest—Cottrell wondered whether Martin’s book would indeed be as objective as claimed and whether readers would “know where facts end and where Martin’s interpretation of the facts begins.” Given the “grave misconceptions of Adventism that [Martin’s] articles already published reveal,” Cottrell felt very uneasy about allowing Martin’s book to have the last word in the dialogues and suggested that Adventist leaders wait for Martin’s book to be released at which point the Adventist book would be recast “in order to clarify the areas in which . . . [Martin] conceives gross misconceptions concerning [Adventists].”<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion, Cottrell made a candid call for clarity and honesty to his fellow Adventist leaders. He urged that the church make “a sincere, tactful endeavor to provide Martin with a clear statement of the facts, particularly with respect to the supposed ‘change’ in Adventist theology, the writings of E. G. White, and the ‘remnant church.’” “Let us spare no effort to make our true position clear,” he demanded, “and not content ourselves with words we have spoken and written in one sense and permitted him to construe in another sense.” Cottrell warned that without such an effort, Martin might feel that he had been “double-crossed,” which would “easily lead—especially in the hands of a ‘research polemicist’ like Martin—to the most intense bitterness.” Continuing with a foreboding sense of danger, he pondered: “Is there not a real and present danger that blackmail and calumny of the worst sort are a latent possibility when these good men

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

discover that they have misunderstood us, or, as they will think, that we have deliberately misled them?”<sup>1</sup>

As he concluded the paper, Cottrell expressed serious concerns for the implications that lack of clarity and forthrightness would have for Adventists. “Almost certainly,” he predicted, “there will also arise a storm of opposition when our ministry and laity discover the real meaning of the actual terms on which we have achieved a rapprochement [*sic*] with Martin and other evangelicals.” This would lead to “the certain refusal of a great many Adventists to go along with the interpretation of Adventism set forth in the documents now being prepared for publication, and in Martin’s new book,” resulting in “a serious division” among Adventist workers. For Cottrell this was another compelling reason for Adventists to “take adequate measures *now* to clear the atmosphere, *before* Martin’s book is published, and to set forth in [*Questions on Doctrine*] a clear exposition of [Adventism’s] true position” on the issues that he found Martin to have had misunderstandings.<sup>2</sup>

### **Reactions to *Questions on Doctrine***

#### Pre-Publication Reactions

*Questions on Doctrine*, released in the latter half of 1957, turned out to be one of the most controversial books produced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. Emphasis in the original. Many of Cottrell’s suggestions do not seem to have had any marked effect as few substantive changes were made between the time of his critique and the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*. The most significant change made to the document as a result of critiques by Cottrell and others seems to have been the addition of biblical materials. See p. 254, 255 of the present study.

engendered a plethora of reactions within the church—both for and against the positions taken by the book and the way it was produced. The first set of reactions actually predated the publication of the book by at least half a year. Two groups of respondents supplied pre-publication reactions to the manuscript which was initially entitled *Replies to a Group of Questions Concerning the Faith of Seventh-day Adventists*, then changed to *This We Believe* before acquiring the final title of *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*. First, there were solicited reactions by church workers around the world. The editorial committee for the book, appointed by the General Conference, had sent copies of the book manuscript to a select group of 118 pastors, teachers, editors, and administrators.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this group, all the presidents, secretaries, and treasurers of world divisions, field secretaries of the General Conference, and North American union and local conference presidents had also received a copy of the document, bringing the total number of individuals solicited for critique to around 250.<sup>2</sup> Though only a relatively small number of them actually replied,<sup>3</sup> those who did respond supplied a number of penetrating and (even what turned out to be brilliantly prophetic) critiques.

The second group of pre-publication reactions was produced by M. L. Andreasen. Though not included in the 250, Andreasen circulated a series of highly critical

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<sup>1</sup>“Questions Have Been Sent To:,” 1956, TMs, ADF 3773, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Figuhr, “Questions on Doctrine,” *Ministry*, January 1958, 29.

<sup>3</sup>I have not been able to uncover exactly how many critiques went back to the committee. Cottrell reported that Merwyn R. Thurber had told him that only seven responded (Raymond F. Cottrell, “*Questions on Doctrine: Footnotes to History*,” 1989, TMs, fld 009590, AU). At this point, it is impossible to determine which seven Thurber may have been referring to. However, I have discovered more than seven responses in the course of my research.



documents attacking not only the forthcoming book, but also the participants in the Adventist-evangelical conferences. While others would join him in denouncing the book after it came out, Andreasen was the lone voice outside denominational leadership providing a reasoned pre-publication critique.

### **Reactions and Interactions by Church Leaders**

On July 25, 1956, LeRoy Edwin Froom, writing on behalf of R. R. Figuhr, president of the General Conference, sent out an early draft of *Questions on Doctrine* to some 120 Adventist church workers (most of them Bible teachers and scholars) for “constructive criticism or suggestion.”<sup>1</sup> This draft contained just the first section of the book—answers to questions 1-33. The second section which comprised twenty more questions and answers was sent in the middle of August.<sup>2</sup> The respondents were then asked to reply by the middle of September.

The few responses that arrived throughout the fall of 1956 varied in length and depth. None came from outside of North America, though many copies were sent overseas. Neither did any local or union conference administrator from North America respond. Among the few that did arrive, all significant responses that went beyond a page of superficial complementary remarks came from either the General Conference administration, the church’s theological seminary, or the Review and Herald Publishing

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<sup>1</sup>L. E. Froom to [Reviewers of *This We Believe*], 25 July 1956, TL, ADF 3773.06c, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>L. E. Froom to M. R. Thurber, 15 August 1956, TL, ADF 3773, LLU.

Association—all located within a block of the church’s headquarters in Washington, D.C.<sup>1</sup>

It must be noted at the outset that the significant reviews given by church workers all showed great appreciation for the book. Not one called for abandonment of the project or complete overhaul of any section. Though some heavily criticized certain portions of the manuscript, they generally praised the book for what it set out to do—namely, to provide clear, understandable defense of Adventism in response to questions by evangelicals. Edward Heppenstall, a seminary professor, commended the writers of the manuscript for having done “an excellent job,” and deemed the manuscript to be “the best that has been so far” in stating Adventist belief to the world.<sup>2</sup> Merwin R. Thurber, book editor of the Review and Herald Publishing Association, likewise affirmed the manuscript and the conferences that preceded it: “I am heartily in favor of what is

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<sup>1</sup>Julia Neuffer to R. R. Figuhr, L. E. Froom, and Committee on “Answers to Questions,” 12 September 1956, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA; Merwin R. Thurber to R. R. Figuhr and L. E. Froom, 13 September 1956, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA; Edw. Heppenstall to R. R. Figuhr, 13 September 1956, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA; D. F. Neufeld and R. F. Cottrell to R. R. Figuhr and L. E. Froom, 14 September 1956, TL, ADF 3773.06c, LLU; Raymond F. Cottrell, “General Suggestion on *THIS WE BELIEVE*,” 1956, TMs, PC 6, box 858, GCA; Raymond F. Cottrell, “Suggestions on *This We Believe*,” 12 December 1956, TMs, PC 6, box 858, GCA; Siegfried H. Horn to A. V. Olson, 15 October 1956, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA; Richard Hammill to A. V. Olson, 22 October 1956, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA; W. R. Beach to M. R. Thurber, 27 March 1957, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA; W. R. Beach to M. R. Thurber, 16 April 1957, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA; Francis D. Nichol to R. R. Figuhr, 17 April 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3206, GCA; W. G. C. Murdoch to M. R. Thurber, 22 April 1957, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA; W. G. C. Murdoch, “Comments on the Document Setting Forth Our Teachings,” TMs, PC 6, box 858, GCA; R. A. Anderson to R. R. Figuhr, 20 June 1957, TL, ADF 3773, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>Edw. Heppenstall to R. R. Figuhr, 13 September 1956, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA.

being attempted. It seems clear that God is opening before us a wonderful opportunity.”<sup>1</sup> Though very critical about the manuscript and the way it was assembled, Raymond F. Cottrell, another editor at the Review and Herald Publishing Association, concurred with Thurber in stating that “God has used [the writers of the manuscript] providentially in their contacts with our non-Adventists friends, and has also led them in the preparation of this material.”<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, the reviewers raised some major concerns about the manuscript. Their reviews contained three major criticisms. First, several respondents urged greater reliance on Scripture and less on church history in some of the answers in the manuscript. They observed that in several sections, the writer (probably Froom) provided a parade of supporting quotations from renowned Christian authors while giving less than an adequate treatment of relevant biblical passages. Richard Hammill of the General Conference Department of Education pointed out that “there are perhaps too many references to commentaries and to books on the Bible.” He cautioned that Adventists “must not give the impression that [their] position is sound because [non-Adventist biblical scholars] hold it.”<sup>3</sup> Cottrell also noted that “the tendency to find many ‘eminent scholars’ who believe as [Adventists] do should be minimized.” “It gives the impression,” he continued, “that [Adventists] feel the need of their support.” “Eminent

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<sup>1</sup>Merwin R. Thurber to R. R. Figuhr and L. E. Froom, 13 September 1956, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>Raymond F. Cottrell, “Suggestions on *This We Believe*,” 12 December 1956, TMs, ADF 3773.06c, LLU.

<sup>3</sup>Richard Hammill to A. V. Olson, 22 October 1956, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA.

scholars,” he wrote, “don’t really amount to much when it comes to establishing a point of truth.” Then he wondered pointedly: “Are we trying to establish something that might be called ‘innocence by association’?”<sup>1</sup> Thurber also singled out this issue and cautioned Figuhr and Froom that the use of historical authorities was “a two-edged sword.” “We should be careful just what weight we give to historical precedent in our theology or Biblical [*sic*] interpretation,” he wrote perceptively. “The other side of the coin is that we have blamed our opponents for basing *their* views on historical precedents (rather than on the Bible, we imply), and point out that if they accept the teachings of certain men on one point they must perforce accept them on others.” “This,” he warned, “could be used *against us* with equal propriety.”<sup>2</sup> Therefore, “this document should make it clear throughout,” wrote Julia Neuffer, a copy editor at the Review and Herald Publishing Association, “that our teachings are based on Bible interpretation and fulfilled prophecy, and that we cite earlier writers only to show that we are not alone in our views.”<sup>3</sup> In addition, Cottrell suggested that biblical exposition on each issue be prominently presented first, followed by historical citations. He argued that this method of

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond F. Cottrell, “Suggestions on *This We Believe*,” 12 December 1956, TMs, PC 6, box 858, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>Merwin R. Thurber to R. R. Figuhr and L. E. Froom, 13 September 1956, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>Julia Neuffer to R. R. Figuhr, L. E. Froom, and Committee on “Answers to Questions,” 12 September 1956, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA.

presentation would correct the “proportionate imbalance” between Bible-based presentation and historical references contained in the manuscript.<sup>1</sup>

Second, in continuation of the above critique, some reviewers insisted that doctrines presented in the forthcoming book be established more firmly upon Scripture. Heppenstall observed that the manuscript as it stood contained some areas which “should receive much more critical investigation” as they left open “the possibility of doubt as to the Scriptural position.” He insisted that the doctrinal positions taken by Adventists be “unassailable and invulnerable as far as possible.” However, Heppenstall did not provide any specific examples where “the possibility of doubt” existed. He simply recommended that the editorial committee solicit a “most critical analysis” of the manuscript “in the form of a specific assignment” to individual theologians in the church.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, Cottrell took direct aim at the manuscript’s treatment of the investigative judgment. He felt that the manuscript did not adequately make a case for the doctrine from Scripture. Rather, he wrote that it attempted to “prove from the Bible something that can be established only from the Spirit of Prophecy [i.e., the writings of Ellen White].” In so doing, he feared that Adventists opened themselves to “severe and justified criticism.” “Should we not,” he implored, “set forth only what can be clearly established from the Bible, no more and no less?”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>D. F. Neufeld and R. F. Cottrell to R. R. Figuhr and L. E. Froom, 14 September 1956, TL, ADF 3773.06c, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>Edw. Heppenstall to R. R. Figuhr, 13 September 1956, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>Raymond F. Cottrell, “Suggestions on *This We Believe*,” 12 December 1956, TMs, PC 6, box 858, GCA.

Third, several reviewers showed a deep concern for definite positions taken by the manuscript which were not seen as being truly representative of Adventist thinking of the time. In his critique of the manuscript, Cottrell maintained that the forthcoming book “should be thoroughly representative, so that every Seventh-day Adventist minister will feel it to be a fair and honorable exposition of truth, and one which he can conscientiously defend, in whole and in part.” However, as he and Don Neufeld, another editor at the Review and Herald Publishing Association, pointed out, the manuscript clearly contained “statements to which respected [Adventist] ministers . . . would take exception.”<sup>1</sup> Alluding to Barnhouse’s and Martin’s branding of those who disagree with the doctrinal positions coming out of the General Conference as “fringe,” Cottrell gave the example of C. S. Longacre, a long-time seminary professor and religious liberty leader, who held semi-Arian views much like some of the nineteenth-century Adventist leaders, as one who would become “a ‘fringe’ Adventist on the deity of Christ.” Though himself a trinitarian, Cottrell found this consequence unacceptable and bade the editorial committee to “avoid everything that would lead [evangelicals] to brand [Longacre] or any other minister in good and regular standing thus, on this or any other topic.”<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the issue of Christ’s divinity, Cottrell pointed out the document’s presentations on Ellen White, “former Adventist belief,” and “Proselytizing [*sic*]” as issues about which the Adventist leaders were telling “only part of the truth as to what

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<sup>1</sup>D. F. Neufeld and R. F. Cottrell to R. R. Figuhr and L. E. Froom, 14 September 1956, TL.

<sup>2</sup>Raymond F. Cottrell, “Suggestions on *This We Believe*,” 12 December 1956, TMs, PC 6, box 858, GCA.

Adventists believe on these points.” He found the document to be downplaying Ellen White’s role in the Adventist church, presenting her more as a founder and charismatic leader and less as an inspired prophet. He also felt that the manuscript portrayed a distorted picture of doctrinal development in ways that tended to minimize or brush off dissenting views. In addition, he was uncomfortable with the document’s disavowal of proselytizing, which for the evangelicals meant that no further effort would be made by Adventists to convert other Protestants into their church. He then concluded that if the content of the manuscript was indeed the official, representative position of the Adventist church, “a large segment of [Adventist] ministry could be branded as the Adventist ‘lunatic fringe’ . . . on various topics,” which would be an undesirable consequence.<sup>1</sup>

Francis Nichol, editor of the *Review and Herald*, made a similar appraisal in his confidential letter to Figuhr: “It seems evident that some statements were early made to Martin and some typewritten forms of answers were given to him that many of us, on mature consideration are unable to support.” He feared that the Adventist conferees in the Adventist-evangelical conferences had “either not sensed as they should the full import of [the] most distinctive doctrinal differences with the world, or else [had] unwittingly succumbed to the temptation to blur differences in order to find a middle ground of fellowship.” He then posited that the latter may have been the case since it was indeed tempting to make “the matter of precise doctrinal statement secondary to

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

fellowship with some not of [the Adventist] faith,” as some had done in the past “without scarcely being aware of it.”<sup>1</sup>

Deeply troubled by these problems, several reviewers called for a more thorough process of evaluation and revision. Cottrell felt that the document, while possessing many commendable attributes, was “altogether inadequate” and indicated that “much remains to be done” for the document to become acceptable for public presentation.<sup>2</sup> To this end, Heppenstall insisted that the church should provide time “within its own ranks” for “wide enough study” in the areas of concern.<sup>3</sup> Hammill and Nichol echoed Cottrell and Heppenstall in stating that the General Conference “should avoid undue haste in getting it out in book form.”<sup>4</sup> Rather, it should evaluate “every statement in the final printed form” to “bridge the gap between those earlier statements [given to the evangelicals] and the printed answers” in the book.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Nichol suggested that galleys of the proposed book be sent to all the religion department chairs at Adventist colleges in North America, asking them specifically to carefully evaluate the document with their colleagues and to send a specific report directly to Figuhr. In addition, he asked that twelve to twenty hand-picked individuals, including “some retired ministers who have done outstanding theological work,” be commissioned with a “very definite and

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<sup>1</sup>Francis D. Nichol to R. R. Figuhr, 17 April 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3206, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>Raymond F. Cottrell, “Suggestions on *This We Believe*,” 12 December 1956, TMs, PC 6, box 858, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>Edw. Heppenstall to R. R. Figuhr, 13 September 1956, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA.

<sup>4</sup>Richard Hammill to A. V. Olson, 22 October 1956, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA.

<sup>5</sup>Francis D. Nichol to R. R. Figuhr, 17 April 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3206, GCA.



specific and significant” assignment to critique the galleys. Such a painstakingly thorough process was necessary, wrote Nichol, because many Adventists were “viewing with uncertainty this whole matter” and would “examine the book with a fine-tooth comb,” giving it “unusually critical attention.”<sup>1</sup> In stating thus, Nichol was echoing the words of Cottrell and Heppenstall who had already forewarned that the problems in this book could result in a major theological controversy within the church. “It will be very unfortunate,” Heppenstall had written ominously, “if after . . . publication, any position taken will be repudiated by a large section of the workers themselves,” leading to “widespread division” and “confusion within and without.”<sup>2</sup> Cottrell had also urged, “Let us be certain that nothing gets into the proposed book that will take us the next 50 years to live down.”<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, a detailed record of the proceedings of the editorial committee that received the solicited reactions to the *Questions on Doctrines* manuscript was not kept. What remains are just one-page or two-page minutes of some of the meetings. Letters exchanged among those involved in the preparation of the book in the one-year period between September 1956 and September 1957 do not reveal any indication that the criticisms made by such individuals as Cottrell, Heppenstall, Neufeld, Nichol, and Hammill made any significant impact on the content of the book. While the order of presentation was shuffled several times to its final format and the wording of the text was

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Edw. Heppenstall to R. R. Figuhr, 13 September 1956, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>Raymond F. Cottrell, “Suggestions on *This We Believe*,” 12 December 1956, TMs, PC 6, box 858, GCA.

subjected to several revisions by the editorial committee, the finalized text of *Questions on Doctrine* bore few indications that the solicited responses led to appreciable changes on substantive issues. For example, the final version of the book retained a plethora of references to Protestant writers (“eminent scholars” as Cottrell called them<sup>1</sup>) for support of various Adventist positions, though some biblical analyses were added during the editorial process.<sup>2</sup> The book also preserved essentially unchanged the materials on the divinity of Christ and the atonement that in-house critics had deep concerns about.

The letters exchanged between Adventist leaders do indicate, however, a fair degree of tension that arose between the three central participants of the Adventist-evangelical conferences—Froom, Read, and Anderson—and several others involved in the editorial process, though once again details cannot be fully ascertained. It appears that in the months leading up to the publication of the book, the three men fought hard to ensure the book’s favorable reception by Martin and Barnhouse as well as the evangelical world. Meanwhile, A. V. Olson, chair of the editorial committee, and several others in the General Conference were wary of making the book too palatable for evangelicals, thereby misrepresenting Adventism and opening the book and the church to internal and external criticisms.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 83-86, 123-128, 131-134, 144, 145, 171-174, 179-181, 198-201, 309-316, 391-395, 413-415, 425, 433-435, 440, 521, 524-526, 567-609. A comparison of a pre-publication manuscript of *Questions on Doctrine* from 1956 to the final, published text of the book reveals that more biblical materials were added to various sections, though essentially all of the references to biblical exegetes and historians were retained. See “Replies to a Group of Inquiries Concerning S.D.A. Theology, Parts I and II,” [August 1956], TMs, pre-publication manuscript of *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, AU.

The tension between the two sides revolved around three issues—Ellen White, the remnant, and the book’s “official” standing within Adventism. The struggle over White dealt with how her prophetic status within the church would be addressed. Around New Year’s Day 1957, Anderson expressed a deep concern over the editorial committee’s handling of a particular quote from White. In the original manuscript as Anderson had written it, White’s denial of claiming to be a prophetess (“To claim to be a prophetess is something that I have never done. . . . But my work has covered so many lines that I can not call myself other than a messenger, sent to bear a message from the Lord.”<sup>1</sup>) was quoted from the July 26, 1906, issue of the *Review and Herald* without providing or explaining the literary context from which the statement was taken. But the editorial committee felt that this statement was quoted in a way that could lead to misrepresentation of her ministry. Thus it decided to eliminate the statement.<sup>2</sup> But when Anderson saw the revised version, it gave him “cause for real anxiety” not only for the chapter but “for the whole project” since, in his mind, the deleted statement was instrumental in Martin’s acceptance of Adventism as Christian. “That positive forthright sentence as it appears in the original [manuscript],” he wrote Olson, “has done more to clarify our position on the Spirit of prophecy [*sic*], and silence our enemies, than all the books we have ever written on the subject.”<sup>3</sup> This confrontation was ultimately resolved

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, “A Messenger,” *Review and Herald*, 26 July 1906, 8.

<sup>2</sup>A. V. Olson to R. R. Figuhr, 2 January 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3205, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>R. Allan Anderson to A. V. Olson, 1 January 1957, TL, C 152, box 2, fld 12, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

by the inclusion of the deleted statement as well as several more sentences in its context that explained why White did not claim to be a prophet.<sup>1</sup>

The second source of tension centered on the chapter on the remnant. Froom, Anderson, and Read were in agreement with one another that using the phrase “the remnant church” to refer to the Seventh-day Adventist Church would be counterproductive in dialoguing with evangelicals. Rather, they had concluded that the term “the remnant people” would be a less offensive and more biblical term to use in communicating to evangelicals. But, according to Read, Olson “rather insisted on the use of the word ‘church’” as the editorial committee got to work.<sup>2</sup> This led Anderson to do a re-write of the chapter, which then was met with Figuhr’s objection since he saw Anderson’s re-written copy as a significant departure from the language that the manuscript preparation committee had voted on.<sup>3</sup> Apparently, in the next three months, Figuhr and Anderson came to a mutually agreeable text for this chapter which left “the remnant church” out. As Anderson wrote Figuhr, “the wording which you and I are suggesting to the brethren, which I think is a very big improvement, gets around the problem [of the “Seventh-day Adventist Church” as “the remnant church”] very well . . . .” Then to reiterate the importance of avoiding the term, Anderson reported a conversation he had had with Martin in which the latter warned, ““if that expression is left like it is, to a great many people it will vitiate the whole attempt that we have made,

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<sup>1</sup>See *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 92.

<sup>2</sup>W. E. Read to R. R. Figuhr, 29 January 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3206, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>R. R. Figuhr to R. A. Anderson, 26 March 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3205, GCA.

because these bitter enemies of yours and mine will fasten hold on these half-a-dozen words and make such capital of them that it will blind their eyes to the great objective of these answers.”<sup>1</sup> In the end, the published text declared: “We believe that the prophecy of Revelation 12:17 points to the experience and work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but we do *not* believe that we *alone* constitute the true children of God—that we are the only true Christians—on earth today.”<sup>2</sup> Using neither “the remnant church” nor “the remnant people,” the chapter simply opted for “the remnant.” In one instance where “the remnant church” was used, the authors qualified the phrase as an example of “Adventist language.”<sup>3</sup>

The third area of conflict revolved around how the book would be presented to the public. As the introduction to the book was being written in the final phase of the editorial committee’s work, the three leaders pushed to give a strong indication that the content of the book was truly representative of Adventism. This was particularly important for Martin since he needed a document that he could objectively refer to in his defense of Adventism as a Christian church. But some Adventist leaders expressed concern in portraying the book as an “official” document.<sup>4</sup> On one hand, the book was already generating criticisms from within. On the other hand, no document could be

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<sup>1</sup>R. Allan Anderson to R. R. Figuhr, 20 June 1957, TL, ADF 3773, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 187.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 191.

<sup>4</sup>R. R. Figuhr to A. V. Olson, 4 May 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3738, GCA; A. V. Olson to Merwin R. Thurber, 6 May 1957, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA; A. V. Olson to R. R. Figuhr, 10 May 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3738, GCA.

pronounced as official without a formal vote by the General Conference in session. Thus, the initial text of the introduction gave the appearance, at least in Anderson's mind, that the book may "not necessarily represent the actual beliefs" of Adventism. This led Anderson—after consulting with Martin—to propose a stronger language that would vouch for the book's representative nature. This push resulted in the inclusion of the phrases "these answers represent the position of our denomination"<sup>1</sup> and "this volume can be viewed as truly representative"<sup>2</sup> in the introduction to the book, signaling another victory for Froom, Read, and Anderson.<sup>3</sup>

Though the writers and editors of *Questions on Doctrine* ultimately found solutions to the struggles over the language and tone of the final text, the push by Froom, Read, and Anderson for a more friendly text toward evangelicals disturbed even Figuhr who had been very supportive of the book and the dialogues that led up to it. Figuhr, in a letter to Olson, expressed being "rather perturbed" that the three men "were putting on pressure to liberalize" the document further.<sup>4</sup> He became concerned that as a result of the "pressure" the book might be perceived as an effort of pandering to the evangelicals.

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<sup>1</sup>*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 8.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>3</sup>R. Allan Anderson to A. V. Olson, 1 May 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3738, GCA. For background to this episode, see also R. R. Figuhr to A. V. Olson, 4 May 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3738, GCA; A. V. Olson to Merwin R. Thurber, 6 May 1957, TL, PC 6, box 858, GCA, GCArch; R. R. Figuhr to J. I. Robison, 8 May 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3206, GCA; J. I. Robison to R. R. Figuhr, 10 May 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3206, GCA; A. V. Olson to R. R. Figuhr, 10 May 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3738, GCA.

<sup>4</sup>R. R. Figuhr to A. V. Olson, 4 May 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3738, GCA. See also R. R. Figuhr to J. I. Robison, 8 May 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3206, GCA.

“While we want to make things as easy as possible for Martin,” he wrote, “we do not want the idea to prevail that we have written the introduction, etc., largely to please him.”<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, upon receiving the report that Read, Anderson, and J. I. Robison (an associate secretary of the General Conference) would serve as the committee to oversee the publicizing efforts for *Questions on Doctrine*, Figuhr wrote Robison from Oslo, Norway, wondering “how wise it was to appoint the other two.” “Not that they are not both excellent men,” he wrote, “but they have been so close to the whole matter and emphasize a certain aspect of the subject that . . . they may not be able to see the viewpoint of men in the field as well as some in the G[eneral] C[onference].” Then he suggested that “a couple of more men” join the committee “who are not quite as enthusiastic as the two mentioned.”<sup>2</sup>

Though Figuhr’s confidential letters to Olson and Robison were not available to the three men, Anderson and Read were not unmindful of the perception that they were too eager to please the evangelicals. In his June 20, 1957, letter to Figuhr, Anderson assured him that he did not want to “soft-pedal the truth” and that he believed that God had given Adventists “a very definite message.” He explained that all he wanted was to prevent “even one expression which, if it had been worded a little differently, would have conveyed the same meaning but would not have created unnecessary difficulty” for Adventists.<sup>3</sup> Three months later, just after *Questions on Doctrine* was completed, Read

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Figuhr to A. V. Olson, 4 May 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3738, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Figuhr to J. I. Robison, 8 May 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3206, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>R. Allan Anderson to R. R. Figuhr, 20 June 1957, TL, ADF 3773, LLU.

also wrote a letter to Figuhr, clarifying his intentions. Citing the “fear” that some Adventists felt of “being ‘one’ with other Christian communities” as a result of the Adventist-evangelical dialogues and *Questions on Doctrine*, Read wrote, “Brother Figuhr, I want it known very definitely that so far as I am concerned I would be against any such move on principle. We cannot unite with any group of churches, National Council [of Churches] or [National Association of] Evangelicals.” Referring to the charge that the three men had compromised and had weakened the witness of Adventism, he declared, “I want it known, Brother Figuhr, that so far as our small group is concerned who made the original contacts, this is not true. . . . I love this message too much to compromise.” “I want to take opportunity to reaffirm my own confidence in this wonderful message,” he continued. “Brother Figuhr, this is my life; I have nothing else to live for.”<sup>1</sup>

Though questions on doctrinal integrity and arguments over wording complicated the progress of the editorial work, the publication of the book in early September 1957 brought closure to the internal debate that had swirled about the General Conference for the previous year. However, the intensity of this debate paled in comparison to a much greater controversy stirred up by M. L. Andreasen.

### **Reactions by M. L. Andreasen and His Interactions with Church Leaders**

In 1956 Milian Lauritz Andreasen was six years into retirement from a half century of denominational work as a local conference president, professor and president

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<sup>1</sup>W. E. Read to R. R. Figuhr, 12 September 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3206, GCA.



at the church's colleges and seminary, and finally a field secretary of the General Conference.<sup>1</sup> He had written extensively on the doctrine of the sanctuary, especially in *The Sanctuary Service*<sup>2</sup> and *The Book of Hebrews*.<sup>3</sup>

When he first read Barnhouse's September 1956 article on Adventism, the eighty-year-old retired theologian was living in Glendale, California, and serving part-time as a ministerial secretary at the Southern California Conference.<sup>4</sup> According to his wife, Gladys, who was interviewed by Virginia Steinweg, Andreasen was immediately troubled by what he read in Barnhouse's article. His concerns centered on Barnhouse's claims that not only were Adventists denying doctrinal positions attributed to them previously, but also were said to be in the course of changing some of their teachings. Andreasen was particularly distressed to read Barnhouse's characterization of the investigative judgment

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<sup>1</sup>For a more complete biographical sketch of Andreasen, see *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1996 ed., s.v. "Andreasen, Milian Lauritz (1876-1962)." Some autobiographical accounts of selected portions of his life can be found in Document File 961, EGWE, and the M. L. Andreasen Collection (C 115), AU. For a book-length biography, see Steinweg, *Without Fear or Favor*. Selected aspects of his theology have been explored in Roy Adams, *The Sanctuary Doctrine: Three Approaches in the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, vol. 1 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981), 165-235; Dwight Eric Haynes, "The Final Generation: A Descriptive Account of the Development of a Significant Aspect of M. L. Andreasen's Eschatology as Related to His Treatment of the Sanctuary Doctrine between 1924-1937" (M.A. thesis, Andrews University, 1989); Jerry Moon, "M. L. Andreasen, L. E. Froom, and the Controversy over *Questions on Doctrine*" (term paper, Andrews University, 1988).

<sup>2</sup>Andreasen, *The Sanctuary Service*.

<sup>3</sup>Andreasen, *The Book of Hebrews*.

<sup>4</sup>Andreasen served as the ministerial secretary of the Southern California Conference for two years until May 31, 1957. See R. R. Bietz to R. R. Figuhr, 2 December 1957, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

and Christ's post-1844 heavenly sanctuary service as merely an application of Christ's completed atonement on the cross. If this was indeed what Barnhouse had heard from the General Conference leadership, it seemed to be a significant departure from historic Adventism, which had placed a great emphasis on Christ's post-1844 heavenly sanctuary service and considered this ministry as the final phase of Christ's atoning work for humanity.<sup>1</sup> Andreasen was further disturbed by Barnhouse's declaration that those who opposed the "new position" taken by Adventist leaders belonged to the "'lunatic fringe,'" were among the "wild-eyed irresponsibles," and that the Adventist leadership was ready to curb divergent views within the church.<sup>2</sup> According to Steinweg, this latter statement seemed to Andreasen "like a return to the days of the Inquisition" and led him to consider "a call to take up sentinel duty" to protect what he believed to be historic Adventist orthodoxy.<sup>3</sup>

What actually prompted Andreasen to voice his concerns, however, was not the articles in *Eternity* and *Our Hope* in which Martin made some troubling assertions about Adventist theology. It was Froom's February 1957 article in *Ministry* entitled "The Priestly Application of the Atoning Act."<sup>4</sup> This piece was part of a long line of articles appearing in *Ministry* that were to set the stage for the publication of *Questions on*

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<sup>1</sup>Steinweg, *Without Fear or Favor*, 166-170.

<sup>2</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, "Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians? A New Look at Seventh-day Adventism," *Eternity*, September 1956, 6.

<sup>3</sup>Steinweg, *Without Fear or Favor*, 170.

<sup>4</sup>Leroy Edwin Froom, "The Priestly Application of the Atoning Act," *Ministry*, February 1957, 9-12, 44.

*Doctrine*. Penned and compiled mostly by Froom and Anderson, these articles provided the first public glimpse into the thinking of the Adventist leaders who participated and supported the Adventist-evangelical conferences.

This particular article by Froom was designed to accompany a compilation from White's writings on Christ's heavenly sanctuary ministry entitled "High Priestly Application of Atoning Sacrifice." The first half of the compilation was published in February and the second in March.<sup>1</sup> In his February 1957 article, Froom stated that the atonement, as Adventists ought to understand it—could not be limited to Christ's death on the cross or the investigative judgment ministry in heaven. Rather, he wrote, "it clearly embraces both—one aspect being incomplete without the other, and each being the indispensable complement of the other." However, when he came to describing the cross event, Froom chose an expression that Andreasen would strongly object to. He wrote that Christ's death provided "a complete, perfect, and final atonement for man's sin" and "a completed act of atonement." On the other hand, Froom stated that Christ's atoning work on the cross was not enough; it would need to be "*applied by Christ our High Priest to, and appropriated by the individual recipient*" in the heavenly sanctuary. In a rather confusing choice of words, Froom indicated that this ministry of applying "a complete, perfect, and final atonement" was "the second imperative part of the one complete and all-inclusive atonement." He then advanced the view that both the cross and the investigative judgment constituted "a complete, effectual, applied atonement."

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<sup>1</sup>"Counsel from the Spirit of Prophecy: High Priestly Application of Atoning Sacrifice, Part I," *Ministry*, February 1957, 28-31, 36; "Counsel from the Spirit of Prophecy: High Priestly Application of Atoning Sacrifice, Part I," *Ministry*, March 1957, 36-38.

This, he wrote, was “the Adventist understanding of the atonement, confirmed and illuminated and clarified by the Spirit of Prophecy.”<sup>1</sup>

Upon reading this article Andreasen immediately wrote a five-page response on February 15 entitled “The Atonement,” in which he criticized Froom for harboring an “*appalling theology*” and masquerading it as Adventist doctrine. Andreasen’s central concern was that Froom was explaining the atonement in simplistic terms that poorly portrayed God’s work of atonement as Adventists understood it. “When we estimate the cost of salvation,” Andreasen wrote, “we must take in the cross, we must include Gethsemane, and also the ages of sorrow and agony since the inception of sin.” For him it was “in this whole program” that “1844 [and Christ’s heavenly sanctuary service thereafter] has its place.” “*But,*” he lamented, “*this place is not the one given it by the author.*” He felt that Froom had put the cross event and the post-1844 heavenly event “in juxtaposition and on the same basis” which resulted in a “*shallow and confused*” understanding of the atonement. In concluding the diatribe against Froom’s article, Andreasen expressed the deep apprehension that he felt toward the Adventist-evangelical conferences, the articles by Barnhouse and Martin, and the planned publication of *Questions on Doctrine*: “Adventists will not permit any man or group of men to make a ‘creed’ for them, and tell them what to believe. Too much is at stake. The present procedure is likely to bring results unlooked for. To some it looks like the Omega<sup>2</sup> so

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<sup>1</sup>Leroy Edwin Froom, “The Priestly Application of the Atoning Act,” *Ministry*, February 1957, 9, 10, 44. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>2</sup>The “Omega” is a reference to Ellen White’s prediction about the end-time apostasy to appear in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. See Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 197.

long foretold. Some of our brethren, in order to be considered orthodox, have compromised our position.”<sup>1</sup> In stating thus, Andreasen revealed that much more was at stake than the definition of the atonement or the propriety of publishing a theologically suspect article. Through this five-page invective, he was cautioning the entire denomination against rapprochement with evangelicals and the procedure through which he perceived the denominational leaders to be stamping out any divergent views that would place Adventism under a negative light before evangelicals.

To ensure that his message was registered with the highest echelon of denominational leadership, Andreasen penned a letter dated February 27 to Figuhr and attached a copy of his “Atonement” manuscript, with Froom and Anderson receiving carbon copies. In that letter, Andreasen expressed grave concerns for the forthcoming book. “I fear greatly for the contents of the book that is being published setting forth [Adventist] belief,” he wrote.<sup>2</sup>

Apparently, Andreasen had only heard of the pre-publication manuscript that was being circulated, but had not actually read it. Despite his contributions as a leading theologian of the church during the two decades prior to his retirement, he had not been one of some 250 who were invited to review the manuscript in September 1956. Though he was now in retirement, he had been one of the church’s leading theologians over the previous quarter-century. Especially if he had discovered that Milton Kern, a fellow

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “The Atonement,” 15 February 1957, TMs, WDF 961-b-1, AU. Emphases in the original.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 7 March 1957, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA. Unfortunately, I could not locate Andreasen’s February 27 letter to Figuhr. However, in his March 7 response, Figuhr quotes this statement from Andreasen’s letter.

retiree and former colleague at the General Conference, had received a copy of the manuscript with a solicitation for suggestions,<sup>1</sup> Andreasen would have been offended by the neglect. Some have suggested that Andreasen's wounded pride was one of the original contributing factors of his opposition to Froom's article and *Questions on Doctrine*.<sup>2</sup>

Still others have seen an additional reason for Andreasen's agitation in the history of an uneasy relationship between Froom and Andreasen. As the conflict between Andreasen and the denomination intensified, D. E. Venden, president of the Central California Conference, wrote Figuhr that he and others had "known for some time that [Andreasen] and Elder Froom, in the past at least, have not seen eye-to-eye on a few points and it seems that some of his thinking stems from his personal grievance that he has been carrying for a while."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>M. E. Kern to R. R. Figuhr, 24 January 1958, HL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>See A. L. White, "The Charge That the E. G. White Writings Are Being Changed—'Attempted Tampering,'" 6 August 1971, TMs, ADF 3773, LLU; Steinweg, *Without Fear or Favor*, 171-173; Raymond F. Cottrell, "*Questions on Doctrine: A Historical-Critical Evaluation*," 1991, TMs, fld 009589, AU; F. W. Schnepfer to R. R. Figuhr, 8 December 1957, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA. Andreasen may even have expressed his disappointment to H. O. Olson, an officer of the Southern California Conference, who received a visit from Andreasen on February 27. In his letter to A. V. Olson (relations unknown) written later that day, H. O. Olson wrote that Andreasen had shown him the letter and "The Atonement" intended for Figuhr, Froom, and Anderson, written that very day. Olson, knowing that A. V. Olson served as the chair of the editorial committee that was overseeing the completion of the "Questions" manuscript, asked, "why not let Eld. Andreasen read the manuscript before it is printed?"—a suggestion which was never heeded (H. O. Olson to A. V. Olson, 27 February 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3738, GCA).

<sup>3</sup>D. E. Venden to R. R. Figuhr, 7 January 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA. Remarks by Figuhr, F. W. Schnepfer, and Milton Kern agree with Venden's

Others have speculated yet another reason for Andreassen's opposition. In one of his letters during this period, Figuhr wrote that Andreassen's personality was such that "there is nothing that will satisfy him except to have his own way." Then he added, "This has been his life's history pretty steadily, I am told."<sup>1</sup> In another letter, he reported that many of Andreassen's students remembered him as "dictatorial, assertive and hard."<sup>2</sup> A close friend and long-time colleague of Andreassen, M. E. Kern, remarked to Figuhr that Andreassen had been "rather undiplomatic, to say the least," in the way he was writing about the atonement and commented parenthetically that lack of diplomacy was "a rather natural trait of his."<sup>3</sup> In another letter to Figuhr, Kern pointed out that Andreassen is "a little stubborn, and not so tolerant with those he feels are superficial."<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps fueled by these psychological and interpersonal factors, Andreassen assumed the worst about Froom's intent in writing the February 1957 *Ministry* article and about the content of the upcoming book, *Questions on Doctrine*. Already in September

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observation (R. R. Figuhr to D. E. Venden, 9 January 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA; F. W. Schnepfer and R. R. Figuhr, 8 December 1957, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA; M. E. Kern to R. R. Figuhr, 24 January 1958, HL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA).

<sup>1</sup>R. R. Figuhr to F. W. Schnepfer, 12 December 1957, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Figuhr to R. R. Bietz, 9 April 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>M. E. Kern to R. R. Figuhr, 24 January 1958, HL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>4</sup>M. E. Kern to R. R. Figuhr, 8 April 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA. In the same letter, Kern wrote of Andreassen's "dislike for self seeking and sham." This latter trait may have been a factor in the uneasy relationship that developed between Andreassen and Froom as the latter was known for aggressive promotion of his causes and his own accomplishments.

1956, he had become greatly alarmed by Barnhouse's article. In the following months, he had been deeply disturbed by various articles in *Ministry* written by the chief participants of the Adventist-evangelical dialogues. Now, the article by Froom in the February 1957 issue of *Ministry* convinced Andreasen that something was theologically amiss at the General Conference headquarters. Having arrived at this conclusion, he could not be assuaged by either the promise of Figuhr that he would discuss the issues raised by the elder theologian with other leaders or the assurance by Figuhr that Andreasen need not "fear for what will appear in the book" since it was "being carefully gone over by a group of capable men in whom we may have the utmost confidence."<sup>1</sup>

In his response, Andreasen took exception to the latter statement, stating that "confidence is not enough" in the case of giving adequate treatment to the topic of the atonement. Since "there is no more important or involved subject than the atonement," he insisted that "years of intensive study" of Ellen White's writings with "free and unhindered access to *all* that has been written" as well as appropriate "training and experience" would be necessary to do the doctrine justice. Froom, in Andreasen's estimation, had not had adequate study, training, or experience.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, because he found Froom's article to present a grossly distorted view of the 1844 event and Christ's heavenly ministry thereafter, Andreasen had deep concerns that the proposed book would not only fail to represent the traditional Adventist belief on the atonement, but more importantly signal "a radical departure from the faith" which

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 7 March 1957, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 11 March 1957, TL, ADF 3773.06d, LLU.



Adventists had held for over a century. “If the book is published,” he warned, “there will be repercussions to the ends of the earth that the foundations are being removed.” As such, he wrote Figuhr, “I hereby lodge my protest against publication at this time of any doctrine of the atonement, and wish my protest to be duly recorded.”<sup>1</sup>

Andreasen’s protest was indeed noted by Froom in his March 27 response to the retired theologian. After expressing “a distinct shock” at Andreasen’s disregard for “common courtesy and Christian ethics” in sending a letter of complaint to Figuhr and Anderson without addressing him directly, Froom charged that Andreasen had “totally misread and misunderstood” his article. He then ended his letter on a characteristically Froomesque rebuttal by appealing to the number of his supporters: “Men, just as experienced and well trained, and as scholarly as you, do not draw your conclusions. . . . Scores of our scholarly men have told me of their gratitude for bringing these statements together in systematic form. . . . I fear that I could not discard their views in lieu of yours.”<sup>2</sup>

Andreasen’s response to Froom’s caustic letter came almost immediately in an equally acerbic tone. First, he defended his letters to Figuhr and Anderson, stating that he was responding to “a public defamation” of denominational leadership. Froom had pointed out in his *Ministry* article that Adventist leaders had taken neither the time nor the interest to fully study the atonement. Far from being unethical, Andreasen retorted, it was his “duty” to write directly to “the editor [R. A. Anderson] who published the article in

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>L. E. Froom to M. L. Andreasen, 27 March 1957, TL, ADF 3773.06d, LLU.

question” and to “the president of the denomination to which [Froom had] done irreparable harm. . . .” As such, sending a private letter “would be the ideal way to hush up the matter and would be entirely inadequate.”<sup>1</sup>

Moving on to the issue at hand, Andreasen insisted that he had neither misread nor misunderstood Froom’s article. “I fully understand what you wrote,” he maintained. And what Froom wrote, for Andreasen, could not be representative of Adventism or Ellen White. Decrying Froom’s assumption of “the role of speaking pontifically for the denomination,” he queried, with a burst of sarcasm: “May we expect other pronouncements from you in regard to other matters, or will we be permitted to settle some questions without your aid. May I ask, who gave you authority to pronounce on doctrine?” If the forthcoming book is to contain what Froom claimed to be the Adventist view of the atonement, Andreasen threatened, “I shall feel compelled to protest with pen and voice to the limit of my ability.” “And remember,” he intoned, “there are yet seven thousand in Israel that have not bowed their knees to Baal, nor gone with the ark to Ekron, nor seeking counsel or advice there.”<sup>2</sup>

So began Andreasen’s campaign to invalidate the view of atonement presented in Froom’s February 27 *Ministry* article, to prevent the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*, and—after the release of the book—to protest what he viewed to be apostasy and heresy proclaimed in it and other recently published writings from denominational headquarters. However, he was not alone in being concerned with Froom’s article. A. V.

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen to L. E. Froom, 2 April 1957, TL, ADF 3773.06d, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Olson, in his reply to H. O. Olson, the pastor in southern California who had asked the chair of the *Questions on Doctrine* editorial committee to read Andreasen's "Atonement" document, agreed with some of Andreasen's sentiments regarding Froom's article: "There is no question but that [Andreasen] is right in feeling that Brother Froom has made some mistakes. I personally feel that things have gotten into print that should not have appeared. The tendency on the part of many is to rush into print; it would be far better to wait and give time for things to mature." In further agreement with Andreasen, Olson implied that Froom had confused his own conclusions with the denominational position: "When men attempt to speak for the denomination they should know that they are expressing the views of the denomination rather than their own personal views and opinions."<sup>1</sup> Even Figuhr, after Andreasen's agitation became more intense, felt that "it would have been better if that article of Brother Froom's had not appeared in *The Ministry*. . . ."<sup>2</sup> Clearly, there were some who shared the substance of Andreasen's concerns and also wondered if the church ought to proceed with the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*. However, Andreasen saw the book as patently un-Adventist—a sentiment which led to a single-handed battle against the hierarchy of the church.

The next phase in Andreasen's campaign opened in June 1957 when he sought to alert Figuhr of a "dastardly attempt to tamper with" the writings of Ellen White on the part of Anderson and Read—the other two main participants of the Adventist-evangelical dialogues. Anderson and Read had met with the Ellen G. White Estate Board of Trustees

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<sup>1</sup>A. V. Olson to H. O. Olson, 5 March 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3738, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Figuhr to F. W. Schnepper, 23 December 1957, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

on May 1, 1957, to propose explanatory notes in the form of footnotes or appendices to be added to selected parts of White's writings in which she describes the atoning work of Christ continuing in heaven. As these expressions could be interpreted by evangelicals as negating Christ's "finished work on the cross," these insertions would clarify "very largely in the words of Ellen White the [Adventist] understanding of the various phases of the atoning work of Christ."<sup>1</sup> When Andreasen heard of this meeting and confirmed it by borrowing Milton Kern's copy of the board minutes,<sup>2</sup> it was just the type of evidence that confirmed his suspicion that the General Conference leaders—Froom, Read, and Anderson in particular—were taking the denomination toward error and apostasy. His indignation over this matter is clearly visible in his letter to Figuhr written on June 21. For him, the proposal by Anderson and Read was a clear attempt at doctoring White's writings to make them agree with the three men's evangelical-leaning view of the atonement and to show evangelicals that Adventism and Ellen White were indeed "orthodox." The two men must be "rebuked and removed from office," he charged, for they had committed the sin of "conspiracy against God and His people."<sup>3</sup>

Two weeks later, Andreasen further charged that Read, Anderson, and the unidentified "group" that sent them to the White Estate Board had fallen to "the greatest

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Ellen G. White Estate, 1, 2 May 1957, EGWE.

<sup>2</sup>M. E. Kern to R. R. Figuhr, 22 January 1958, HL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA. Kern stated that he showed Andreasen the minutes at the latter's request at a camp meeting in June 1957. Kern apologized to Figuhr for showing Andreasen the minutes which led to a diatribe against the General Conference.

<sup>3</sup>M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 21 June 1957, TL, ADF 3773.06d, LLU.

apostacy [*sic*]” ever confronted by the Adventist church. He saw this as a systematic effort to undermine not only the integrity of White’s writings, but more crucially the sanctuary doctrine as Adventists had believed it for more than a century. All this is happening, he lamented, “because two outside men ridiculed the doctrine of the investigative judgment, and [General Conference leaders] lost their heads in trying to make them think [Adventists] are orthodox in all matters, and felt safe in reconstructing Sr. White that [the Adventist church] might be recognized, accepted of the churches.” If Figuhr would take any of these charges seriously, Andreasen appealed to the General Conference president, he would “see to it that the proposed book is *not* published.” Otherwise, “it will be fatal,” he warned, for the faithful “will rise up in revolt when they find out what has been done, unless vigorous action is taken by the authorities concerned.”<sup>1</sup>

To Andreasen’s dismay, Figuhr and others at denominational headquarters were unmoved by Andreasen’s passionate plea. “Certainly,” wrote Figuhr in response, “there is no intention here whatever to tamper with the writings of Sister White.” Then, referring to Andreasen’s call to halt the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*, Figuhr reminded him that the book was not simply the work of Froom, Read, and Anderson, but “the product of a large group of men.” As such, he implied that it indeed was representative of contemporary Adventist belief.<sup>2</sup> Then, on July 11, J. I. Robison responded to Andreasen on behalf of Figuhr, indicating that the proposal by Read and

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 4 July 1957, TL, ADF 3773.06d, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 26 June 1957, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

Anderson to add explanatory notes to White's writings was voted down by the White Estate Board. He assured Andreasen that there is no attempt "to meddle with Sister White's writings, for it is not for us to interpret them." Moreover, he vouched for the doctrinal integrity of *Questions on Doctrine* and attested that the manuscript preparation committee had "endeavored to the fullest extent to express [Adventist] doctrines in full accord with the teachings in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy." Therefore, he urged Andreasen not to be "unduly disturbed and feel without justification that [the General Conference leaders] are tampering with the teachings of the denomination over the years."<sup>1</sup>

The assurances that Figuhr and Robison gave were of no avail as Andreasen, "after long and prayerful mediation [*sic*]," composed a letter on September 11, 1957, addressed to all the members of the General Conference Executive Committee to inform and warn them of the "proposed changes in [Adventist] faith and doctrine as revealed in the minutes of the Board of Trustees of the White Estate for May 1, 1957. . . ."

Andreasen's primary evidences for the "proposed changes," which he described as "the greatest apostasy this denomination has ever experienced," were the White Estate Board minutes and Froom's February 1957 article in *Ministry*. He charged that these two documents were part of a larger conspiracy to undermine "under cover" the foundations of Adventist faith. Since he considered "previous efforts to solicit [the] interest of the president of the General Conference" to have failed, Andreasen appealed to the executive committee that "this be made the first business at the coming Autumn Council; and that

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<sup>1</sup>J. I. Robison to M. L. Andreasen, 11 July 1957, TL, ADF 3773.06d, LLU.

. . . a hearing be held [to investigate the individuals involved] and proper discipline be administered if guilt is found.” While he predicted that he would receive the response that “such a hearing is impossible,” he exclaimed that “denominational existence was at stake” and that failure to act upon this problem would be “criminal and soul destructive.”<sup>1</sup>

Though he had addressed the letter to the General Conference Executive Committee, it was not Andreasen’s intention to send the letter to them—at least, not immediately. It was actually intended for one person only, i.e., Figuhr. Andreasen’s letter to Figuhr written and sent the following day, with the letter to the executive committee enclosed, reveals that he wanted to use the previous day’s letter as an attention getter. He warned that he would send the letter to “about 50 persons the first week in October,” unless Figuhr agreed to “consider that matter at or before the Autumn Council” scheduled for late October. “I am afraid that you have not considered the seriousness of the matter,” he wrote. He forecasted “a wholesale defection from the faith” if nothing is done to remedy this situation. If Figuhr would not acquiesce to his demands, Andreasen said he would “appeal to the [General] Conference in session,” which was to meet the following year.<sup>2</sup>

Faced with such a threat, Figuhr broke away from the cordial, diplomatic tone of earlier letters to issue essentially a “cease-and-desist” letter. “*I have considered the matter to which you referred as closed,*” he declared resolutely in his letter of September 18. He chided Andreasen that it was he who was bringing harm to the church: “What I do

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen to [General Conference Executive Committee], 11 September 1957, TL, ADF 3773.06d, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 12 September 1957, TL, ADF 3773.06d, LLU.

object to and what does harm to the work is insistence on the promulgation of one's personal views and stubbornly insisting on carrying on promotion [of those views], contrary to the counsel of the church." He assured Andreasen once again that no change had been attempted or made to White's writings, that Read and Anderson had acted properly in consultation with their colleagues, and that the two men were loyal to the teachings of the church and to Ellen White. Thus, he asked Andreasen to understand the viewpoint of the church leaders and "feel assured that no one is attempting to tear down [Adventist] standards or beliefs"—a claim Andreasen found difficult to accept.<sup>1</sup>

It seems that Andreasen's initial reactions were largely based on the perception that the leaders of the church were changing historic teachings of the church surreptitiously. What triggered this perception were statements by Barnhouse and Martin who declared that Adventism in the 1950s had undergone and was experiencing a theological shift. That meant compromise and apostasy for the elder theologian who had spent a good part of his career upholding what he believed to be historic Adventism. The perception of theological compromise was heightened after Froom's February 1957 *Ministry* article and after Anderson and Read's proposal to the White Estate board came to light. Central to Andreasen's sense of urgency was what he saw as an attack on the Adventist understanding of the atonement. In fact, as of September 1957, his concern was limited to preserving the place of the investigative judgment within the atonement process and his audience was limited to Figuhr and selected leaders of the church, including Froom and Anderson, whom he believed were misleading the church.

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 18 September 1957, TL, ADF 3773.06d, LLU.



However, when it appeared that his calls for theological alarm were being muted, Andreasen would go on to take the next step of bringing the matter to a much wider circle of leaders and then to the general church membership in North America.

### Post-Publication Reactions

Although the pre-publication manuscript of *Questions on Doctrine* had yielded some serious reservations on the part of several church leaders and vociferous opposition by M. L. Andreasen, the General Conference went ahead with its plan to publish the book. Once the book was released, it was generally well-received throughout the church. Articles in denominational periodicals and correspondences among church leaders show the book as quickly becoming popular among Adventists. As was intended, it became the book of choice for sharing Adventism with evangelicals. The popularity of the book, however, did not deter M. L. Andreasen from waging a larger scale war against it. He even developed a following among the few Adventists who shared his views on the book.

### Initial Reports in Church Publications

Though the book was printed in early September 1957 and released to the public in November, the Adventist church's main periodicals were surprisingly tardy in their responses to *Questions on Doctrine*. In fact, no reference of any kind to the book can be found in the *Review and Herald*, *Ministry*, and *Signs of the Times* during the final months of 1957. Finally, in January 1958 Figuhr made an announcement of the publication in *Ministry*. Mindful of Andreasen's criticism that the book did not adequately represent Adventist theology, the General Conference president declared in an article that "probably no other book published by this denomination has been so carefully read by so

large a group of responsible men of the denomination before its publication. . . .” Still, he reported, “there was . . . a remarkable chorus of approval.”<sup>1</sup>

In the same month, Figuhr made the first announcement of the book’s publication in the *Review and Herald* in its January 23, 1958, issue. Figuhr reported on the enthusiastic reception the book was receiving from various sectors of the church, quoting from two conference presidents, a pastor, and a science teacher. Then he concluded the report with the same assertions that he gave in *Ministry*: “The contents of this book have probably been more carefully and widely read, before printing, than any other volume we have every produced. . . . It is therefore not the product of one or a few men but of many, and sets forth faithfully and clearly the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.”<sup>2</sup>

Also, in the same issue, the advertising for the book began in earnest, announcing the special low price of \$1.50. The full-page ad echoed Figuhr as it touted the book as having been “prepared by the General Conference by a group of our ablest scholars and approved by our leaders throughout the world—to clarify to the world the true evangelical nature of Adventist beliefs and teachings.”<sup>3</sup>

In his eager promotion of the book, however, Figuhr seems to have been guilty of overstating his case and misleading his readers. While it is true that the manuscript was widely distributed, documentary evidence and later testimonies from those involved in

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. F[iguhr], “Questions on Doctrine,” *Ministry*, January 1958, 29.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Figuhr, “Appreciation Expressed for New Books,” *Review and Herald*, 23 January 1958, 32.

<sup>3</sup>Advertisement for *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, *Review and Herald*, 23 January 1958, 30.

the publication of the book indicate that there was never a resounding and unanimous “chorus of approval.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the manuscript enjoyed unprecedented pre-publication dissemination, but as discussed above,<sup>2</sup> almost all of the meticulous reviews were conducted right at the General Conference headquarters. As such, contrary to Figuhr’s claim, it remained essentially the product of a few men.

In his March 1958 article in *Ministry* entitled “Unity of Adventist Belief,” Anderson, writing for the first time about *Questions on Doctrine* since its publication, added questionable claims to the already overstated promotion of the book. He asserted that “except for minor suggestions, no change whatsoever in content was called for” after the reviewers read the book’s manuscript. “When the reports came back,” he claimed proudly, “the unanimous and enthusiastic acceptance of the content of the manuscript gave remarkable testimony to the *unity of belief* that characterizes us as a people.”<sup>3</sup> As shown above,<sup>4</sup> the responses were far from unanimously laudatory and several reviewers had called for significant changes to the manuscript’s content. Anderson himself had struggled with Olson over content as the editorial process was being completed. But now Anderson characterized all the pre-publication concerns as “minor suggestions.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>See pp. 245-262 of the present study.

<sup>3</sup>R. A. Anderson, “Unity of Adventist Belief,” *Ministry*, March 1958, 28. Though he had written this article, Anderson had originally wanted it and the sequel appearing in the next month to be signed by Figuhr as “it would give a great deal more weight” (R. Allan Anderson to R. R. Figuhr, 24 January 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA). Apparently Figuhr chose not to accept Anderson’s suggestion.

<sup>4</sup>See pp. 247-262 of the present study.

<sup>5</sup>R. A. Anderson, “Unity of Adventist Belief,” *Ministry*, March 1958, 28.

In addition to promoting *Questions on Doctrine*, the second purpose of this article was to counter Andreasen's criticisms against the book. Without naming the retired theologian, Anderson mentioned that "a section of this book as well as certain statements in *The Ministry*, has evidently been misunderstood by a very few." But he dismissed this "misunderstanding" as resulting from a careless reading of the book. If they would read the book carefully, he claimed, they would see that the book is "in complete accord with the clearest statements of the Spirit of prophecy [*sic*]" on the atonement.<sup>1</sup> Thus, he continued in the second installment of the article, Adventists should not be concerned that doctrines "have been increasingly clarified" through such an endeavor as *Questions on Doctrine*. Rather than having "changed our beliefs," he assured his readers, "our denominational beliefs have crystallized [and] have become unified in our declared understanding of truth." Therefore, he urged his readers (and Andreasen and his followers), "whatever may have been our record in the past, this is no hour for a divided witness or a critical attitude."<sup>2</sup>

The charge that *Questions on Doctrine* represented a change in Adventist theology was also on Figuhr's mind as he wrote an article in the *Review* entitled "The Pillars of Our Faith Unmoved."<sup>3</sup> In this April 24, 1958, article, Figuhr found support for his thesis in an unlikely source—M. R. DeHaan. DeHaan, a long-time critic of Adventism, had

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 28, 29.

<sup>2</sup>R. A. A[nderson], "Unity of Adventist Belief—II: A Call to Action," *Ministry*, April 1958, 25.

<sup>3</sup>R. R. Figuhr, "The Pillars of Our Faith Unmoved," *Review and Herald*, 24 April 1958, 5, 6.

written a highly critical review of *Questions on Doctrine* in the March 1958 issue of *The King's Business*. In that review, DeHaan had concluded that “there had been no *essential* change in the historic stand of Adventists.” Hence, he argued that Adventism should be classified as a non-Christian cult as it had been for decades by evangelicals.<sup>1</sup> For Figuhr the review provided a strong support for his proclamation that Adventism remained unchanged after *Questions on Doctrine*. Contrary to the charges of the few who “have raised the cry of a ‘change of doctrine,’” he wrote, “We hasten to assure our people that there has been no compromise, no denial of the faith.” “Our teaching on the heavenly sanctuary and the atonement is as we have long preached it.”<sup>2</sup>

Two weeks later, Francis D. Nichol, the editor of the *Review*, weighed in and offered his review of *Questions on Doctrine*. In his May 8 editorial entitled “A New Day for Adventists,” the strong reservations that Nichol had about the book’s manuscript a year earlier were completely undetectable.<sup>3</sup> First, notwithstanding his earlier private protest that the book would be divisive, he lauded it as one which presents “most truly a consensus of Adventist thought.” Then, he acclaimed the tome as being unparalleled in its effectiveness in communicating Adventism to other Christians. “This book probably comes as near as we can presently hope to come,” he wrote, “in providing to the man who

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<sup>1</sup>M. R. DeHaan, Review of *Questions on Doctrine*, *The King's Business*, March 1958, 19.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Figuhr, “The Pillars of Our Faith Unmoved,” *Review and Herald*, 24 April 1958, 5, 6.

<sup>3</sup>See Francis D. Nichol to R. R. Figuhr, 17 April 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3206, GCA.

asks of us a reason for the hope that is within us.”<sup>1</sup> Whether Nichol had a change of heart regarding *Questions on Doctrine* between April 1957 and May 1958, or, as the editor of the church’s official organ, he was putting a positive spin on the book’s significance in spite of his deep concerns, it is not possible to know. But what is clear is the difference between Nichol’s position expressed in his April 1957 letter to Figuhr and that which was expressed thirteen months later in the *Review*.

In summary, reactions to *Questions on Doctrine* in Adventist publications came gradually and in a limited fashion. In fact, the reports about the book qualified more as announcements and defenses for it than critiques or reactions. Often, what the articles were really critiquing and reacting to was Andreasen’s opposition to the book. Perhaps out of fear that a public discussion involving the pros and cons of the book would upset the appearance of unanimous support that the General Conference leaders sought to project, only those who were involved with the production of the book were given voice in *Ministry* and the *Review and Herald*. They sang, as might have been expected, a chorus of praises for the book. So while a fiery debate was raging between Andreasen and the General Conference, the church’s official publications avoided a head-on debate on the issues, while emphasizing instead the credibility of the book as the denomination’s most representative work on its beliefs.

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<sup>1</sup>F. D. N[ichol], “A New Day for Adventists,” *Review and Herald*, 8 May 1958, 9, 10.

## Reactions by M. L. Andreasen and His Interactions with Church Leaders

Andreasen's initial protest against *Questions on Doctrine*

Although Figuhr had pronounced Andreasen's case closed, the elder theologian was far from finished with his protests. In fact, Figuhr's rejection of his pleas and the publication of *Questions on Doctrine* despite his appeals solidified Andreasen's resolve to use all his might to protest the book and its content. On October 15, as the annual Autumn Council of the General Conference was about to be convened in Washington, D.C., Andreasen issued a document entitled "A Review and a Protest."<sup>1</sup> This document did not contain any new arguments, but summarized and reiterated his objections to Froom's description of Christ's sacrifice on the cross as "a complete, perfect, and final atonement for man's sin."<sup>2</sup> Much of this document turned on Andreasen's visceral reaction to the last of Froom's three adjectives, i.e., "final," modifying the word "atonement."<sup>3</sup>

It seems that Andreasen saw this word purely as a reference to the place of the cross in the *chronology* of Christ's atoning work, but it could very well be taken as an expression of the decisive, irrevocable, and all-sufficient *quality* of the atonement provided on the cross. The ambiguous use of the word "final" may have been a case of a

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen, "A Review and a Protest," 15 October 1957, TMs, C 152, box 28, fld 8, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

<sup>2</sup>L. E. Froom, "The Priestly Application of the Atoning Act," *Ministry*, February 1957, 10.

<sup>3</sup>M. L. Andreasen, "A Review and a Protest," 15 October 1957, TMs, C 152, box 28, fld 8, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

deliberate double entendre on the part of Froom, a “seeming attempt to state a proposition in terms that would permit non-Adventists to conclude that [Adventists] are stating something different from what [they] actually believe,” as Neufeld and Cottrell pointed out concerning a pre-publication manuscript of *Questions on Doctrine*.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps in the interest of clarity, *Questions on Doctrine* omitted the use of the word “final” in its description of Christ’s work on the cross, though the other two adjectives were used in the book’s treatment of the cross and its place in God’s work of atonement. In that section, the book explained that Adventists held to “a wider concept of the atonement” which regarded Christ’s sacrifice as an all-sufficient act which “*provided*” the sacrificial atonement and Christ’s heavenly ministry in the end-time anti-typical Day of Atonement as an act through which the sacrificial atonement “is *applied* to the seeking soul.” Thus the authors of the book explained: “When, therefore, one hears an Adventist say, or reads in Adventist literature—even in the writings of Ellen G. White—that Christ is making atonement now, it should be understood that we mean simply that Christ is now *making application of the benefits of the sacrificial atonement He made on the cross*; that He is making it efficacious for us individually, according to our needs and requests.”<sup>2</sup>

*Questions on Doctrine* had nowhere indicated that Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary was not part of his atoning work. Rather, it gave a broad definition of

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<sup>1</sup>D. F. Neufeld and R. F. Cottrell to R. R. Figuhr and L. E. Froom, 14 September 1956, TL, ADF 3773.06c, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 348, 354, 355. Emphasis in the original.



the atonement which included that ministry in its post-1844, investigative judgment phase. However, Andreasen interpreted the book's description of the investigative judgment to be controlled by his misreading of Froom's statement in *Ministry*: "That is the tremendous scope of the sacrificial act of the cross—a complete, perfect, and final atonement for man's sin." What Froom had meant here was that the sacrificial aspect of the atonement was perfect and final, while in another portion of the article he stated clearly that the cross event is but one part of the ongoing atonement process.<sup>1</sup> Andreasen, however, did not read the statement in question as intended. His misreading is evident in the way he quoted the statement in the third of his "Atonement" letters: "The sacrificial act on the cross (is) a complete, perfect, and final atonement for man's sin"<sup>2</sup>—replacing the dash in the original with a parenthetical "is." Through this substitution and the manner in which he interpreted this reconstituted sentence, Andreasen showed that he understood Froom to be arguing for a completed atonement on the cross, not a completed sacrifice on the cross.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>L. E. Froom, "The Priestly Application of the Atoning Act," *Ministry*, February 1957, 10.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, quoted in M. L. Andreasen, "The Atonement," 4 November 1957, TMs, DF 961-b-1, EGWE.

<sup>3</sup>See Knight, "Historical and Theological Introduction to the Annotated Edition," xviii, xix. Knight provides a helpful analysis of the meaning of Froom's original statement and Andreasen's misreading of the statement. See also A. V. Olson, "The Priestly Application of the Atoning Act," *Ministry*, May 1961, 10, 11. In this article, Olson criticized Andreasen, though not by name, for "lifting the expression 'final atonement' out of its context" in Froom's February 1957 article and making an "absolutely unjustified" charge that Froom denied the High Priestly work of Christ in heaven.

However, having read Froom's article as endorsing the "completed atonement" view of the cross, Andreasen judged Froom—and by extension, *Questions on Doctrine*—as being dangerously out of line with the historic teaching of the church. In fact, he would state later that the February 1957 article was a "reprehensible" piece of work which "reveals some of the inner workings [of *Questions on Doctrine*], and is basic to an understand [*sic*] of *Questions*."<sup>1</sup> Thus, when Andreasen read in the book that Christ is now making application of the benefits of the sacrificial atonement, he understood it as denying the atoning value of Christ's ministry in heaven and denigrating it as mere "application" of the completed atonement which took place on the cross. This conclusion led him to exclaim: "If the sacrifice on the cross is complete, perfect, final, our doctrine of the sanctuary, of the investigative judgment, of the 2300 days, all will fall to the ground and also Sister White's leadership. This is the most subtle and dangerous error that I know of."<sup>2</sup> As his friend and former colleague, Milton Kern, observed, Andreasen's "shock over the Froom article" had impacted his thinking so strongly that, in Kern's view, it created "an unwarranted critical attitude toward the whole proposition of undertaking to answer the request of these protestant [*sic*] leaders. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen, "The Atonement," 4 November 1957, TMs, DF 961-b-1, EGWE.

<sup>2</sup>M. L. Andreasen, "A Review and a Protest," 15 October 1957, TMs, C 152, box 28, fld 8, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

<sup>3</sup>M. E. Kern to M. L. Andreasen, 7 April 1958, box 11355-11357, GCA.

Reactions by Andreasen in  
“The Atonement” series

Having now committed himself to a protest campaign “with pen and voice to the limit of [his] ability,”<sup>1</sup> Andreasen began issuing a series of manuscripts entitled “The Atonement,” following the title of his first manuscript of February 15 and numbered retroactively to that document. Between November 4, 1957, and March 13, 1958, he fired off seven more papers, striking each time at the section on the atonement in *Questions on Doctrine*. In fact, the only concern he had was with “the section on the Atonement” which he deemed “utterly unacceptable.” He insisted that it “be recalled.” As for the rest of the book, he actually commended it as containing “so many good things . . . that may be of real help to many.”<sup>2</sup> Even as he expanded and clarified his argument with heavy reliance on quotations from Ellen White, Andreasen’s central thesis remained the same—that the *final* atonement belonged to the post-1844 heavenly sanctuary ministry of Christ, not to his sacrifice on the cross.

However, Andreasen was not arguing that the atonement was taking place only in heaven since 1844. “The atonement,” he pointed out, “is not a single event but a *process*, reaching down through the ages, which will not be finished until time shall be no more.” Still, it was only “the last part of this process” which could be called “the ‘final’ atonement.”<sup>3</sup> He stated that the atonement process was “begun” on the cross, but its

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen to L. E. Froom, 2 April 1957, TL, ADF 3773.06d, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “The Atonement, [III],” 4 November 1957, DF 961-b-1, EGWE.

<sup>3</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “The Atonement, V,” 2 December 1957, DF 961-b-1, EGWE.

actual completion awaited the end of time.<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere, he wrote of “two phases of the atonement.” He argued that “the first phase of Christ’s atonement was that of a ‘suffering sacrifice.’” This phase began before the creation of the world and ended with Christ’s death. He further divided Christ’s work on earth into two sub-phases: “the first reaching from the baptism to Gethsemane, and the second embracing Gethsemane and the cross.” Andreasen’s second phase involved Christ’s work in the heavenly sanctuary, spanning from Christ’s ascension to the end of earth’s history. This phase was also divided into two sub-phases. The first part of this phase was Christ’s work of intercession on behalf of humanity since the time of his ascension. Then came the second part, or the time of “the final atonement,” which began in 1844. Andreasen gave a special emphasis on the latter segment because it was in this period that “the last generation” would rise and “make the demonstration that man can overcome [sin] as Christ overcame.” While he recognized that each phase with its subdivisions was “complete in itself and vital” and “bore heaven’s seal of perfection,” he asserted that none qualifies as “the final atonement” except “the work wrought out by Christ in the group of 144,000, who will reflect the image of Christ fully, and demonstrate that the work of Christ on earth—the perfection of a righteous Character [*sic*] that meets the approval of God—was not an experience that was possible only for Christ, but which can be obtained through the grace of God by men who have their sins forgiven and trust fully in the mighty power of God.” “*They*,” he exclaimed, “are the final demonstration of the power of God” and none other.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “The Atonement, VI,” 5 January 1958, DF 961-b-1, EGWE.

<sup>2</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “The Atonement, IX,” 13 March 1958, TMs, DF 961-b-1, EGWE. Andreasen’s presentation of the various phases of the atonement in this

Andreasen's affirmation that the atonement is a process and that each phase of the atonement is complete and perfect showed that his theology was not as different from Froom's as he claimed. Though he himself may not have recognized it, Andreasen reiterated in his own way what Froom had written in his controversial article of February 1957. In that article Froom explained that "the atonement is twofold—first a single, comprehensive act [on the cross], then a continuing process or work of application." Then he added, "it takes the two phases to have a complete, effectual, applied atonement." Though the two men were very different in the way they articulated the doctrine—with Froom emphasizing the first phase and Andreasen the second—their views were not mutually exclusive. Like Andreasen, Froom taught that "the 'atonement' is a comprehensive term"—divided into two major phases.<sup>1</sup> Like Froom, Andreasen taught that the "the atonement [was] not a single event but a *process*" that could be

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he suffered and died for the sins of the world, and the third phase as the period in which "Christ demonstrates that man can do what He did, with the same help He had." See Andreasen, *The Book of Hebrews*, 52-60. In this scheme, Andreasen had no phase set aside for the period between the cross and 1844. In that regard, his schematization in "Atonement, IX," composed ten years later, represents a more developed reflection on the subject. While Roy Adams, in his doctoral dissertation on the theology of M. L. Andreasen, Uriah Smith and A. F. Ballenger, stated that "perhaps in no other place did he outline his position on the atonement more clearly than in *Hebrews*" (Roy Adams, *The Sanctuary Doctrine*, 204), "The Atonement, IX," should be regarded as a place where, to borrow the controverted phrase from Froom, a more "complete, perfect, and final" presentation of Andreasen's position on the doctrine can be found. Perhaps this is why this ninth broadside on the atonement was chosen as one of the six documents in *Letters to the Churches*, a compilation of Andreasen's representative anti-*Questions on Doctrine* writings (Andreasen, *Letters to the Churches*). For another analysis of Andreasen's view on the atonement, see Moon, "M. L. Andreasen, L. E. Froom, and the Controversy over *Questions on Doctrine*," 44-45.

<sup>1</sup>L. E. Froom, "The Priestly Application of the Atoning Act," *Ministry*, February 1957, 10.

understood as having two major phases.<sup>1</sup> Kern put it well when he made the following observation on the theologies of Froom and Andreasen: “I believe that basically the brethren are all agreed on the same teaching, but one has neglected to emphasize a point on which the other feels most strongly.”<sup>2</sup> Froom, it appears, was so engrossed in his attempt to communicate the idea of the two phases of the atonement in a manner that would be acceptable to evangelicals that he may have diminished the importance of the investigative judgment phase. On the other hand, it seems that Andreasen was so disturbed by Froom’s use of the word “final” in reference to Christ’s atoning work on the cross that he saw everything connected to Froom as contaminated by his “erroneous” theology.

While their views on the atonement may have been closer than what Andreasen may have wanted to admit, it was actually their views on history that set them apart the most. This contrast can be seen in Froom’s own nine-part rebuttal to Andreasen’s “Atonement, [III],” of November 4, 1957. In response to Andreasen’s invocation of pioneers of the Adventist movement such as Uriah Smith and J. H. Waggoner as well as the 1872 “Fundamental Principles of the Seventh-day Adventists” statement as normative and representative evidences, Froom countered that Smith and Waggoner were “in the minority group of Arians” among the Adventist pioneers<sup>3</sup> and that the 1872 statement

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “The Atonement, V,” 2 December 1957, DF 961-b-1, EGWE.

<sup>2</sup>M. E. Kern to R. R. Figuhr, 24 January 1958, HL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>[Leroy Edwin Froom], “I. Uriah Smith’s Restricted View of the Atonement: Did Not Commence . . . till 1844,” [1957], TMs, C 152, box 9, fld 10, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU; idem, “II. J. H. Waggoner’s Position on the Atonement: Its Nature, Time,

(which Andreasen called the denomination's "first 'creed'") was neither authoritative nor official when it declared that the atonement, "so far from being made on the cross . . .[,] was but the offering of the sacrifice."<sup>1</sup> Froom argued that the 1931 "Fundamental Beliefs" statement, which expressly declared the death of Christ to be an "atoning sacrifice," represented a more mature and authoritative position of the church. He pointed out that the 1931 statement, unlike that of 1872, was authorized by the General Conference since it was included in the church's *Yearbook* and "permanently incorporated in the *Church Manual*."<sup>2</sup> Froom further defended *Questions on Doctrine* from Andreasen's charge that the book's presentation on the atonement was written under the influence of Martin to go "nearer to the orthodox views of the universal church," resulting in removal of an old Adventist landmark and denigration of Ellen White.<sup>3</sup> Froom repudiated these claims in three short installments by stating first that Andreasen's charges were "a figment of imagination, and wholly wrong historically." In writing *Questions on Doctrine*, Froom wrote, "We were setting forth our denominational position, not seeking approval or accommodating our position to others." He explained

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and Place," [1957], TMs, C 152, box 9, fld 10, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

<sup>1</sup>[Leroy Edwin Froom], "Historical Facts Concerning the Alleged 'Creed' of 1872," [1957], TMs, C 152, box 9, fld 10, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU; idem, "Contrasting Articles of '1872' and '1931,'" [1957], TMs, C 152, box 9, fld 10, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

<sup>2</sup>See [Leroy Edwin Froom], "Contrasting Articles of '1872' and '1931,'" [1957], TMs, C 152, box 9, fld 10, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU; idem, "VIII. Historical Background of 1931 'Fundamental Beliefs,'" [1957], TMs, C 152, box 9, fld 10, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

<sup>3</sup>M. L. Andreasen, "The Atonement, [III]," 4 November 1957, TMs, DF 961-b-1, EGWE.

that the committee that prepared the book first made “an assemblage of the complete testimony of the Spirit of prophecy [*sic*] . . . for consultation and guidance,” then wrote the section on the atonement. Thus, Froom certified, there was neither any attempt at moving Adventist belief closer to evangelicalism nor at depreciating the value of Ellen White’s writings.<sup>1</sup>

Responses by Figuhr and continuing agitation by Andreasen

Meanwhile, the epistolary joust between Andreasen and Figuhr resumed after the former began to distribute his series of documents on the atonement. Figuhr responded to this new development by refuting Andreasen’s attack on the section on the atonement in *Questions on Doctrine*. He denied that the book made Christ’s heavenly sanctuary ministry unnecessary. Rather, he noted, it only emphasized “the atoning sacrifice of Christ” in its rightful place in the process of atonement.<sup>2</sup> He pointed out that even Andreasen himself agreed in his *Book of Hebrews* that Christ “‘accomplished’” and “‘finished His work as victim and sacrifice.’”<sup>3</sup> In reply, Andreasen retorted that Figuhr had not adequately understood the doctrine of the atonement which “is a most profound and delicate subject, one that is not comprehended in a moment or a year.” Hinting

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<sup>1</sup>[Leroy Edwin Froom], “V. Speculative Assertions vs. Historical Facts,” [1957], TMs, C 152, box 9, fld 10, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU; idem, “VI. The ‘Old Landmarks’ Stand Immutable,” [1957], TMs, C 152, box 9, fld 10, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU; idem, “VII. Are the Spirit of Prophecy Positions Reprehensible?” [1957], TMs, C 152, box 9, fld 10, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 11 November 1957, TL, DF 961, EGWE.

<sup>3</sup>Andreasen, *The Book of Hebrews*, 53, quoted in R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 11 November 1957, TL, DF 961, EGWE.



strongly that he should have been consulted in the composition of the section on the atonement, he reminded Figuhr that “it takes years and years of concentrated study, which your advisers have not given to it.”<sup>1</sup>

Andreasen’s caustic letter and continued agitation led Figuhr and the General Conference officers to issue a formal letter of admonishment and a demand to cease his activities. The officers agreed at their meeting on December 13, 1957, to send a letter to Andreasen “questioning the propriety of his activities” and to request that he “discontinue his work on [opposing *Questions on Doctrine*], since it may cause division and lack of confidence” in church leadership.<sup>2</sup> Based on this action, Figuhr penned yet another letter to Andreasen chiding him not only for his misinterpretation of *Questions on Doctrine* but also for inciting confusion in the church. It was Andreasen, Figuhr wrote, who was creating “Omegas,” not the General Conference—“Omegas of confusion, misunderstanding and destructiveness that undermine the church of God.”<sup>3</sup>

In another letter, dated December 16, 1957, Figuhr stepped up pressure on Andreasen to cease his campaign by implying that his sustentation might be affected: “You are doing yourself great harm and bringing confusion and perplexity to the cause. You should not now be tearing down what, through the years, you have helped to build up. To see a retired worker, supported by sustentation of his church, actively opposing that church and breaking down confidence in its leadership, cannot but make one feel

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 3 December 1957, TL, ADF 3773.06d, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Officers’ Meeting, 13 December 1957, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 16 December 1957, TL, ADF 3773.06d, LLU.

very sad.”<sup>1</sup> In this letter, Figuhr did not make a direct connection between Andreasen’s activities and continuation of his sustentation. However, in a letter written to F. W. Schnepfer, president of the Pacific Union Conference, Figuhr made a clearer connection. Reminding Schnepfer that Andreasen was “on denominational sustentation,” he wondered how far the church should tolerate Andreasen’s agitation before a “hard” action is taken. “Is it proper,” he asked Schnepfer, “to let a man like this carry on his disturbing work, setting himself against the leadership of the denomination as he does?” “We do not want to be hard on him,” he stated emphatically, “but, on the other hand, he too should recognize denominational organization.”<sup>2</sup> The threat implicit in Figuhr’s letter to Andreasen and Schnepfer was that Andreasen’s sustentation might be severed should the senior theologian continue in his activities.

As Andreasen showed no sign of ceasing his activities, Figuhr felt compelled to issue a lengthy letter to church leaders in North America, showing where Andreasen’s position on the atonement was in error. This letter which was endorsed by the General Conference Officers’ Meeting on December 23, 1957, addressed mainly the doctrine of the atonement.<sup>3</sup> Replete with support from Ellen White, Figuhr advanced basically the two-phase view of the atonement<sup>4</sup> which, as he told another person, Andreasen would

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 19 December 1957, TL, ADF 3773.06d, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Figuhr to F. W. Schnepfer, 12 December 1957, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Officers’ Meeting, 23 December 1957, GCA.

<sup>4</sup>R. R. Figuhr to Brethren, 27 December 1957, ADF 3773.06d, LLU.

agree with if he “would settle down and calmly read the book”<sup>1</sup> that he was opposing so vehemently.

As Figuhr’s December 27 letter, with the blessings of his fellow officers, was being broadcast among “administrators, Bible teachers, editors, and other selected individuals,”<sup>2</sup> Andreasen countered Figuhr’s December 19 letter to him which had referred, albeit obliquely, to the possibility that his sustentation status might be affected should he continue to cause disruption in the church. “Your ukase that my continued activities will undoubtedly bring up my relationship to the church of course means that my credentials and sustentation will or may be revoked,” he shot back. “This is a good and forceful argument; but in the United States of America it is a cheap and silly one. It may be effective in cowing inferiors, time servers, slaves, but not men. And of course it is a psychological mistake. Denominationally it is illegal.” Then in the seething tone of a deeply hurt and anguishing soul, he wrote:

I am a man of peace. I can be reasoned with. But no man can threaten me and expect to avoid the consequences. So I hope you will not renege on your threat, but will carry through. . . . You have threatened me. . . . You have disqualified yourselves by judging without a hearing; the next higher authority is the people. You are upholding the Ministry [*sic*] which is destroying confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy, watering down the Testimonies, telling plain untruths, etc. On this there can be no compromise. You say the matter is settled, you have closed the door. The matter is not settled and never can be with a threat.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Figuhr to R. R. Bietz, 16 December 1957, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Officers’ Meeting, 23 December 1957, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>M. L. Andreasen to Officers of the General Conference and Other Men in Responsible Positions, 29 December 1957, TL, C 152, box 28, fld 8, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

Then, in a tone filled with intrigue and suspicion, he warned whoever else might be reading the letter: “The observant reader will not have failed to see that the threat is aimed at him [the reader] as much as at me. In fact I am a minor consideration. The real aim is to intimidate others from following my example. Washington is threatening the whole working force of the denomination and using me as an example of what will happen if others should wish to protest.” Finally, Andreasen’s letter of protest turned to one of incitation for open rebellion against the church: “So this is a warning from me to make sure where you stand if you join in the protest. It may cost you much. Our leaders—some of them—have become our masters, and are ready to bear down on any that objects.”<sup>1</sup>

As the new year of 1958 dawned, Adventist leaders across North America were abuzz in reaction to the sharp, rancorous pitch of Andreasen’s most recent letter. In a letter to Figuhr, T. E. Unruh denounced Andreasen’s charges as “infantile” and stated that Andreasen’s acrimonious “spirit can never find justification,” “even if his contentions bore any semblance of validity.”<sup>2</sup> F. W. Schnepfer, president of the Pacific Union Conference, went much further in denouncing Andreasen’s tactics in a letter to Figuhr: “I am afraid that his recent physical ailment has left him with a mental ailment. I just cannot explain his conduct and course of action in any other way.”<sup>3</sup> Schnepfer was not as

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>T. E. Unruh to R. R. Figuhr, 10 January 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>F. W. Schnepfer to R. R. Figuhr, 7 January 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

blunt but intimated the same idea in his letter to Andreasen: “You are not thinking straight.” He urged the elderly protester that a much better method of resolution would be to ask for a hearing on the specific problems that he identified.<sup>1</sup>

#### Adventist voices sympathetic to Andreasen

While the prevailing opinion among Adventist leaders seems to have been positive toward *Questions on Doctrine* and unsympathetic toward Andreasen’s comments, the developing crisis revealed that there were several who shared some of Andreasen’s views. In December 1957, R. R. Bietz reported that “quite a number of men—some of them rather prominent in the denomination—are taking Elder Andreasen’s side, and there seems to be a bit of a battle shaping up.” He related an incident during a conference committee meeting discussing the distribution of *Questions on Doctrine* in which “a number of the men spoke up to the effect that they didn’t feel that the book should have much of a circulation until the atonement was settled.”<sup>2</sup> Bietz reported further that there was “quite a bit of sympathy” toward Andreasen as “some of the brethren . . . feel that he should have been consulted with relative to the book in the first place.”<sup>3</sup> Merlin Neff of the Pacific Press also shared with Figuhr a recent incident that happened in California: “One of the prominent leaders in the Pacific Union Conference,

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<sup>1</sup>F. W. Schnepfer to M. L. Andreasen, 2 January 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Bietz to R. R. Figuhr, 11 December 1957, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>R. R. Bietz to R. R. Figuhr, 18 December 1957, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

a man with years of experience in mission service, etc., told a group of us . . . that *Questions on Doctrine* was not the doctrines as the church believes them.”<sup>1</sup>

In addition to these reports of pro-Andreasen voices, Richard Lewis of the Review and Herald Publishing Association went on record requesting Figuhr to consider re-studying the subject of the atonement and revising *Questions on Doctrine*. Lewis, who had recently joined the publisher as its associate book editor, criticized the process through which *Questions on Doctrine* was prepared in his January 13, 1958, letter. First, he wrote that Andreasen should have been asked to review the manuscript as the book was being prepared. “It was obviously a tactical error, if not a strategic one,” he wrote, “to bypass this veteran scholar and writer . . . , especially since the sanctuary has been one of his special interests.” Next, Lewis wondered if Andreasen was not “correct in finding the statements [in *Questions on Doctrine*] on the mediatorial work of Christ inadequate,” even if his comments were “petulant, exaggerated, and unbalanced—even irritating.” Clearly, “there is room for criticism” of the book, he acknowledged. And he feared that the “present differences should develop into such a split as occurred at Minneapolis and persisted for years following.” For Lewis, one “ominous sign” of this possibility was the way Andreasen was being treated by the church. He cautioned Figuhr that there were “many who think [Andreasen] is right on this matter of the atonement.” Even for the sake of these others, he advised Figuhr that a renewed study of the atonement and revision of the book must be considered. Otherwise, he wrote, “all the good that we seem to have

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<sup>1</sup>Merlin L. Neff to R. R. Figuhr, 8 January 1957, quoted in R. R. Figuhr to Merlin L. Neff, TL, 14 January 1957, ADF 3773.06d, LLU.

gained through the recent *rapprochement* with the evangelicals will be lost if the cry goes up that Adventists have restyled their doctrines to please their new friends.”<sup>1</sup>

After interviewing a number of active and retired church leaders as well as academics, Milton Kern also revealed that there were several leaders who gave credence to some of Andreasen’s charges against Froom’s February 1957 *Ministry* article and *Questions on Doctrine*. In his January 24, 1958, letter to Figuhr, Kern paraphrased the words of one current General Conference officer who observed that “the brethren, in trying to meet the arguments of Martin and others, have perhaps minimized the distinctive features of the full service of the atonement.” He related another’s comment that “the book needs some correction” on the section on the atonement. Turning to his personal view on the controversy, Kern commented, “The new book, ‘Questions on Doctrine,’ is unfortunate in endeavoring to explain that Sister White’s use of the word ‘atonement’ (pp. 354, 355) really means ‘the application of the atonement made on the cross.’” To say this, he felt, would mean to restrict her writings on the atonement to the definition given by contemporary interpreters. Thus he recommended that the upcoming large-quantity printing of the book in spring 1958 be halted and a special committee be convened to spend several weeks reviewing the book and all the major reactions to it. This committee would consist of Nichol, Andreasen, and two or three scholars from outside the General Conference whose membership in the committee would be approved by Andreasen. Kern forecast that the work of this committee would effect just “small

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Lewis to R. R. Figuhr, 13 January 1958, TL, ADF 3773, LLU.

changes,” but it would “bring quite united approval” and rescue the denomination from this “first class emergency.”<sup>1</sup>

In February 1958, yet another critic of *Questions on Doctrine* voiced his concerns directly to Figuhr. This time, it was P. C. Jarnes, an active faculty member in the religion department at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska. “I want to register my most earnest protest,” he wrote. He explained, without identifying any specific problems, “the book contains contradictions and errors,” which in light of the Bible and Ellen White’s writings, “strike at the very foundations of our existence [*sic*] as a people, and which cannot be correct[ed] with minor revisions.” As he concluded this short letter, Jarnes warned Figuhr that “grave consequences” may follow if the plan to print a large quantity of the books in the spring of 1958 was not abandoned.<sup>2</sup>

Figuhr, however, was not willing to go along with these requests to revisit and revise the section on the atonement and perhaps other parts of *Questions on Doctrine*. By this time, both sides had become too entrenched in their respective positions to revisit it in a truly objective manner as suggested by Lewis and Kern. Any changes to the book would leave open the possibility of Martin and Barnhouse rescinding their support for Adventism’s admission to the evangelical community. Also, as Unruh noted, Andreasen had been “burning his bridges so rapidly” that the likelihood of reconciliation seemed low.<sup>3</sup> Through the open letters on the atonement and numerous private letters to Figuhr

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<sup>1</sup>M. E. Kern to R. R. Figuhr, 24 January 1958, HL, box 11359-11359, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>P. C. Jarnes to R. R. Figuhr, 6 February 1958, TL, C 152, box 2, fld 13, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

<sup>3</sup>T. E. Unruh to R. R. Figuhr, 10 January 1958, TL, box 11358-11359, GCA.



and other administrators, Andreasen had branded the General Conference leaders as apostate and heretical. Thus rapprochement seemed to be an increasingly remote possibility.

#### *A new window of reconciliation*

In early February 1958 a potential for breakthrough in the controversy opened up when a meeting was arranged between Figuhr, Andreasen, and Schnepfer at the Pacific Union Conference office. Andreasen's account of the meeting, revealed in his letter to Figuhr on February 5, indicated that the General Conference president was open to "a hearing or discussion" in Washington, D.C., regarding Andreasen's concerns. This resulted in a noticeable turnabout in the attitude on the part of the thus-far combative theologian. "I am ready to come," he wrote eagerly, "in good faith." For one who had been battling Figuhr for the previous twelve months, Andreasen was now surprisingly agreeable and trusting: "I will waive all my objections in regard to who is to conduct the hearing or who shall attend. You assured me that as far as you were concerned you felt you could consider the matter without prejudice. I am satisfied." He had one condition for the hearing, though. He asked that "the hearing be public, OR that a stenographer be present and that [he] be given a copy of the minutes."<sup>1</sup>

The General Conference officers responded quickly to Andreasen's letter and voted on February 10 to invite him at the church's expense to the denominational headquarters for a meeting with a specially appointed committee. This committee would consist of twelve leaders stationed at or near the headquarters: R. R. Figuhr; W. R.

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 5 February 1958, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

Beach—General Conference secretary; C. L. Torrey—General Conference treasurer; L. K. Dickson, A. L. Ham, A. V. Olson, H. L. Rudy—General Conference vice presidents (Olson was, of course, also the chair of the three-person editorial committee that oversaw the production of *Questions on Doctrine* in its final phase); W. B. Ochs—North American Division president; J. I. Robison—General Conference associate secretary; W. G. C. Murdoch—seminary dean; F. D. Nichol—*Review and Herald* editor; and W. E. Read—General Conference field secretary and a key participant in the production of *Questions on Doctrine*. In coming to this decision, the officers determined that the meeting was not to be a public hearing, but they stipulated that all the statements would “be taken down on tape and recorded, both for the committee and Elder Andreasen.”<sup>1</sup> Figuhr communicated this news to Andreasen on the same day and suggested February 25 as the date for the meeting. Figuhr assured him that the hearing would indeed be “a friendly Christian conversation over the perplexities that have developed” and that the General Conference officers would not “pre-judge, or accuse, or . . . permit any prejudicial spirit to reign.”<sup>2</sup>

With this latest exchange of letters, hope for a peaceful resolution to the conflict seemed suddenly within reach, but what transpired thereafter over the course of the following three months to derail this plan remains a rather perplexing chapter in Adventist history. Andreasen was willing to come for the proposed February 25 meeting

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Officers’ Meeting, 10 February 1958, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 10 February 1958, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

in Washington, except that his wife suddenly fell ill and was hospitalized. Hence, he requested that the meeting be postponed for “four or five weeks.”<sup>1</sup>

#### Breakdown of conciliatory spirit between Andreasen and the church leaders

As Andreasen explained his personal situation, however, a hint of trouble surfaced. Andreasen took issue with a sentence in Figuhr’s description of what the meeting would entail. Figuhr had written that the officers intended “to take up [Andreasen’s] activity . . . and also give [him] opportunity to bring to the attention of the brethren” what he believed to be the errors in *Questions on Doctrine*.<sup>2</sup> Andreasen interpreted this statement as an indication that the primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss his activities of the previous year after which criticisms of the book would be entertained. “It is the latter in which I am particularly interested, and for which I must have time if my visit is to accomplish anything,” he wrote. But he also stated that he would not mind discussing his activities, but warned that such a discussion would invariably include the activities of some General Conference officers—presumably a reference to the dialogues with evangelical leaders and the activities related to the publishing of *Questions on Doctrine*.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 12 February 1958, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 10 February 1958, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 12 February 1958, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

As benign as this statement may seem compared to the much harsher words expressed earlier, this little exchange betrayed a fundamentally different attitude that each man had toward the proposed meeting. Though Figuhr replied meekly that his own statements and activities were open for discussion if Andreasen felt he had been “derelict” in his responsibility,<sup>1</sup> Andreasen was correct in interpreting that Figuhr wanted foremost to address the “administrative issue”<sup>2</sup> of Andreasen’s disturbances in the church. Figuhr had wanted to extract some show of regret and apology, which would be the condition for engaging in a doctrinal discussion. Figuhr’s primary concern as the leader of the world church was ecclesiastical—i.e., controlling the damage incurred by Andreasen and seeking ways to repair pained relationships. He believed that Andreasen “must be called to account in a Christian way for the harm that he [had] been doing.” Only then could they engage in a discussion on theology, though this would not be “a deep discussion of the theological questions” arising from *Questions on Doctrine*.<sup>3</sup> On

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 18 February 1958, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>See R. R. Figuhr to M. E. Kern, 7 March 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA. In this letter, Figuhr shared his resolve to make the “administrative” matter the centerpiece of the proposed meeting, though he was not forthright about this intent in his correspondences with Andreasen. In response to this plan, Kern argued, “there is far more hope for reaching our objective in taking up the doctrinal problem first.” “In the first place,” he wrote, “this will tend to disarm [Andreasen’s] belligerent attitude . . . if we [are to] get him to cease his agitation. I think he would feel that, after all, you brethren are interested in the questions which weigh so heavily on his heart, and are willing to sit down and talk them over.” “If you could win out there,” he continued, “I think the administrative problem will just about settle itself” (M. E. Kern to R. R. Figuhr, 17 March 1958, HL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA).

<sup>3</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. E. Kern, 7 March 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

the other hand, Andreasen was mainly interested in theological reconciliation—i.e., restoring what he felt was historic Adventist orthodoxy.

Further signs of trouble emerged in Andreasen's letter of February 21 in which he sought clarification on how the meeting would be recorded and whether he would be given a copy of the minutes, as he originally requested. Though the General Conference officers had voted that the meeting "be taken down on tape and recorded, both for the committee and Elder Andreasen,"<sup>1</sup> Figuhr had stated in his February 10 letter only that a tape recording would be made, but not whether Andreasen would be given a copy of the minutes. So on February 21 Andreasen sought a clear answer to this question. "[A copy of the minutes] is necessary," he wrote, "for in any discussion of what is said or not said, it will be my word against that of twelve." "I must have a copy of the minutes," he insisted. "This is the condition upon which I come."<sup>2</sup>

Andreasen's frustration over the matter of the minutes continued as Figuhr refused to provide the answer that was sought. Figuhr, in his February 27 response, merely reminded Andreasen of his February 10 letter in which he had indicated that a tape recording would be made. "This would provide a full record of what is said and done," he wrote. "We assume that such a complete record would be agreeable to you."<sup>3</sup> Clearly, this was not a satisfying answer for Andreasen, as his question was not whether there

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Officers' Meeting, 10 February 1958, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 21 February 1958, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 27 February 1958, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

would be a full record of the proceedings, but whether he would receive a copy of the full record—which he reiterated in his response of March 12.<sup>1</sup>

With his frustration level climbing, it was at this point that Andreasen resumed his series on the atonement. After releasing three open letters (“Atonement, VI-VIII”) in January, he had put his writing on hold as a result of the meeting with Figuhr and the invitation that followed from the General Conference officers. But faced with Figuhr’s apparent unwillingness to provide a clear answer to the question on the minutes, Andreasen must have felt justified to distribute “The Atonement, IX,” dated March 13, 1958.<sup>2</sup> Though much less caustic in tone than the eight previous letters, the document signaled deep trouble for the prospect of the reconciliation meeting.

From the tone of his March 18 letter to Andreasen, Figuhr was certainly surprised and disappointed by Andreasen’s ninth open letter. He admonished Andreasen by saying: “It would be only fair for you to stop your activity until we can have the talk we have agreed upon.”<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, Figuhr chose not to dwell on this “disappointment” and asked whether April 24 would be a good date for the meeting.

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 12 March 1958, TL, ADF 3773.06f, LLU. Andreasen uncharacteristically did not press upon the matter in his next letter but made an extraordinary proposal. He suggested that he and Figuhr “could get together alone for a while.” “Within a day,” he predicted, “the whole matter could be cleared up” (M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 9 March 1958, TL, ADF 3773.06f, LLU). But neither pursued this possibility.

<sup>2</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “The Atonement, IX,” 13 March 1958, TMs, DF 961-b-1, EGWE.

<sup>3</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 18 March 1958, TL, ADF 3773.06f, LLU.

In the same letter, Figuhr responded to Andreasen's repeated demand for "a copy" of the tape recording. In doing so, he made a costly misreading of Andreasen's recent letters. In his first two letters since Figuhr first proposed a meeting in Washington, Andreasen asked specifically for "a copy of the minutes."<sup>1</sup> He reiterated the same request in his March 4 letter, asking for clarification on "a copy, or a duplicate tape" of the tape recording.<sup>2</sup> Then on March 12, Andreasen wrote that he was waiting to see whether a tape recording would indeed be made and he would "get [a] copy of it."<sup>3</sup> Figuhr interpreted Andreasen's letters of March 4 and 12 as a demand for a duplicate tape recording, rather than a transcribed copy of the tape recording, which was what Andreasen meant when he asked for "a copy of the minutes" or "a copy" of the recording. Even when he mentioned "a duplicate tape," he mentioned it only as an alternative to a written copy of the minutes. Faced with what they believed to be a repeated demand for an audiotape copy of the recording, Figuhr and the General Conference officers felt that Andreasen could very well misuse the recording to attack the church leaders—the same misuse of sources that he was perceived to be engaged in in the nine letters on the atonement. This sentiment felt by the General Conference officers is clear in Figuhr's April 3 letter to Kern. In this letter, Figuhr characterized Andreasen as demanding a copy of the "tape." "We hardly feel that we can give him a [tape] copy of this discussion," Figuhr explained to Kern, "in view of the fact that he has so misused letters we have

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 5 February 1958, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA; M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 21 February 1958, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 4 March 1958, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 12 March 1958, TL, ADF 3773.06f, LLU.

written him in the past.”<sup>1</sup> This fear led the General Conference officers to decide against making a tape recording and to supply only the “conclusions reached by the entire group . . . in writing” to all the participants of the meeting, including Andreassen.<sup>2</sup> On March 18, Figuhr communicated the officers’ decision to Andreassen.<sup>3</sup>

The General Conference officers’ renegeing on the issue of tape recording and minutes proved to be the decision that finally doomed the possibility of their meeting with Andreassen. The latter did not like the fact that there would be neither tape nor stenographic recording, but just conclusions which would be very different from the minutes themselves. “You will be able to write out your *conclusions* without my being present,” he wrote. “What I want and was promised was a ‘*full record*,’ a ‘complete record,’” he insisted, referring to Figuhr’s earlier letters.<sup>4</sup> Even if a full record would be made, he was not willing to come to the meeting if he would not be furnished a copy. Now that Figuhr was indicating that not even a full record would be made, but only a report on the conclusions, Andreassen saw no reason to continue the discussion. “Your broken promise cancels the agreement,” he declared and ended the letter.<sup>5</sup>

Figuhr responded on April 3 with an explanation for backtracking on the promise to make a tape recording of the meeting. He admitted that he had first promised a tape recording, but reminded Andreassen that no promise had been made of giving him “a

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. E. Kern, 3 April 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Officers’ Meeting, 17 March 1958, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreassen, 18 March 1958, TL, ADF 3773.06f, LLU.

<sup>4</sup>M. L. Andreassen to R. R. Figuhr, 26 March 1958, TL, ADF 3773.06f, LLU.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



copy”—i.e., an *audio* copy of the tape recording.<sup>1</sup> Figuhr explained that “a tape recording of every little remark would not be fair to the participants” since “in such discussions it is not uncommon for earnest men to make a slip which later they regret and correct.” So he asked once again that the participants meet without making a tape recording but rather have written “conclusions” which would need to be approved by everyone, including Andreasen. “As I look back over your letters, this would appear to be in accord with your original suggestion,” he added.<sup>2</sup>

Here it seems that Figuhr not only misunderstood Andreasen’s demand, but also miscommunicated what he and the officers were willing to provide. Apparently, when he used the word “conclusions,” he meant it as a synonym of “minutes.” This becomes clear in his letter to Kern written on the same day explaining the officers’ reason for backtracking on the tape recording question. Accusing Andreasen of calling off the meeting “over a technicality,” Figuhr shared with Kern what he had told Andreasen: “We did tell him, however, that we would give him a copy of the conclusions *or minutes* of the meeting, as we all, including himself, would agree to.”<sup>3</sup> Actually, Figuhr had not made any reference to the “minutes” in his letters to Andreasen, but just the “conclusions.”<sup>4</sup> But apparently, for Figuhr, the two terms were interchangeable. But Andreasen could not

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<sup>1</sup>That Figuhr understood Andreasen to be expecting an audiotape copy is clear from Figuhr’s letter to Kern written on the same day: R. R. Figuhr to M. E. Kern, 3 April 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 3 April 1958, TL, RG NA11, box 3981, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. E. Kern, 3 April 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA. Emphasis supplied.

<sup>4</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 3 April 1958, TL, RG NA11, box 3981, GCA.

have known that, given the usual usage of the two words. With the relationship between the two sides already fragile due to a high level of distrust, the General Conference officers' decision not to make a tape recording but only to provide the "conclusions" was enough of a reason for Andreasen to call off the meeting. On the other hand, it is reasonable to conjecture that Andreasen would not have called off the meeting had Figuhr promised to provide him with a copy of the minutes, as was originally requested and promised.

This chapter in the battle between Andreasen and church leaders is indeed a perplexing one that leaves many questions. What if Figuhr had correctly interpreted Andreasen's request for a written copy of the minutes, would the proposed meeting have been convened on April 24? What if Figuhr had explained what he meant by "conclusions"? What if he had used the word "minutes" instead of "conclusions"? What if the meeting actually took place on April 24? Or, for that matter, what if Gladys Andreasen had not fallen ill and Andreasen had made the trip to Washington in good faith for a meeting on February 25? Had the two sides been able to meet either in February or April, would they have been able to reconcile with one another on the issue of the atonement and Andreasen's recent activities? These questions linger on in the minds of Adventist historians, particularly as they reflect on the impact that the breakdown of the relationship between Andreasen and the church leaders had on Adventist theological discourses in the decades to come.

Disintegration of relationship between  
Andreasen and the church leaders

From April 3, 1958, and on, the relationship between Andreasen and the General Conference never recovered in any appreciable way until nearly the end of the elder theologian's life. Because each side was deeply distrustful of the other, the seemingly less consequential "technicality" over how the record of their meeting would be taken and made available derailed a meeting that potentially might have saved the controversy from spinning out of control to the degree that it did over the following years and decades.

But in 1958 Figuhr was operating with a very different assessment of Andreasen and his influence. Essentially, he underestimated the long-term ramifications of the controversy and thus tended to downplay Andreasen's persistent activities. "I do not feel that Andreasen can do much harm in the long run," he wrote A. V. Olson on April 7, ten days after Andreasen broke off the meeting. To his credit, Figuhr had given Andreasen much attention over the course of the previous fourteen months. He had been quite forbearing with the octogenarian, but now he was losing patience and began hardening his stance on this matter. "I feel in no mood to compromise," he wrote in the same letter. "It seems to me that Brother Andreasen has gone so far in his activity against the church and [in] his aiding the enemies of the church by his irregular and vicious attacks that he has certain things to make right before he can reestablish himself in the confidence of the church."<sup>1</sup>

There were others, however, who saw things differently and sought to revive the possibility of a meeting between Andreasen and the General Conference leaders.

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Figuhr to A. V. Olson, 7 April 1958, TL, RG 11, box 3738, GCA.

Immediately after learning of the cancellation of the meeting, R. R. Bietz visited Andreasen and came out of the meeting with the fear that the controversy was “snowballing and that the situation [was] becoming progressively worse.” In order to avoid “another ‘off-shoot’ to contend with,” Bietz pleaded with Figuhr to make another attempt to meet Andreasen and promise “a complete record, either tape or stenographic.” He believed that Andreasen would respond positively to “genuine interest” and “continued Christian love” shown by General Conference leaders since he felt that “he has been ignored, pushed aside, and humiliated.” As a show of such an interest and love, Bietz asked if the leaders could invite Andreasen to the upcoming quadrennial General Conference session in June. If Andreasen were to be dealt with “administratively,” Bietz worried, it would mean “adding fuel to the fire,” resulting in “a more determined effort” to campaign against *Questions on Doctrine* and the General Conference leaders.<sup>1</sup>

Kern was also among those who felt the gravity of the potential fallout arising from the controversy. Writing with a renewed sense of urgency after reading Figuhr’s April 3 letter, he warned Figuhr, “A complete break with Brother Andreasen now will mean great disaster to the church and to Eld. Andreasen, of course; and I join Elder Bietz in making a plea that this break be held off a time giving more time to see what we all can do.” Having communicated with Bietz and Andreasen, Kern believed that Andreasen would “agree to cease all his activities, if there is likewise no denunciation of him from the General Conference.” He echoed Bietz’s suggestion to officially invite Andreasen to the General Conference session, just as he and Meade MacGuire—both retirees since

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Bietz to R. R. Figuhr, 6 April 1958, TL, ADF 3773.06f, LLU.

1950—had been invited. Then after the General Conference session, he recommended, the two sides could gather together for an in-depth study with other theologians.<sup>1</sup>

Figuhr's responses to Bietz and Kern on April 9 and 10, respectively, indicated that the matter was now practically closed in his mind and that the only way that he saw for an amicable resolution to the problem was for Andreassen to show contrition. First, he indicated that it was no longer possible to entertain the possibility of providing Andreassen with a complete record of the minutes since the General Conference could no longer put itself "open to further misrepresentation." Apparently, there had been further discussions among the officers, and the final consensus was that only "conclusions" and no "minutes" could be released to Andreassen, which represented an even further retreat from the original decision by the officers.<sup>2</sup> (However, Figuhr would send off confusing accounts of what was happening in various letters written to individuals other than Andreassen. Although on April 11, he stated that "a detailed account of the meeting in which individuals are quoted" could not be supplied to Andreassen,<sup>3</sup> he wrote in his April 29 letter to Schnepfer that the officers "would give him copy of the minutes."<sup>4</sup>) Second, Figuhr felt that he himself and the church leaders had been patient enough and it was time for Andreassen "to come to [the leaders] and acknowledge his errors in [his] writings."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>M. E. Kern to R. R. Figuhr, 5 April 1958, HL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Figuhr to R. R. Bietz, 9 April 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA; R. R. Figuhr to M. E. Kern, 10 April 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>R. R. Figuhr to Glenn Calkins, 11 April 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>4</sup>R. R. Figuhr to F. W. Schnepfer, 29 April 1958, TL, ADF 3773.06f, LLU.

<sup>5</sup>R. R. Figuhr to R. R. Bietz, 9 April 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

Then, “all that he needs to do to bring quiet and peace is to stop his agitation.”<sup>1</sup> Third, because of what Andreasen had been doing, Figuhr wrote that he could not be invited to the General Conference session. “How can we invite a man to the General Conference,” he asked, “who has been so irregular and has so definitely endeavored to create confusion in the church?”<sup>2</sup> It appears that in Figuhr’s mind, Andreasen had already become *persona non grata*—one whom he no longer wished to take seriously. Finally, Figuhr reiterated his view that Andreasen’s agitation was not as great a problem as Bietz or Kern made it to be. “As far as this being a controversy is concerned,” he wrote Kern, “we do not look upon it in that light.”<sup>3</sup> To Bietz, he wrote optimistically that the problem was near over: “The storm has just about blown itself out.”<sup>4</sup>

Though Bietz countered Figuhr’s declaration by stating that “only little whirlwinds” had passed and “the tornado [was] yet to come,”<sup>5</sup> Figuhr remained confident that the worst of the Andreasen problem was over. Interpreting Andreasen’s month-long pause from broadside publication as a sign that he was capitulating, Figuhr wrote to North American union conference presidents on April 17: “Our impression is that things are dying down.”<sup>6</sup> In reply to this highly optimistic letter, however, Schnepfer suggested that

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. E. Kern, 10 April 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Figuhr to R. R. Bietz, 9 April 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. E. Kern, 10 April 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>4</sup>R. R. Figuhr to R. R. Bietz, 9 April 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>5</sup>R. R. Bietz to R. R. Figuhr, 14 April 1958, TL, RG NA11, box 3981, GCA.

<sup>6</sup>R. R. Figuhr to North American Division Union Presidents, 17 April 1958, TL, ADF 3773.06f, LLU.

Figuhr “not underestimate the situation or its possible consequences.” Having recently visited with Andreasen, Schnepfer reported that Andreasen was merely “delaying to await the outcome of correspondence relative to his proposed visit to Washington” and had “every intention of carrying on his program” if no satisfactory arrangement would be made regarding the recording of the meeting. In fact, Schnepfer observed, “he seems to be courting martyrdom” which might well result in “a strong sympathetic following”<sup>1</sup>—a prospect which Figuhr clearly did not envision as possible.

Figuhr’s hopes for peace from Andreasen’s agitations were dashed when Andreasen roared back from his self-imposed moratorium and fired off a letter to Figuhr on May 1. In this letter, Andreasen accused Figuhr of prevarication and requested formally a public hearing on the Adventist-evangelical conferences, activities of those involved with the conferences, and the content of *Questions on Doctrine*. This letter was significant for two reasons. First, it had the effect of completely extinguishing the possibility of a reconciliation meeting. Second, this letter was the first instance in which Andreasen brought up doctrinal issues other than the atonement, such as the human nature of Christ and the mark of the beast. In departure from his earlier statement that his only problem with the book was its section on the atonement, Andreasen now took issue with the book’s teaching on the human nature of Christ: “I utterly reject the teaching that Christ was exempt from the inherited passions that corrupt the natural descendants of Adam.” He also wondered why the current Sabbath school lessons on Revelation skipped over chapter 13 in which Adventists saw a connection between Sundaykeeping and the

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<sup>1</sup>F. W. Schnepfer to R. R. Figuhr, 25 April 1958, TL, ADF 3773.06f, LLU.

mark of the beast. He speculated that the omission of that chapter was influenced by Martin's criticism of the teaching on the mark of the beast. Andreasen cited both instances as examples of surreptitious and illegal changes to Adventist theology.<sup>1</sup>

With this, Andreasen resumed his attack on *Questions on Doctrine* and the General Conference leaders. As was evident in his May 1 letter to Figuhr, Andreasen's campaign was no longer a one-doctrine crusade focusing on the atonement. His open letters of May 15 and June 4 charged *Questions on Doctrine* with removing or changing a number of the "pillars" of Adventist theology such as the teachings on the mark of the beast, the human nature of Christ, the investigative judgment, and Ellen White.<sup>2</sup> Unlike the previous letter, "Atonement, IX," where Andreasen had taken a much more subdued and even-tempered tone, these new letters returned to the vitriolic tone of his earlier letters.

In spite of the resumption of open letters and the harsh rhetoric contained in each, one final, albeit perfunctory, overture was made by the General Conference to explore the possibility of a reconciliation meeting. Between May 13 and July 24, seven letters were exchanged between the General Conference officers and Andreasen. In response to Andreasen's demand for a public hearing, Figuhr offered a hearing at the General Conference Committee.<sup>3</sup> Andreasen scoffed at the notion that appearing before this committee—a large but closed group—could constitute a public hearing and insisted the

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 1 May 1958, TL, ADF 3773.06f, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>M. L. Andreasen, "Review, I," 15 May 1958, TMs, C 152, box 28, fld 8, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU; idem, "Memorial," 4 June 1958, TMs, DF 961a, EGWE.

<sup>3</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 13 May 1958, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.



meeting be completely open to the public—just as Martin Luther’s trial in Worms was made public.<sup>1</sup> A similar exchange continued between W. R. Beach and Andreasen, with neither side budging from its position until the negotiations completely dissolved in July.<sup>2</sup>

*Letters to the Churches* and  
re-ignition of the controversy

Though Andreasen did not engage in any public activity over the next seven months, he resumed this campaign with a greater flair and sophistication in February 1959. That month, he initiated a new series of missives called *Letters to the Churches*, with the help of a printer named A. L. Hudson.

Andreasen’s publisher, Hudson, was an Adventist layman from Baker, Oregon, who was not new to controversies. Just a few years earlier he had aligned himself with Robert Wieland and Donald Short who were calling for the church to make “corporate repentance” for its refusal to accept the righteousness by faith message at the 1888 General Conference session. Now Hudson found himself supporting another crusader who was calling for repentance for the apostate teachings found in *Questions on Doctrine*. Even before joining with Andreasen, he began protesting independently against “the head-long retreat” that the book was taking toward apostasy in the area of

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 19 May 1958, TL, ADF 3773.06f, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>W. R. Beach to M. L. Andreasen, 29 May 1958, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA; M. L. Andreasen to W. R. Beach, 1 June 1958, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA; W. R. Beach to M. L. Andreasen, 4 June 1958, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA; M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 28 June 1958, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA; L. L. Moffitt to M. L. Andreasen, 24 July 1958, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

Christ's human nature—predating Andreasen's criticisms by half a year.<sup>1</sup> In an improbable bid to have the General Conference officially “repudiate this book and official[ly] reprimand [*sic*] the men responsible for its production,” Hudson launched a campaign in February 1958 to present a resolution at the General Conference session in June of that year.<sup>2</sup>

Hudson's quest for evidences corroborating his charge that the Adventist church was slouching toward apostasy led him to a telephone conversation with Barnhouse on May 16, 1958. The chief purpose of this surreptitiously recorded conversation, as Paul McGraw asserts, was to ascertain the nature of the compromises made, if any, by the Adventist conferees of the Adventist-evangelical conferences and to “get incriminating evidence against General Conference leadership.”<sup>3</sup> Over the course of the dialogue, Hudson did get Barnhouse to state that the General Conference leaders were in the process of making changes to traditional Adventist theology, particularly in the areas of the investigative judgment, the remnant church, the mark of the beast, and Ellen White.<sup>4</sup>

Hudson was by no means the only other vocal critic of *Questions on Doctrine*. Some time during the first half of 1958, a group of lay people living in the Loma Linda,

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<sup>1</sup>A. L. Hudson to R. R. Figuhr, R. A. Anderson, and F. D. Nichol, 29 December 1957, quoted in J. I. Robison to A. L. Hudson, 6 January 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>A. L. Hudson to A. J. Gordon, 9 February 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>McGraw, “Born in Zion?” 255.

<sup>4</sup>A. L. Hudson, comp., *Witnessing a Metamorphosis* ([Baker, OR: Hudson Printing Co., 1959]), 33-54.

California, area formed the Committee for the Revision of *Questions on Doctrine* out of their concern for the book's treatment of Christ's human nature and the investigative judgment in particular. The group's first letter to the church leaders signed by twenty-one individuals declared, "Not since the time of the J. H. Kellogg pantheistic controversy . . . has anything arisen to cause such disquietude, dissention [*sic*] and dis-unity among our people as the publication of this book."<sup>1</sup> Walking essentially the same line as Andreasen and Hudson, they charged denominational leaders of "endeavoring to impose upon the denomination a new brand of theology watered down to please the so-called evangelicals."<sup>2</sup>

Buoyed by the fact that there were others who not only shared his view of *Questions on Doctrine*, but also were vocalizing their criticisms, Andreasen proceeded to commence a new round of open letters with the first installment of *Letters to the Churches* in February 1959. Along with the nine-part series entitled "The Atonement," the six-part *Letters to the Churches* became Andreasen's lasting theological legacy from this era. The six documents which were released at various times throughout 1959 contained not only Andreasen's key criticisms of *Questions on Doctrine*, but also

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<sup>1</sup>Committee for the Revision of *Questions on Doctrine* to General Conference Committee of Seventh-day Adventists, and Other Esteemed Denominational Leaders, [May 1958], TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>Roy F. Cottrell to R. R. Figuhr, 11 September 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA. Roy F. Cottrell (Raymond F. Cottrell's uncle) was a key member of the Committee for the Revision of *Questions on Doctrine*. See also Committee for the Revision of *Questions on Doctrine* to R. R. Figuhr, 24 July 1958, TL, ADF 3773.06f, LLU. See also Roy F. Cottrell to Raymond F. Cottrell, 13 June 1958, TL, ADF 3773.06f, LLU; D. A. Mitchell to C. E. Eldridge, 19 August 1958, TL, ADF 3773.06f, LLU; R. R. Figuhr to Roy F. Cottrell, 25 August 1958, TL, ADF 3773.06f, LLU; W. E. Read to D. A. Mitchell, 8 September 1958, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.

accounts of his struggle against the book and the church during this time period. *Letters to the Churches* contained Andreasen's treatises on Christ's human nature, Ellen White, the atonement, and narratives of his recent challenges against the General Conference in which he raised questions about the doctrinal integrity and moral authority of the leaders.<sup>1</sup> Except for the sections on Christ's human nature, the content of the letters was not new. Most sections of the letters were condensed and polished versions of the "Atonement" series.

Andreasen's key concern regarding the human nature of Christ was that the new book presented Christ's incarnation as a man who was radically different from all other human beings. *Questions on Doctrine*, in its sections on the human nature of Christ, taught: "Whatever [nature] Jesus took was not His intrinsically or innately. His taking the burden of our inherited weakness and failings . . . did not in the slightest degree taint His human nature." It stated further that "all that Jesus took, all that He *bore*, whether the burden and penalty of our iniquities, or the diseases and frailties of our human nature—all was taken and borne *vicariously*." Therefore, when Ellen White "refers occasionally to sinful, fallen, and deteriorated human nature," the book declared, "it is in this sense that all should understand" her statements. Elsewhere in the book, Christ was described as "born in the flesh," "exempt from the inherited passions and pollutions that corrupt the natural descendant of Adam." Finally, in an appendix, the book provided a collection of quotations on Christ's human nature from White's writings. These quotations were

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<sup>1</sup>Andreasen, *Letters to the Churches*. The six letters were entitled: "The Incarnation: Was Christ Exempt?"; "Attempted Tampering"; "Downgrading Mrs. White"; "A Resumé"; "Why Not a Hearing? Inherited Passions"; and "The Atonement."

grouped under such subheadings as “Took Sinless Human Nature” and “Perfect Sinlessness of Christ’s Human Nature.”<sup>1</sup>

Andreasen asserted that the teaching of *Questions on Doctrine* represented a major departure from traditional Adventist Christology.<sup>2</sup> Andreasen believed that Christ was born in the flesh with exactly the same set of tendencies to sin as all other human beings. Christ’s victory over sin in spite of his innate sinful tendencies was the cornerstone on which Andreasen had built his doctrine of the final atonement and the last generation. The last generation on earth would consist of a group of God’s people who would demonstrate to the universe that it is possible to keep the law of God and live a sinless life.<sup>3</sup>

When Andreasen read the statement on p. 383 of *Questions on Doctrine* which indicated that Christ was “exempt from the inherited passions and pollutions that corrupt the natural descendant of Adam,”<sup>4</sup> he interpreted the word “passion” as the sum total of “man’s emotions.” Working with this definition, Andreasen argued that to exempt a person from passions would be to take away “all temptations that incite men to action” which “results in a creature less than a man, a kind of no-man, a shadow man, a non-

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<sup>1</sup>*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 60-62, 383, 647-660.

<sup>2</sup>See *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine: Annotated Edition* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003), 519-526, for a discussion on the conflict between the traditional Adventist teaching on the human nature of Christ and that of *Questions on Doctrine*.

<sup>3</sup>See Andreasen, *The Book of Hebrews*, 58-60; idem, *The Sanctuary Service*, 299-321.

<sup>4</sup>*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 383.

entity. . . .” Thus, Andreasen contended, to state that Christ was exempt from the passions of humankind would be to rob him of his true and complete humanity, Andreasen contended.<sup>1</sup>

*Questions on Doctrine*’s presentation of Christ as “different from other men,” in Andreasen’s estimation, had the effect of pulling the rug from under the last-generation theology. Andreasen’s end-time, last generation theology would not be able to stand if God had extended “special favors and exemptions to Christ” in the incarnation.<sup>2</sup> If Christ indeed was “exempt from the inherited passions and pollutions that corrupt the natural descendant of Adam,”<sup>3</sup> as the book claimed, then “he would have been unable to understand or help mankind,” disqualifying him from being the Savior. Furthermore, if Christ lived a sinless life by virtue of being exempt from those passions, Andreasen argued, human beings are left without the hope of overcoming sin, and Satan’s charge that God’s law cannot be kept by his creatures becomes true. Therefore, the idea “that God exempted Christ from the passions that corrupt men” was for Andreasen “the acme of all heresy” brought in through the Adventist-evangelical conferences.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Andreasen, *Letters to the Churches*, 5, 6.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>3</sup>*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 383.

<sup>3</sup>Andreasen, *Letters to the Churches*, 8-14, 94.

Reactions by church leaders  
to *Letters to the Churches*

The publication of the *Letters to the Churches* provoked many in the church to respond in defense of *Questions on Doctrine* and the General Conference. One of the first to respond to Andreasen was Edward Heppenstall. Heppenstall faulted Andreasen for attacking *Questions on Doctrine* based on a different definition of “passion” than the one the book was using, just so that the argument made in the book would be easy to knock down. Heppenstall argued that the book was using the term “passion” to signify “the evil tendencies and wickedness of the carnal nature.”<sup>1</sup> He pointed out that Ellen White had used the word in the same way in one of her books: “[Christ] was a mighty petitioner, *not possessing the passions of our human fallen nature.*”<sup>2</sup> Then as a more general criticism, Heppenstall wrote rather bluntly that the senior theologian might be suffering from three attitudinal problems. First, he cited “pride,” which he defined as “supercilious smugness and over-confidence in one’s opinion and position which will consider anyone a threat who differs.” Second, he faulted Andreasen for harboring “resentment,” which was displayed in “egoistic opposition to others who differ” and “reluctance to face the findings of truth or the corrections necessary to spiritual growth.” Finally, Heppenstall blamed him of dwelling in an attitude of “distrust of [the] brethren” who were “even more anxious” than Andreasen to understand the truth. He urged Andreasen not to latch onto a word or phrase, define it in his own way, and then “proceed

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<sup>1</sup>Edward Heppenstall to M. L. Andreasen, 3 March 1959, TL, ADF 3773.06g, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 508, 509. Emphasis in the original.

to indict all and every minister who may disagree.” In closing, he pleaded with his former teacher to follow his own exhortations: “First, think things through, and second, before formulating a conclusion be sure to gather all the evidence; do not build an argument on one word or one quotation.”<sup>1</sup>

On the same day that Heppenstall wrote Andreasen from Washington, D.C., George McCready Price was writing an open letter to his fellow retiree from his home in Loma Linda, California. Though actually sent nine days later, the letter betrayed Price’s immediate reaction to Andreasen’s first letter. “Your confusion of thought arises from your failure to recognize the difference between what Sr. White calls our hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil,” wrote Price. “All our passions and propensities,” he continued, “belong to the second of these categories, our cultivated tendencies.” But, he declared, “Jesus partook of the weaknesses and infirmities which we all inherit from Adam, but he had none of our cultivated evil tendencies for the simple reason that one cannot cultivate any style of action which is not even begun, and Jesus never began anything of the sort, not even by a thought.” Then what did Jesus inherit? Price explained that Jesus inherited “the increased weakness and degeneracies of four millenniums of sin . . . but he had no trace of . . . sinful passions and propensities” since “only the traits born with one, or already in the stream of heredity at birth, are thus transmitted.”<sup>2</sup> However, in stating thus, Price left several questions unanswered: Was

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<sup>1</sup>Edward Heppenstall to M. L. Andreasen, 3 March 1959, TL, ADF 3773.06g, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>George McCready Price to M. L. Andreasen, 12 March 1959, TL, RG 58, box 11358-11359, GCA.



Jesus born with hereditary tendencies to evil? Are weaknesses and infirmities the same as hereditary tendencies to sin? If cultivated tendencies are never inherited, are all human beings born only with the hereditary tendencies? Does this mean, then, that Jesus was born just like all other human beings? How was Jesus able to avoid cultivating sin from birth?

Another letter of Price's arrived in Andreasen's mailbox in mid-September—this time a response to the latter's fifth and sixth missives in the *Letters to the Churches* series. Commenting on Andreasen's call for a public hearing in the first part of his fifth letter, Price castigated him for seeking to cause a spectacle to embarrass the church. "Why, even Dulles, or Nixon, or Herter," he wrote, "in their discussions with their most bitter opponents behind the Iron Curtain, never think of having their talks open to the public, and never ask for a tape record of what goes on." Then at the end of such a meeting, Price wrote, "they agree with their opponents in framing a unified or mutual statement to be given to the public." If these secular and avowed enemies can meet in closed sessions in a civil manner, he asked, "why can't a veteran Adventist minister be equally courteous and reasonable?"<sup>1</sup>

In the second half of the letter, Price stated that the *Questions on Doctrine* statement that Christ was exempt from the passions and pollutions of fallen human nature was *not* a new doctrine. "Obviously it is new to you," he wrote, somewhat sarcastically, "for you have been teaching the opposite." But quoting the second volume of *Testimonies for the Church* by White, Price pointed out that the teaching found in

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<sup>1</sup>George McCready Price to M. L. Andreasen, 13 September 1959, TL, ADF 3773, LLU.

*Questions on Doctrine* “was not new to Mrs. E. G. White.”<sup>1</sup> In *Testimonies*, volume 2, White had written, “[Christ] is a brother in our infirmities, but not in possessing like passions.”<sup>2</sup> Price argued that these passions, as he wrote in his first letter to Andreasen, were “cultivated” traits which Christ never had.<sup>3</sup>

As he closed his letter, Price made a most interesting comment regarding theological development. He challenged perhaps the most foundational premise undergirding all of Andreasen’s activities—that doctrinal change equals apostasy. In his criticism of Andreasen’s sixth letter in the *Letters to the Churches* series, he wrote, “Your No. 6 is just a rehash of your old argument that the present generation of Adventists do not pronounce Shibboleth quite the same as you used to pronounce it two generations ago.” Then he launched a question that few others dared to ask: “Why should they?”—i.e., why should Adventists not modify their beliefs and expressions of beliefs? Finally, Price delivered a punch line that flew in the face of Andreasen’s argument for upholding the traditional Adventist teachings: “I thought this is a ‘movement,’ not a status quo. If we as a people can’t learn anything or change for the better with the passing years and decades, I would feel uneasy. I have never thought that we had all truth, or were already perfected. This book has advanced light.”<sup>4</sup> In short, Price was saying two,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 202.

<sup>3</sup>George McCready Price to M. L. Andreasen, 13 September 1959, TL, ADF 3773, LLU.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

if paradoxical, things at the same time in defense of *Questions on Doctrine*. On one hand, he argued that the book was not teaching anything new on the human nature of Christ. On the other hand, he submitted that, even if it was, it represented a positive change in the expression of Adventist belief on the subject.

Andreasen's *Letters* also prompted T. E. Unruh to respond after more than two years of non-involvement in matters relating to *Questions on Doctrine*. He accused Andreasen of failure on four counts: disregard for the truth, compromised intellectual honesty, pre-judgment before all facts are known, and intolerance toward others' views. He charged that Andreasen manipulated evidence to create a "wicked" choice between *Questions on Doctrine* and the writings of Ellen White. Quoting White's words which support the view that Christ did not possess the same "passions" as other human beings, Unruh held that there was no conflict between the two. Rather, he wrote, "it is Elder M. L. Andreasen who is in conflict with the Spirit of Prophecy." Unruh concluded his letter by asking Andreasen to cease his "reckless" activity against the church and assuring him that there was still a "possibility of getting together with the brethren" in Washington, D.C.<sup>1</sup>

The General Conference administration became once again disturbed by Andreasen's resumption of activity in February 1959 and felt compelled to dispatch a statement to union and local conference presidents in North America. In reference to Andreasen and *Letters to the Churches*, Figuhr wrote, "his evident purpose is to stir up trouble." As such, Figuhr did not encourage "creating a great issue over the matter," as

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<sup>1</sup>T. E. Unruh to M. L. Andreasen, 8 March 1959, TL, ADF 3773.06g, LLU.

Andreasen “would welcome it.” His continuing position on this matter was that Andreasen would soon blow off all steam and simmer down. At the same time, Figuhr attached Heppenstall’s March 3, 1959, letter to Andreasen to help administrators answer potential questions arising from Andreasen’s attacks.<sup>1</sup> In another letter to the same recipients, Harry Lowe, chairman of the Biblical Research Committee of the General Conference, issued an information bulletin designed to help church leaders answer questions arising from Andreasen’s letters. First, Lowe quoted L. L. Moffitt, chairman of the Sabbath School Lesson Manuscript Committee, who explained that the omission of Revelation 13 from the Sabbath school lesson quarterly of the second quarter of 1958 had nothing to do with the Adventist-evangelical dialogues as charged by Andreasen. According to Moffitt, the decision was “based on the fact that since the lessons are for the world field, and in view of the anti-American feeling in some parts of the world,” it was advisable “to eliminate a discussion of the United States in prophecy.”<sup>2</sup> Lowe went on to emphatically protest that the church had not and was not changing its view on the mark of the beast or any of the distinctive teachings of Adventism. He challenged the North American church leaders to “watch all of the Bible study materials issued by the

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Figuhr to North American Division Union and Local Conference Presidents, 30 March 1959, TL, ADF 3773.06g, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>L. L. Moffitt to [Unknown recipient], 30 March 1958, quoted in Harry W. Lowe to North American Division Union and Local Conference Presidents, 28 May 1959, TL, ADF 3773.06g, LLU.

denomination” to see if they can “detect whether there is any letting down in presenting the fundamental truths of the three angels’ messages.”<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, efforts were continually being made on a personal level to dissuade Andreasen from prolonging the controversy. On one occasion, Bietz asked Figuhr if Andreasen could be encouraged to “prepare a manuscript on the Atonement [*sic*] without any reference to any controversy” in order to “keep him busy” and “keep his mind off other things,” such as continuing to challenge church leaders.<sup>2</sup> Figuhr was happy to follow this course of action.<sup>3</sup> This manuscript, if Andreasen managed to make it acceptable to the leaders, would be published by a denominational publishing house and both sides would be able to save face. Andreasen would be able to state his beliefs and have them published by the church, while the leaders would not need to change anything in *Questions on Doctrine*. Bietz worked hard to convince Andreasen that “this might be a tremendous contribution that he could make to the denomination,”<sup>4</sup> but Andreasen was non-responsive to the suggestion.

By June 1960, all hope of reconciliation was extinguished and the dialogues came to an insurmountable impasse. Andreasen saw the leaders of the church united in compromise and apostasy—unwilling to listen to his voice of reason and truth. The

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<sup>1</sup>Harry W. Lowe to North American Division Union and Local Conference Presidents, 28 May 1959, TL, ADF 3773.06g, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Bietz to R. R. Figuhr, 24 March 1959, TL, ADF 3773.06g, LLU. See also R. R. Bietz to M. L. Andreasen, 3 November 1960, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>R. R. Figuhr to R. R. Bietz, 27 March 1959, TL, ADF 3773.06g, LLU.

<sup>4</sup>R. R. Bietz to R. R. Figuhr, 24 March 1959, TL, ADF 3773.06g, LLU.

leaders felt that all public and private overtures toward Andreasen had been exhausted and that the church was in need of a strong theological response to his charges. It fell upon A. V. Olson to provide such a response—a comprehensive theological critique of Andreasen’s writings. Already in January the General Conference officers had formed a committee of six, with Figuhr as its chair, to seek the most appropriate way to respond to Andreasen.<sup>1</sup> When he was asked to be the author of this response, Olson, though now in retirement, was serving as the chairman of the board of trustees of the Ellen G. White Estate. His document, entitled “An Examination of M. L. Andreasen’s Objections to the Book *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*,”<sup>2</sup> was the most complete defense of the church leaders’ position that appeared during this period.<sup>3</sup> Olson’s document, though it was never formally endorsed by the General Conference, became the de facto official response, with the General Conference distributing it to all the North American union and local conference presidents.<sup>4</sup> The document was written to provide rebuttals for eight major objections submitted by Andreasen from 1957 through 1960.

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Officers’ Meeting, 13 January 1960, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>A. V. Olson, “An Examination of M. L. Andreasen’s Objections to the Book *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*,” 28 June 1960, TMs, C 152, box 28, fld 8, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU. After the initial printing on June 28, 1960, this document was printed once again on 6 September 1960 with some revisions to be distributed among church administrators throughout North America.

<sup>3</sup>Some time in late 1959 or 1960, Frank Chaney, a retired missionary and educator, released a six-part series of open letters entitled “The Atonement,” in which he sought to fend off the charges that Andreasen had made in his *Letters*. Despite its extended treatment of the subject, this series was basically a resumé of the arguments that had been proffered by defenders of the book over the previous two years. See Frank L. Chaney, “Letters, No. 1-6,” [1959?], TMs, DF 961-b, AU.

<sup>4</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Officers’ Meeting, 31 August 1960, GCA.

Andreasen's eight objections that Olson responded to were accusations that *Questions on Doctrine* was: (1) "wrong in teaching that Christ served as priest at the cross"; (2) "wrong in teaching that atonement was made on the cross"; (3) "wrong in teaching that a perfect and complete atonement was made on the cross"; (4) "teaching a bloodless atonement"; (5) "rejecting the blood of Christ as a means of atonement in the heavenly sanctuary"; (6) "abandoning the denominational position on the atonement"; (7) "using wrong terms in speaking of Christ's work on the cross and in the heavenly sanctuary"; and (8) "taking a wrong position regarding the nature of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

In each of his refutations against Andreasen, Olson sought to demonstrate that Andreasen was self-contradictory and out of harmony with the inspired writings that he purported to defend. Olson's treatment of Andreasen's objections was filled with two-column, side-by-side comparisons of Andreasen's statements pitted against the Bible, Ellen White, *Questions on Doctrine*, and his own writings from the past. Delivered with very few substantive comments, quotations taken mostly from White's writings pitted against Andreasen's words provided powerful refutations in themselves.<sup>2</sup>

#### Defrocking of Andreasen and the final series of clashes

The interactions that took place between Andreasen and the church leaders in the final year of the retired theologian's life were as tumultuous as those that took place in

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<sup>1</sup>A. V. Olson, "An Examination of M. L. Andreasen's Objections to the Book *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*," 28 June 1960, TMs, C 152, box 28, fld 8, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

the preceding four years. In his rejoinder to Olson entitled “A Most Dangerous Heresy,” Andreasen reiterated his grievances against *Questions on Doctrine*. He pointed out that he had found in the book, “seventeen divergencies [*sic*] from the hitherto accepted and published doctrines of the church.” Of those, he asserted that “the statement found on page 383” was the “worst.”<sup>1</sup> This statement claimed that Christ was “exempt from the inherited passions and pollutions that corrupt the natural descendants of Adam.”<sup>2</sup>

Andreasen believed that the statement in question attacked “the character of God” and charged “both the Father and the Son of outright deceit.”<sup>3</sup> This charge by Andreasen marked quite a departure from his observation three years earlier that “only the section on the Atonement [*sic*] . . . is unacceptable and must be recalled.”<sup>4</sup> He now claimed that it was the book’s stance on the human nature of Christ that was the most reprehensible. He went on to argue that in order for Christ to be “tempted *in all points* like as we are,” he could not be exempt from anything that human beings experience. Echoing the points that he made in *Letters to the Churches*, Andreasen wrote: “If God in any way favored His Son, He would in that act have admitted that man can not keep the law, that it was necessary for God to exempt Christ from some of the requirements He had imposed upon

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “A Most Dangerous Heresy,” September 1960, TMs, C 152, box 28, fld 8, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

<sup>2</sup>*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, 383.

<sup>3</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “A Most Dangerous Heresy,” September 1960, TMs, C 152, box 28, fld 8, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

<sup>4</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “The Atonement, [III],” 4 November 1957, TMs, DF 961-b-1, EGWE.



man. This would be for God to admit defeat.” “Moreover,” he intoned, “it would have vitiated the whole plan of salvation.”<sup>1</sup>

Upon completion of this paper, Andreasen sent it to Figuhr along with a letter that would lead to the removal of his ministerial credentials. In that letter Andreasen demanded “an open, public trial, before an impartial jury and a competent judge” in which he—acting as the prosecutor—would proceed to “place an impeachment against [Figuhr] and others.”<sup>2</sup> This letter, sent just before the Autumn Council of the General Conference Committee, must have convinced Figuhr that Andreasen had indeed gone too far and that the church had been longsuffering enough. Figuhr resolved now to “*at least* suspend the credentials” that Andreasen had held from the day of his ordination to ministry. The dispossession of his credentials would mean that Andreasen would no longer be able to function as an ordained Seventh-day Adventist minister. Figuhr’s desire to suspend Andreasen’s credentials at the Autumn Council was held back, however, due to opposition from the North American union conferences who felt that they “should be more longsuffering.”<sup>3</sup>

When the General Conference Committee met the following year for its Spring Council, however, the leaders were ready to vote to suspend Andreasen’s credentials. Andreasen had not let up on his attacks against the church and its leadership, circulating

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “A Most Dangerous Heresy,” September 1960, TMs, C 152, box 28, fld 8, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>2</sup>M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 8 October 1960, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>R. R. Figuhr to T. E. Unruh, 23 January 1961, TL, RG 11, box 3215, GCA. See also R. R. Figuhr to R. A. Anderson, 25 January 1961, TL, C 152, box 2, fld 16, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

at least three more open letters throughout North America. Utilizing some fresh rounds of ammunition found in Martin's newly released *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*, Andreasen continued to attack the church for neglecting its doctrinal pillars, colluding with evangelicals toward apostasy,<sup>1</sup> crushing and demonizing dissent,<sup>2</sup> and publishing and promoting heretical, apostate teachings throughout the church.<sup>3</sup> Faced with such persistent and defiant efforts, the General Conference officers met on April 5, 1961, and voted to "recommend to the General Conference Committee that the credentials of M. L. Andreasen be suspended."<sup>4</sup> During the Spring Council that convened the following day, the General Conference Committee voted unanimously—as Figuhr put it—"to suspend the credentials of M. L. Andreasen until such time as he can manifest a better spirit of unity and harmony."<sup>5</sup>

The final ten months of Andreasen's life—between the suspension of his ministry credentials and his death on February 19, 1962—continued to be eventful. As soon as he received General Conference secretary W. R. Beach's April 14 letter informing him of the suspension, Andreasen visited Bietz who had recently been elected as the president of the

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen, "The Sabbath School," [October] 1960, TMs, DF 961-e, EGWE.

<sup>2</sup>M. L. Andreasen, "*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, Then *Truth about Seventh-day Adventists [sic]* (Martin)," October 1960, TMs, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>M. L. Andreasen, "The Apostacy [*sic*]," [1960], TMs, DF 961, EGWE.

<sup>4</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Officers' Meeting, 5 April 1961, GCA.

<sup>5</sup>R. R. Figuhr to George J. Appel, 10 April 1961, TL, RG 11, box 3208, GCA. The full text of the resolution to suspend Andreasen's credentials can be found in Minutes of the General Conference Committee, 6 April 1961, GCA.

Pacific Union Conference. Without indicating exactly what he wanted from the church, Andreasen talked to Bietz about his plan to release “damaging material to the public press” and to “enlarge his activities.”<sup>1</sup> This proved to be an empty threat, but Andreasen continued the same course of periodically distributing open letters, though now the protesting of his suspension took center stage. On May 3, he sent a document to Figuhr entitled “A Conversation” which was the transcript of an interview of Andreasen with two unnamed individuals asking him questions. Here Andreasen pointed out what he viewed to be illegal about the General Conference Committee’s decision to suspend him. He insisted that he should have been present to defend himself in order for the decision to be legal. He charged that “untrue slander” and “malicious rumors” were the grounds on which he was “sentenced.” Though his interviewers suggested that he file a “damage suit” for defamation, “not less than \$100,000,” Andreasen refused to go along, though he thought that “would be a sweet revenge.” At the end of the script, he wrote a note to Figuhr telling him to beware. “I never give up,” he wrote.<sup>2</sup>

As stubborn and belligerent as he appeared to be at times, Andreasen did not allow his suspension to sever his ongoing, albeit tumultuous, dialogue with Bietz, Figuhr, and other church leaders. In May 1961, another face-to-face meeting took place between Figuhr, Andreasen, and Bietz in southern California during which they were able to converse “in a friendly fashion.” During this conversation, Andreasen indicated that he had stopped sending out letters and wished that his credentials would be restored. In light

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Bietz to R. R. Figuhr, 3 May 1961, TL, RG 11, box 3209, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “A Conversation,” 3 May 1961, TL, ADF 3773, LLU.

of this unexpected positive development, Andreasen and Figuhr agreed to draft separate promissory statements that would be agreeable to the other side. The statement drafted by Figuhr spelled out the process of restoring Andreasen's credentials. It stated that the credentials would be returned to Andreasen *after* he ceases to circulate documents and forbids others from distributing them.<sup>1</sup> At this point, had Andreasen given even a nominal assent to this statement, his credentials would most likely have been restored in a short time. But he began insisting that the church return his credentials back to him *before* he ceased activities related to criticizing the church.<sup>2</sup>

Disappointed yet again by the church leaders, Andreasen composed a document entitled "A Protest against the Secret Trial of M. L. Andreasen" on July 2, 1961. In this document, Andreasen narrated once again how he came to protest *Questions on Doctrine* and charged that the process that the church leaders took to suspend his credentials lacked "fundamental justice." As he concluded, however, he indicated that the document would not be sent out and directed his attention solely upon Figuhr, calling on him to repent of the wrongs he had committed toward Andreasen and the church. At that point, he had rather pungent words for Figuhr: "I have it in my power to ruin you *completely* [*sic*]. I have no intention to do that, if you turn and make amend. But I am of a mind to go all the way unless you undo the evil you have done."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 31 May 1961, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Bietz to R. R. Figuhr, 29 June 1961, TL, RG 11, box 3209, GCA. See also R. R. Figuhr to R. R. Bietz, 12 July 1961, TL, RG 11, box 3209, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>M. L. Andreasen, "A Protest against the Secret Trial of M. L. Andreasen," 4 July 1961, TMs, ADF 3773, LLU.

In his response, Figuhr simply urged the elder theologian to follow through with the plan that they verbally agreed upon in May: “I cherish the hope, Brother Andreasen, that we can arrive at a friendly understanding and move forward in an atmosphere of confidence.” He then indicated that the officers were quite willing to revoke the suspension of credentials if Andreasen would only agree to cessation of activities that they felt were disruptive and divisive.<sup>1</sup>

But on August 2, Andreasen penned another letter which basically served as the rejection notice to Figuhr’s plea for reconciliation. Andreasen took the *Adventist Church Manual*’s procedure for disfellowshipping members as the norm for all disciplinary actions in the church and strongly criticized the manner in which he was suspended. He demanded a new trial in which he could present evidence and witnesses and defend his position.<sup>2</sup> But in his response, Figuhr pointed out that Andreasen had made a bad comparison as the basis for his reasoning: “There is a wide difference between the disfellowshipping of a church member and temporarily suspending the credentials of a worker.” Furthermore, Figuhr insisted that the primary concern for the General Conference officers was how Andreasen propagated his ideas rather than what he was teaching: “The brethren do not ask that you necessarily retract what you have said, although they are not in agreement with your statements, but they simply want the

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 25 July 1961, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “Letter 1,” 2 August [1961], TL, RG 11, box 3208, GCA.

assurance that, since you have already ceased circulating your material, you do not propose to continue it.”<sup>1</sup>

When Andreasen continued in his defiance and resumed distribution of open letters such as “Memorandum,”<sup>2</sup> “Defence of M. L. Andreasen,”<sup>3</sup> and “Introductory Speech by M. L. Andreasen,”<sup>4</sup> which were resumés of his activities over the previous four years, the General Conference Committee voted to further censure him by removing his name from the list of retired workers in the 1962 *Yearbook*. The committee, however, voted not to withhold sustentation from Andreasen in consideration of his age and health.<sup>5</sup>

While this latest decision was being made at the Autumn Council of the General Conference Committee, Andreasen was on the verge of making another attempt at reconciliation with the church, which raised the hopes of the leaders once again. In a remarkable show of capitulation, he wrote:

I do not wish to argue this matter now. . . . There is a point beyond which protest against what the leaders have done fail [*sic*] to do any good. I think that point has been reached now. Sr. White states that men have a right to protest, but she also says that having made the protest the time will come when we are to leave the matter with

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 4 August 1961, TL, RG 11, box 3208, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “Memorandum,” September 1961, TMs, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “Defence of M. L. Andreasen,” 4 September 1961, TMs, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>4</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “Introductory Speech by M. L. Andreasen,” October 1961, TMs, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>5</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Committee, 2 November 1961, GCA. This decision was communicated to Andreasen in a letter by Beach: W. R. Beach to M. L. Andreasen, 3 November 1961, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

God and let Him handle the case. I feel that this time has come for me. I think I have protested enough, perhaps too much, and that I can safely let God do His work without my help. I think I have gone the limit, and I do not think that any will accuse me of not doing my duty in this respect.

He then pointed to the Autumn Council as the point for his decision. “If nothing was done there,” he wrote, “I would consider my protest a failure, and unconvinced retire from the conflict.” Finally, “as a basis for negotiations” and “discussion,” Andreasen suggested that in the future he would communicate with three or more officers of the church, if he felt he had warnings or messages from God. “I feel . . . that I have spoken to the church,” he remarked, “and hence suggest that if I have any further word, I confine myself to some of the chief officers.”<sup>1</sup>

The receipt of this letter elated Figuhr as he wrote back: “I believe, Brother Andreasen, we are on the way to a better understanding and relationships [*sic*], now that you have come to the conclusion to confine your writing to some three or four individuals of the General Conference.”<sup>2</sup> But back from Andreasen came a completely unexpected reply. In what became his last letter to Figuhr, Andreasen charged that the General Conference president had “completely misread” him and had attributed to him ideas that were not present in his letter. Apparently, while Figuhr had interpreted Andreasen to be proposing unilateral cessation of activities, Andreasen had meant the letter to be merely suggestive—“a *basis of discussion*” and “*negotiation*.” For Andreasen this misunderstanding was another evidence of Figuhr’s imperial attitude toward him. “You

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 30 October 1961, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Figuhr to M. L. Andreasen, 16 November 1961, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

have decided not to discuss, not to negotiate,” he wrote Figuhr. Hence, he told Figuhr, “I accept your decision that you will not discuss nor negotiate.” Nonetheless, he stated emphatically, “I WILL BE HEARD.”<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, Andreasen was determined to be heard, but his voice was being continually weakened by the deterioration of his health. He did manage to get at least two more documents out in his final attempt at being heard. First, he lodged a formal request to Beach on December 20 to “enter impeachment proceedings against R. R. Figuhr.”<sup>2</sup> Next, he issued his final open letter entitled “Shooting the Watchdog” on January 19, 1962, in which he again lamented the persecution he received from the Adventist church and the state of the church which was marked by “lack of common honesty, prevarication, and general disrespect for the laws of God and man.”<sup>3</sup> Neither letter yielded a response from the General Conference.

#### Reconciliation, death, and reinstatement of credentials

By early February, faced with a dramatic decline of his health, Andreasen sought to find peace and reconciliation with his church and asked for a visit by Figuhr. On February 16, Figuhr and Bietz visited Andreasen who was hospitalized at the denomination’s Glendale Sanitarium and Hospital. During this meeting the three men

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 4 December 1961, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>M. L. Andreasen to W. R. Beach, 20 December 1961, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>M. L. Andreasen, “Shooting the Watchdog,” 19 January 1962, TMs, box 11355-11357, GCA.



discussed frankly the issues of Andreasen's activities of the previous five years, his suspended credentials and removal from the *Yearbook*, and financial arrangements for his wife after his death. Andreasen assured the visiting leaders that he did not desire to "engage in any activity which would harm the church" and showed regret over any "doubt and confusion" that his recent writings might have created. He further expressed his desire that his letters and pamphlets not be duplicated for distribution—a message directed especially to "offshoots" of Adventism.<sup>1</sup> Through this conversation, the three men were reconciled. This meeting was especially important for Andreasen because even as he was so deeply agitated by *Questions on Doctrine* and the General Conference, he wanted to be reconciled to his church. His widow, Gladys, stated that Andreasen had "spent many nights sobbing his heart out" regarding being so estranged from the church. But after this meeting, she reported, he was able to die a "happy" man.<sup>2</sup> Three days after his meeting with Figuhr and Bietz, on February 19, Andreasen died at the age of 85.<sup>3</sup>

On March 1, 1962, the General Conferences Committee voted to revoke its former action to suspend Andreasen's credentials. It also voted to put his name back on the list of the retired workers in the *Yearbook*.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the church entered into a financial arrangement with Gladys Andreasen in which she would receive some denominational

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Officers' Meeting, 26 February 1962, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>Gladys Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 27 February 1962, HL, ADF 3773, LLU.

<sup>3</sup>*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1996 ed., s.v. "Andreasen, Milian Lauritz (1876-1962)."

<sup>4</sup>Minutes of the General Conference Committee, 1 March 1962, GCA. See also Minutes of the General Conference Officers' Meeting, 26 February 1962, GCA.

service credit for the time she accompanied her husband in his speaking ministry. Also, she would receive a generous amount for Andreasen's funeral expenses and the sale of his entire library to the General Conference.<sup>1</sup>

Thus ended Andreasen's five-year struggle against *Questions on Doctrine* and the General Conference. However, the struggle over many of the issues raised in Andreasen's attacks as well as in his books of the 1930s and 1940s has continued well beyond his death. At Andreasen's funeral on February 23, T. J. Michael, who read the obituary, said, "Few, very few, have made the impact on the thinking and the faith of Seventh-day Adventists that Elder Andreasen's teaching and writing have made."<sup>2</sup> This statement, at that time, may have been taken as an expression of the eulogistic hyperbole of an admirer. Looking back at Andreasen's life, for many, his final five years made him a pitied figure who lost the high respect he commanded from his active years as a professor and administrator. Many viewed those last few years as a period in which Andreasen ruined his own good name by championing what they considered to be a lost cause. However, considering the theological developments in the decades following his death, Michael was more right than even he might have realized. Ironically, it is because of—not in spite of—the last five years of Andreasen's life that Adventists have come to be so significantly impacted by his teachings. Whatever one might feel about Andreasen,

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<sup>1</sup>See Minutes of the General Conference Officers' Meeting, 4 April 1962, GCA; Minutes of the General Conference Officers' Meeting, 9 April 1962, GCA; Minutes of the General Conference Officers' Meeting, 12 April 1962, GCA; Minutes of the General Conference Officers' Meeting, 4 June 1962, GCA; Minutes of the General Conference Officers' Meeting, 13 June 1962, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>Steinweg, *Without Fear or Favor*, 185.

his writings and the theology therein—whether appealing or not—continue to impact the faith and belief of Seventh-day Adventists worldwide.

### **Reactions to *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism***

It was in early 1960 that the long anticipated *Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* by Walter Martin was published by Zondervan Publishing House. Originally scheduled for 1957, the book had experienced several delays, partly due to delayed publication of its corresponding volume by Adventists, *Questions on Doctrine*.

When Martin's book was finally released it contained a brief statement by an Adventist representative at the beginning of the book. Harry W. Lowe, who was the chairman of the Biblical Study and Research Committee of the General Conference, wrote a 400-word "Statement" both to recommend the book as a product of "a sincere desire to study fully at firsthand" the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists and to disavow the portions in which Adventists believe "the author has erroneously criticized" Adventist history and theology. The only part of the book that Lowe could wholeheartedly endorse and agree with was the forty-page section in which Martin extensively quoted *Questions on Doctrine* to reconstruct the key beliefs of Adventism. In spite of several "unfounded" criticisms that he regretted seeing in the book, Lowe commended Martin for "his earnest endeavor to set forth correctly [the Adventist] doctrinal positions and . . . his attitude of Christian brotherhood."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>H. W. Lowe, "A Statement," in *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1960), 15.

Not all Adventists were as charitable toward Martin as Lowe was in the “Statement,” or toward Lowe’s commendations. In his letter to Figuhr, Nichol agreed with Lowe that Martin had written in a “kindly way,” much more than what Adventists were used to. But “therein lies the great danger of this book,” he warned. “In fact, I consider it the most subtly dangerous attack on us that has been made in many a year.” He was also concerned that the non-Adventist world would take Lowe’s words “as a kind of endorsement of the book.” As a result, he wrote, “I don’t think we should ever have put such a prefatory page in a book that is subtly attempting to show that many of our teachings are wrong.”<sup>1</sup>

Nichol was not alone in feeling troubled by Martin’s *Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*. On March 24 of the same year, Theodore Carcich, president of the Central Union Conference, sent a letter to all the local conference presidents within his union expressing his disappointment with the book. “Under a guise of sweet-honeyed words oozing with so-called Christian fellowship,” he wrote, “Mr. Martin proceeds to serve up the same theological hash regarding the Sabbath, state of the dead, investigative judgment and the Spirit of Prophecy that our spiritual forefathers had to refute years ago.” “This theological Boy Scout has taken it upon himself,” he continued, “to speak with pontifical finality upon the foundational doctrines of our message as if he were supreme authority on things Biblical, and he is anything but that.”<sup>2</sup> Carcich then sent a copy of this letter to Figuhr since he did “not wish to do anything in the dark.” Echoing Nichol’s words, he

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<sup>1</sup>F. D. Nichol to R. R. Figuhr, 10 March 1960, TL, RG 11, box 3208, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>Theodore Carcich to [Local Conference] Presidents, 24 March 1960, TL, RG 11, box 3208, GCA.

called the book “a clever and subtle attempt to undermine the foundational doctrines of Seventh-day Adventism.” As such, he told Figuhr that the Adventist bookstores in the Central Union Conference would not be stocking Martin’s book as it would “confuse the faith of many.”<sup>1</sup>

The voices of concern over Martin’s book grew even louder as Adventist bookstores in various parts of the country began carrying the title for sale. R. E. Finney, president of the Wisconsin Conference, felt that the book “could well mean a disaster for some . . . if it falls into their hands.” He then wondered if it had been a wise decision to widely publicize the book through denominational publications.<sup>2</sup>

These voices must have raised enough concerns among administrators, because a decision was made in April 1960 to clear Adventist bookstores of Martin’s new book. The rationale given for this decision was that proper protocol had not been followed. In order to place the book in circulation among Adventist bookstores, it had to be reviewed and recommended by the General Conference Publishing Department, which had not occurred. More importantly, Adventist leaders reasoned that Martin’s book “is definitely not the truth” about Adventism. Rather, it was one that is full of objectionable and erroneous content. Thus the church could not allow what it knew to be in error to continue to be sold in its bookstores.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Theodore Carcich to R. R. Figuhr, 24 March 1960, TL, RG 11, box 3208, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>R. E. Finney to F. D. Nichol, 22 April 1960, TL, RG 11, box 3208, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>W. A. Peterson to P. J. Zondervan, 22 April 1960, TL, RG 11, box 3208, GCA.

When he learned of this important development, Martin immediately wrote Figuhr, protesting “censorship” of his book. He argued that he had striven hard to be factual in his presentation of Adventist belief and pointed out that Adventist leaders had taken part in critiquing the book before its publication.<sup>1</sup> To this, Figuhr replied that the original purpose of the Adventist bookstores was to be the “sales outlets” of the church’s three publishing houses in North America. But this was not the only reason why Martin’s book was not being stocked and sold. “While you have done a magnificent job in setting forth fairly our beliefs and teachings,” Figuhr explained, “you do, on the other hand, sharply attack a number of our doctrines.” Hence, Figuhr told Martin that writing reviews of the book in the church’s publications was all that could be done to publicize it.<sup>2</sup>

Lowe’s review of *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* in the May 1960 issue of *Ministry* was the first review of the book in an Adventist periodical. Lowe praised Martin for making the effort to “ascertain the real teachings” of Adventism and to exhibit true “Christian grace.” Then, in the rest of the short review, Lowe went on to give a summary of the major sections of the book without commenting on the merits of the arguments.<sup>3</sup> What Lowe did not state in his review, Anderson provided with a narration of how Martin came to publish this book in an article in the same issue entitled “Giving the Trumpet a Certain Sound.” After a quick narration of events, Anderson asked the readers to remember that “this book was not written for Adventists, but for Christians of

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<sup>1</sup>Walter R. Martin to R. R. Figuhr, 29 April 1960, HL, RG 11, box 3208, GCA.

<sup>2</sup>R. R. Figuhr to Walter R. Martin, 6 May 6 1960, TL, RG 11, box 3208, GCA.

<sup>3</sup>H. W. Lowe, Review of *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*, *Ministry*, May 1960, 37, 38.

other faiths, most of whom do not know” what Adventists believe in. He pointed out that Martin had identified “the nature of man, the law and the Sabbath, the sanctuary and the judgment, and [Martin’s] evaluation of the writings of Ellen White” as “the main areas of his disagreement.” Anderson then announced that *Ministry* would be carrying articles in the months to come on these themes “covering these points and showing . . . the weaknesses in his arguments.”<sup>1</sup>

What followed thereafter in a prolonged response to the major criticisms made in Martin’s book were fifteen articles published between June 1960 and July 1961.<sup>2</sup> These articles, written by six different writers, were put together with some minor adjustments into a single volume entitled *Doctrinal Discussions*, which also included one additional article written by an unnamed author on “Views on the Law in the Creeds of Various

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<sup>1</sup>R. A. Anderson, “Giving the Trumpet a Certain Sound,” *Ministry*, May 1960, 14.

<sup>2</sup>These articles in chronological order were: Edward Heppenstall, “The Law in Adventist Theology and Christian Experience,” *Ministry*, June 1960, 4-10; W. E. Read, “The Investigative, or Pre-Advent, Judgment: Does This Teaching Have Any Biblical Basis?” *Ministry*, July 1960, 4-8; H. W. Lowe, “Ellen White and the Spirit of Prophecy,” *Ministry*, September 1960, 26-30; ; Richard Hammill, “The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day,” *Ministry*, September 1960, 16-20, 37, 38; idem, “The Sabbath or the Lord’s Day?” *Ministry*, October 1960, 6-11; H. W. Lowe, “Alleged Outside Influence on Ellen White,” *Ministry*, October 1960, 14-17; Richard Hammill, “Primary Anti-Sabbatarian Texts,” *Ministry*, November 1960, 12-18; idem, “Primary Anti-Sabbatarian Texts,” *Ministry*, December 1960, 7-12; W. E. Read, “The Investigative, or Pre-Advent, Judgment: Does the Bible Reveal the Time for This Phase of the Judgment to Begin?” *Ministry*, December 1960, 14-19, 35; R. Allan Anderson, “Life Only in Christ,” *Ministry*, January 1961, 7-14, 35-37; idem, “The Immortality of the Soul: Natural Immortality Unsupported by Hebrew and Greek,” *Ministry*, February 1961, 8-13, 39, 40; D. E. Mansell, “The Nature of Man, Part I,” *Ministry*, March 1961, 20-23; idem, “The Nature of Man,” *Ministry*, April 1961, 11-16; Edward Heppenstall, “The Hour of God’s Judgment Is Come,” *Ministry*, June 1961, 8-13, 30, 31; idem, “The Hour of God’s Judgment Is Come, Continued,” *Ministry*, July 1961, 6-13, 38.

Churches.” In his preface to this compilation, Figuhr stated that while the purpose of these articles was to refute Martin’s efforts to disprove the doctrines that Adventists hold to be biblical, Adventists would not deny Martin’s “privilege” of holding teachings different from their own and to “become somewhat argumentative in his disagreement.” He observed, however, that Martin’s arguments were not new. “Practically all, with some variation,” he pointed out, “can be traced back” to D. M. Canright whom he characterized as “a certain rather ambitious person who spent some thirty years in intimate association with Adventists and in actively propagating their beliefs before he discovered at long last that they were all wrong.” Figuhr also noted that external challenges on doctrinal issues were not necessarily a negative experience. “To have various points of his faith questioned and attacked should stimulate the Christian to further Bible study and a re-examination of the reasons of his faith,” he maintained. “This, in the end, should lead to very beneficial results—either the discovery of weaknesses and even perhaps error, or to a firmer conviction and added assurance of his beliefs.” He submitted that the articles in this book were the fruits of the latter experience.<sup>1</sup>

Interestingly, the sixteen responses in *Doctrinal Discussions* were focused differently than were the issues that Adventists had been grappling with among themselves. Satisfied with the responses provided in *Questions on Doctrine*, Martin had not taken issue with the concepts of the multi-phased atonement and the human nature of Christ. Though *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* did criticize the investigative

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<sup>1</sup>Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Doctrinal Discussions: A Compilation of Articles Originally Appearing in The Ministry, June, 1960—July, 1960, in Answer to Walter R. Martin’s Book The Truth About Seventh-day Adventism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, [1961]), 7, 8.



judgment teaching as one of the four key areas of criticism, Martin's focus was on whether the teaching could be supported by Scripture—not what its relationship to the cross was in the doctrine of the atonement, as Adventists had been debating. In fact, all of Martin's questions converged on the question: Is there a clear biblical basis for each of these doctrines? Martin had answered “no” to each of the four doctrines. In return, the Adventist writers set out to demonstrate from Scripture that the answer was “yes.” Their responses were neither innovative nor creative. Just as Martin's critiques were not new, so the responses did not go outside the boundaries of traditional Adventist apologetics in their reasoning. But the tone of their presentations reflected the changing of times in Adventist-evangelical relations. Mirroring the more dispassionate and sensitive tone that *Questions on Doctrines* and *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* had cultivated, these *Ministry* articles adopted the same tone of respectful disagreement under the watchful guidance of Anderson who was still serving as the editor.

### ***Movement of Destiny and the End of an Era***

The doctrinal debate over the issues engendered by the Adventist-evangelical dialogues, *Questions on Doctrine*, and *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* subsided significantly after Andreasen died in 1962. At least in North America, the rest of the 1960s was a period marked less by theological debates and more by administrative and institutional changes. Particularly for the key participants of the Adventist-evangelical conferences, this period was one of major transitions. In 1964 Froom retired from full-time teaching at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, while Figuhr and

Anderson retired from their positions at the General Conference in 1966. (Read had already retired from the General Conference in 1960.)

In his retirement Froom engaged in the writing of what would prove to be his final major work. Published in 1971 as *Movement of Destiny*, the book attempted to provide a theological history of Adventism from its roots in Millerism and mid-nineteenth-century America to the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*. According to Froom, this was a project that A. G. Daniells, a former General Conference president, had recommended that Froom undertake. Froom reported that Daniells had urged him in the spring of 1930 to write “a thorough survey of the entire plan of redemption . . . *from 1844 onward, with special emphasis upon the developments of ‘1888,’ and its sequel.*” At the same time, Daniells told Froom to wait “for certain theological wounds to heal, and for attitudes to modify on the part of some,” and even for some individuals to have “dropped out of action,” before engaging in the writing of this volume. Though it had taken more than thirty-five years for him to devote himself fully to this project, it was Froom’s sense of his place in history as “a connecting link” between the pioneers of Adventism and his contemporaries that led him to persist in the development of the project over the intervening years.<sup>1</sup>

Consistent with the style and thrust of Froom’s earlier works, such as *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* and *The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers*, *Movement of Destiny* was not necessarily a dispassionate history of the development of Adventist theology, but an unabashedly apologetic work that promoted the author’s particular view

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<sup>1</sup>Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 17.

of Adventist history. For Froom, Adventism represented the “Movement of Destiny” which was commissioned by God in the end-time to play “the role of recoverers and consummators” of the “lost and trampled truths” which were “held in embryo in the apostolic church” and “began to be heralded anew . . . by the Reformation leaders and their successors.”<sup>1</sup> Froom extended this evolutionary view of Christian history to Adventism and identified the 1888 General Conference session in Minneapolis as an epochal moment in Adventist history which provided a much-needed corrective to the theological errors held by the pioneers and opened a new era in which the “eternal verities” (i.e., the foundational doctrines of Christianity) and the “testing truths” (i.e., the distinctive beliefs of Adventism) were being developed in progressive harmony through a succession of publications and events.<sup>2</sup>

For Froom the 1957 publication of *Questions on Doctrine* was another epochal event which emphasized the importance of the “eternal verities” to Adventism, while stressing also its “testing truths.” Froom noted that the book affirmed Adventism’s enlightened commitment to Christian orthodoxy which led to the removal of prejudices that other Christians had held against Adventism. What enabled the book to change “the impaired image of Adventism,” according to Froom, was its formal repudiation of such concepts formerly held by individual Adventist leaders as Christ being the literal, created son of God and Christ’s death on the cross providing an incomplete atonement. The segment of *Questions on Doctrine* that most capably accomplished this task, in Froom’s

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 27, 28.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 73-76.

opinion, was Appendices A, B, and C, which were “definitive” compilations of Ellen White’s writings on the Trinity, Christ’s human nature, and the atonement. For him, these appendices represented “the climax of the volume” which “completed the long process of clarification, rectification of misconceptions, and declarations of truth before [the Christian] Church and the world, presenting [Adventists’] united and truly authoritative position on these long-misunderstood points.”<sup>1</sup>

As proof of his assertion that *Questions on Doctrine* provided a much-needed corrective to misconceptions held by non-Adventists, Froom cited numerous personal correspondences he had had with evangelical, Catholic, and Jewish leaders. He reported that these religious leaders from around the world not only “expressed genuine satisfaction in having obtained a reliable portrait of the essence of Adventism,” but also acknowledged Adventists “to be recognized as truly Christian believers.”<sup>2</sup>

What Froom omitted from *Movement of Destiny*, however, was mention of opposition to *Questions on Doctrine* from a much larger segment of evangelicalism and from Andreasen and his supporters within Adventism. Because Froom wrote on the influence that *Questions on Doctrine* had on evangelicals and other Christians in such glowing terms, the reader is left with a false impression that contemporary evangelical reactions to the book were unanimously positive—which was hardly the case, as documented in chapter 3. While Froom gave no account of Adventist responses to *Questions on Doctrine*, it is abundantly clear from his presentation that he thought all

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 484, 485.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 488-492.

Adventists ought to accept the book as a “representative and reliable”<sup>1</sup> account of the church’s beliefs. In Froom’s eyes, for an Adventist to disagree with the book or view any part of it negatively meant rejecting God’s “eternal verities” couched in the book and seeking to return Adventism to the era of doctrinal immaturity.

Notwithstanding his own assumptions about the reactions to *Questions on Doctrine*, Froom did not fail to engage in polemics on the two critical issues that Andreasen raised. After narrating an account of how the Adventist-evangelical conferences and *Questions on Doctrines* came about, Froom spent two chapters detailing support, taken largely from Ellen White’s writings, for the positions on the divine-human nature of Christ and the atonement taken by him and his colleagues in *Questions on Doctrines*. He claimed that White’s (and the Bible’s) position on the divine-human natures of Christ was not understood and held as representative by Adventists until the 1931 statement of fundamental beliefs and was not fully understood until the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*. Thus, for post-*Questions on Doctrine* Adventists, belief in either the semi-Arian view of Christ’s divine nature or the post-lapsarian view of Christ’s human nature would mean deviation from White’s “Heaven-indicted [*sic*] portrayal.”<sup>2</sup> Froom also argued that White taught “so much and so soundly, and so consistently and constantly” the view of a complete sacrificial atonement made on the cross. He insinuated that to refer to that atonement as less than complete—as had Andreasen

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 492.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 500. See also 493-500.

(though his name was nowhere mentioned)—would be to revert to an earlier era of “confusion and misunderstanding” on this subject.<sup>1</sup>

Froom came closest to making a reference to Andreasen and his activities in the next two chapters entitled “The Lesson of the Faltering Messenger.” These chapters, dealing with the fate of Adventism’s famous apostates from the first decade of the twentieth century, were curiously placed out of the chronological order of presentation that Froom had been following up to that point. The “lesson” that Froom drew from his account of the “faltering” experiences of A. T. Jones, E. J. Waggoner, J. H. Kellogg, and F. E. Belden was that “their defection did not invalidate the truth they brought.” These chapters, placed immediately after the discussions on the *Questions on Doctrine* saga, were undoubtedly designed as an appraisal of Andreasen’s legacy. It seems that Froom sought to affirm Andreasen’s ministry in the Adventist church, while classifying him as a “faltering messenger” who strayed in his final days.<sup>2</sup>

Froom closed these two chapters by likening the decisions of life to a choice between “two roads—a higher road and a lower road—with contrasting endings.” “Happy the lot of him,” he declaimed poignantly, “who comes to the sunset of life on the upper road, in full fellowship with God and accord with the Church; who ever remains in fundamental loyalty to the body of Truth for which it stands; who is at peace with God and in harmony with his brethren.” “On the other hand,” he continued, “tragic the plight of the one who, after a life of service, grows confused, warped, or soured in his thinking,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 500-517.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 518-540.

and who comes to misconceive error as being truth, and now regards attested truth as error; who has broken fellowship with his brethren, and turned away from the Church he once served so well.” Given such a direct parallel between this passage and how many church leaders viewed the end of Andreasen’s life, it is difficult not to see the controversy between Andreasen and the Adventist church as providing a subtext for these statements. Interestingly though, Froom noted that the one who ultimately takes the “lower road” should be “pitied rather than censured.” Perhaps his further reflections on the Andreasen affair led him to feel regret for how the church had handled the dissent. Whatever Froom’s sentiments may have been on the church’s treatment of Andreasen, his assessment of “defectors” such as Waggoner and Jones (and inferentially Andreasen) was that they had made “tragic” choices that lead to “a lonely, frustrating end.”<sup>1</sup>

For reasons not directly related to Froom’s treatment of *Questions on Doctrine, Movement of Destiny* was allowed to go out of print in the late 1970s. In other sections of the book, Froom had taken a strong stand against the charge made by Robert Wieland and Donald Short since the early 1950s that Adventist leaders had rejected God’s message given to the church in 1888. In two separate sections, Froom declared unequivocally that the leaders did not reject the message of 1888 given through Waggoner and Jones. Rather, he concluded that the leaders, after initial ambivalence and rejection, came to embrace and promote the message.<sup>2</sup> Though Wieland and Short were not mentioned by name, Froom’s characteristically opinionated treatment was perceived as being unfair

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 266, 357-374, 444, 445, 681-686.

toward the two missionaries to Africa. Robert Pierson, who succeeded Figuhr in 1966 as the General Conference president and had written the foreword to the book, shared that perception and refused to allow the foreword to be carried in future printings unless Froom's rebuttal to Wieland and Short was modified or expunged. By that time, Froom had passed away and the managers of his estate refused to make changes. The Review and Herald Publishing Association then quietly allowed the book to go out of print.<sup>1</sup>

The "demise" of *Movement of Destiny* coincided roughly with that of *Questions on Doctrine*. When Latin American Adventists requested permission to translate *Questions on Doctrine* into Spanish in 1975, the General Conference leaders made a decision to permit neither translation nor reprinting of the book in English.<sup>2</sup> This decision was reflective of the changing of the guard that had taken place in the General Conference since the retirement of those who participated in the Adventist-evangelical dialogues and the preparation process of *Questions on Doctrine*. In the years after Pierson's appointment to the General Conference presidency, a new cadre of leaders had received assignments to influential positions within the church. The new group was far more sympathetic toward Andreasen than toward *Questions on Doctrine*, which was a significant factor in the discontinuation of *Questions on Doctrine* and *Movement of*

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<sup>1</sup>"Interview with Raymond F. Cottrell" by Jerry Moon, 20 November 1988, in Jerry Moon, "M. L. Andreasen, L. E. Froom, and the Controversy over *Questions on Doctrine*" (term paper, Andrews University, 1988), 63-69.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 66.



*Destiny* and the re-introduction of certain features of Andreasen's theology in denominational literature.<sup>1</sup>

In many ways, *Movement of Destiny* signaled the end of an era in Adventist history. First, the book offered one final, first-hand look at the controversy stemming from the Adventist-evangelical dialogues. Though Adventists would continue to debate various portions of *Questions on Doctrine*, Froom's book was unique in that it was the last major testimony offered by a participant of the dialogues. Second, the book (with its heavy polemic against Wieland and Short) helped broaden the Adventist theological discourse from issues specific to *Questions on Doctrine* to a wider debate on soteriology. Adventists were becoming quite consumed and divided by questions surrounding the definition and meaning of salvation (particularly the meaning of righteousness by faith) and were no longer focusing on specific statements made in *Questions on Doctrine*. Third, the decision not to reprint Froom's book and *Questions on Doctrine* marked the church leaders' unwillingness to prolong the residual debate from the 1950s. Seeing that continuing circulation of the two books might result in rekindling the debate, the leaders chose to firmly close the door on the *Questions on Doctrine* controversy and to put it behind them once and for all. Their decision was an attempt to put to rest the turbulent chapter in Adventism that began with Martin's 1955 visit to the General Conference and

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<sup>1</sup>See Kenneth H. Wood, "How We Got Where We Are: A Review of Some Aspects of Adventist History since 1955," November 1978, TMs, restricted document, AU. Wood who became the editor of *Review and Herald* in 1966 is an example of those who gained significant influence as a result of Pierson's appointment to the General Conference presidency. In this document presented to Pierson's advisors, Wood did not hide his preference for Andreasen's theology and his criticism of *Questions on Doctrine* and *Movement of Destiny*.

continued through the Adventist-evangelical dialogues, the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*, and the extensive reactions that these events spawned throughout the 1950s through 1970s.

### Summary and Conclusions

Even after the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences became widely known and the articles by Barnhouse and Martin were printed in *Eternity*, Adventists gave few public reactions to the two events. The reactions that did appear in denominational publications were uniformly positive. In particular, many Adventist leaders saw the publication of the *Eternity* articles as a historic event that had a providential cause. Though there were only a few direct reactions, many indirect ones appeared in *Ministry* in the form of theological commentaries that were designed primarily to prepare Adventists for *Questions on Doctrine*. One central agenda for these articles was to demonstrate that the Adventist church teaches that Christ's atonement was completed on the cross, that his human nature was radically different from that of humanity, and that his divine nature was co-equal with God the Father and the Holy Spirit.

What is most interesting about the reactions presented in the *Ministry* articles is the contrast between the Adventist leaders' assertion that "no attempt whatsoever has been made to add to, take from, or change [Adventist] doctrines,"<sup>1</sup> and Barnhouse's and Martin's observations that there had indeed been a change. In June 1956, in two separate

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<sup>1</sup>R[oy] A[llan] A[nderson], "Changing Attitudes toward Adventism," *Ministry*, December 1956, 17.

letters to Martin, Froom declared, “We are *not* changing our faith. We need to be very careful about statements along that line. We are repudiating the positions of some who, in earlier days and a few hang-overs today, held positions in contravention to our sound scholarship, and the clear counsels of Mrs. E. G. White.” Therefore, Froom insisted, “we need to be careful about giving the impression that we are changing our faith.”<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, writing to Martin the following day, Froom cautioned him again that “the impression must not be created that we are repudiating or changing our basic ‘official’ teachings. . . . We are simply repudiating misrepresentative statements, misstatements, and carelessly worded statements of our true positions. . . . What we have done in the forty or fifty Answers to Questions [*sic*] is to amplify, clarify, correct misconceptions, and unfold our true teachings in language which can be better understood.”<sup>2</sup>

However, it appears that neither Barnhouse nor Martin fully accepted Froom’s explanations. Barnhouse, in his September 1956 *Eternity* article, remarked that “the position of the Adventists seems to some of us in certain cases to be a new position.”<sup>3</sup> In a letter written on January 24, 1957, to a former Adventist pastor, Barnhouse asserted that “the whole doctrine of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment have undergone recasting and reinterpretation in Adventist theology within the last few years.” He then informed his correspondent that “in the new definitive volume entitled ‘This We

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<sup>1</sup>LeRoy Edwin Froom to Walter R. Martin, 18 June 1956, TL, ADF 3773.06c, LLU.

<sup>2</sup>LeRoy Edwin Froom to Walter R. Martin, 19 June 1956, TL, C 152, box 2, fld 11, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

<sup>3</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse, “Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians? A New Look at Seventh-day Adventism,” *Eternity*, September 1956, 7.

Believe—The Faith of Seventh-day Adventists’ [the initial title of *Questions on Doctrine*], which will be published by the General Conference the early part of this year, these reinterpretations are rather plainly evident.”<sup>1</sup>

Martin was equally forceful in his conclusion that Adventism had undergone transformation in certain areas of its beliefs. In his November 1956 article in *Eternity*, Martin pronounced the “Seventh-day Adventism in 1956” to be “a far cry from the Adventism . . . of Dudley Canright in his book *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced* [published in 1889].” Martin concluded that “many of the earlier minority positions in Adventism have either been reversed or revised in line with the convictions of the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination that advancing light and progressive truth make necessary clarification and adherence to the cardinal truths of the gospel.”<sup>2</sup>

So, had Adventism changed or not? This question would become one of the most intriguing issues of the controversy that unfolded thereafter. Though evangelical critics of the *Eternity* articles (and later, *Questions on Doctrine*) charged that Adventism had not really changed—that it was the same legalistic, non-Christian cult of the previous 100 years, Barnhouse and Martin never budged from their position that the Adventism of the 1950s was indeed Christian and devoid of the heresies that had disfigured nineteenth-century Adventism. By portraying what had happened in the intervening years as

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Grey Barnhouse to R. A. Greive, 24 January 1957, TL, “Seventh-day Adventists, 1956-1957” folder, Donald Grey Barnhouse Collection, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

<sup>2</sup>Walter R. Martin, “The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism: What Seventh-day Adventists Really Believe,” *Eternity*, November 1956, 38, 39.

“changes,” they were attempting to justify their acceptance of Adventism as Christian and to convince other evangelicals to change their attitudes toward Adventism.

Meanwhile, Adventist leaders in the mid-1950s stood firm in their position that nothing of the essence had changed in their doctrines and that Adventism had always taught the teachings as expressed in *Ministry* and in the forthcoming book, *Questions on Doctrine*. They were disappointed to read the assertions by Barnhouse and Martin indicating that Adventist theology was different from that of the yesteryears. In a letter to Froom written just after Barnhouse’s *Eternity* article came out, Unruh wished that the evangelical leader “had not left the impression that [Adventists] might be shifting [their] position.”<sup>1</sup> Conveying the idea that no change had been made was even more critical for Adventist leaders since any change would be perceived by many rank and file Adventists as compromise and even apostasy. Already by early 1957, charges were being made that Adventist leaders were changing and misrepresenting historic Adventist beliefs on Christ’s nature and atoning work.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it was important for Adventist leaders to declare unequivocally that no change had been made.

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<sup>1</sup>T. E. Unruh to L. E. Froom, 22 August 1956, TL, ADF 3773.06c, LLU. After expressing his dismay, however, Unruh went on to offer an explanation for Barnhouse’s statement: “Of course, it must be recognized that Dr. B. finds himself in a difficult spot. Any reversal on his part calls for some face saving . . .” Adventist leaders, therefore, “should be understanding and sympathetic,” he wrote.

<sup>2</sup>See J. Korlvinka to Brethren in Christ [General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists], 6 January 1957, TL, RG 11, box 3738, GCA; H. O. Olson to A. V. Olson, 27 February 1957, RG 11, box 3738, GCA; M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 7 March 1957, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA; M. L. Andreasen to R. R. Figuhr, 11 March 1957, TL, box 11355-11357, GCA.

At the same time, it was equally important for them to explain to their evangelical counterparts that the Adventism of 1956 was indeed different from either the Adventism as portrayed in contemporary cult apologetics literature or the Adventism of generations past when dissenting positions were given space in denominational publications. This dilemma of having to please both the Adventist and evangelical critics is evident in Anderson's letter to Martin immediately following the publication of Figuhr's article in the December 13, 1956, issue of *Review and Herald*.<sup>1</sup> Anderson attached a copy of the article with the letter and preempted the potential disappointment that Martin might feel with this warning: "You may wonder why [Figuhr] is stating so definitely that this is not a modification or alteration of our beliefs, et cetera." Such a statement was necessary, he explained, because of "a man or two here and there that is inclined to feel that what we are doing is something that will seriously change our position, et cetera." Still, Anderson wished that Figuhr's statement "might have been worded just a little differently." After reproducing Figuhr's line—"The answers [by Adventist leaders] therefore are not in any sense a modification or alteration of what Seventh-day Adventists proclaim to the world as their beliefs"—Anderson proceeded to offer what he would have written, "The answers therefore are not in any sense a modification or alteration of the real truth Seventh-day Adventists have been called to proclaim to the world." This statement "would be more in harmony with facts," he wrote Martin, "because you know and I know that some statements have been made publicly and have appeared in print which are not in harmony with the actual truth. . . ." Then he concluded by reassuring Martin that the

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Figuhr, "A Non-Adventist Examines Our Beliefs," *Review and Herald*, 13 December 1956, 3, 4.

Adventist leaders were “very conscious of” the problem. At the same time, Anderson reminded Martin that “it will serve the best interests of all concerned if we help our own people to know that there is no serious movement to change our belief, but rather to clarify it.”<sup>1</sup>

In essence, it appears that Adventist leaders such as Anderson were engaged in a double entendre involving the word “clarify.” They assured fellow Adventists that the church was merely clarifying—i.e., making clear—the traditional teachings of Adventism. Then, to Barnhouse and Martin, they asserted that they were in the process of clarifying—i.e., clearing away unorthodox elements from—Adventist teachings. This shows what an awkward position the Adventist leaders placed themselves in. Nonetheless, they were jubilant over the agreement that they reached at least with Barnhouse and Martin on a crucial point—that Adventism as it stood in 1956 was an orthodox, Christian denomination and should be welcomed into evangelical fellowship.

Were the Adventist leaders honest and forthright in this process? Many critics within and without Adventism would quickly accuse the Adventist leaders of deliberate misrepresentation of Adventist history and beliefs. Though many within the church did not believe that their leaders had misrepresented Adventism and had lauded their efforts, several individuals within the church, such as M. L. Andreasen, would criticize vigorously the Adventist-evangelical conferences, the *Eternity* articles, and certain doctrinal points presented in the Adventist answers to the questions put forth by Martin

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<sup>1</sup>R. Allan Anderson to Walter R. Martin, 11 December 1956, TL, ADF 3773.06c, LLU.

and Barnhouse. Thus they all too quickly fulfilled Cottrell's prediction concerning the divisive effect *Questions on Doctrine* would have on the church.

Though at least 250 Adventist church leaders received pre-publication manuscripts of *Questions on Doctrine* in the fall of 1956, very few responded with substantive reviews. Those who did respond were generally positive about the idea of publishing the manuscript and gave their support to the project. However, a handful of them made substantive critiques of the manuscript. In addition to the criticisms of over-reliance on historical sources and inadequate biblical support for the doctrinal positions, several reviewers criticized the manuscript's failure to present a fair and honest picture of Adventist beliefs. Because of these problems, some went further to propose a more thorough process of review aimed at fine-tuning the document theologically. Most of these suggestions went unheeded as the pressure exerted by Froom, Read, and Anderson to make the manuscript acceptable to Martin and Barnhouse often trumped other concerns. Whatever criticisms or disagreements there may have been prior to the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*, Adventist leaders—at least publicly—were united behind the book when it was finally released.

There was one figure, however, who sullied that unity. As a retiree living in southern California, M. L. Andreasen had not hitherto been involved with either the dialogues with the evangelicals or the preparation of the *Questions on Doctrine* manuscript. But he had become deeply disturbed by Froom's article on the atonement in the February 1957 issue of *Ministry*. He understood Froom to be adopting the evangelical view that Christ's death on the cross constituted the "final atonement." For Andreasen, this was a contemptible compromise of the Adventist doctrine of the sanctuary, especially



the investigative judgment concept. His suspicion that something was awry in the General Conference was exacerbated when he heard of Read and Anderson approaching the board of the White Estate requesting that explanatory insertions be added to Ellen White's writings on the atonement. Andreasen concluded that a systematic effort to change Adventist beliefs was being made. Apostasy, he believed, was brewing in the heart of the church's headquarters.

For the next five years, until his death in February 1962, Andreasen's modus operandi was one of suspicion toward church leaders and *Questions on Doctrine*. Though initially his only concern with *Questions on Doctrine* was its presentation on the doctrine of the atonement, the list of "divergencies [*sic*]" eventually grew to seventeen, of which the book's position on the human nature of Christ was perceived as the most dangerous.<sup>1</sup> Throughout these five years, Andreasen was a man on a mission—to correct the theologically errant course that the church was on and to limit and turn back the impact of *Questions on Doctrine*. Particularly during the four-and-a-half years between the publication of the book and his death, he took his mission to the general church membership by propagating two major series of letters—first, the "Atonement" series, then the *Letters to the Churches* series—in which he called for revision or withdrawal of *Questions on Doctrine* and a cleansing of the apostate elements in the church's hierarchy.

The cornerstone of Andreasen's theology was his last generation theology which taught that there will arise a generation of God's people in the end-time who will overcome sin completely and demonstrate to the universe that it is possible to live a

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<sup>1</sup>M. L. Andreasen, "A Most Dangerous Heresy," September 1960, TMs, C 152, box 28, fld 8, Roy Allan Anderson Collection, AU.

sinless life. This theology served as the background for Andreasen's insistence on reserving the wording of "the final atonement" to the investigative judgment era—a special time in the history of redemption when the final blotting out of sin was to take place and the last generation would arise. This theology required also that Christ's human nature be exactly like human beings born in sin so that he could serve as the model for the last generation who would be born in sin but experience the same victory over sin that Jesus did. Due to the importance of the final atonement and postlapsarianism to his signature theology of the last generation, Andreasen fought forcefully against the prelapsarianism of *Questions on Doctrine* and its presentation of the cross as the central feature of the atonement. If Christ's human nature was in any way different from that of an ordinary human being and if the cross finished the work of atonement, Andreasen's last generation theology would become superfluous and irrelevant and his theological legacy as well as what he saw as the theological heritage of the Adventist pioneers that he sought to protect throughout his career would crumble. Thus, for Andreasen, his reaction to *Questions on Doctrine* went much beyond doctrinal discussions; it was a monumental struggle for the survival of the Adventist movement.<sup>1</sup>

Figuhr, Froom, Read, and Anderson as well as many other church leaders did not share Andreasen's enthusiasm for his last generation theology. These leaders approached Andreasen and his agitation less as a theological question and more as an ecclesiastical or administrative issue. Initially, theology was debated and ideas were rebutted and defended. But the focus gradually shifted to *how* and *with what attitude* Andreasen was

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<sup>1</sup>For more discussions on Andreasen's last generation theology, see Knight, *A Search for Identity*, 144-152; Haynes, "The Final Generation."

presenting his case, rather than *what* he was arguing for. That brought the elderly theologian to great consternation. Figuhr and other leaders did seek to alleviate Andreasen's fears by assuring him that there was no conspiracy at work to change theology and reminding him that he himself had in the past made the very statements he was attacking now. However, Andreasen would not relent and became increasingly difficult to reasonably communicate with, which ultimately led to the suspension of his ministerial credentials.

The publication of Walter Martin's *Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* came on the heels of the last of Andreasen's *Letters to the Churches*—at the height of the tension between the church leadership and Andreasen. This timing may partially explain why the book did not trigger very many reactions from Adventists. The only significant reaction came in the form of *Ministry* articles between 1960 and 1961 that provided rebuttals to the four major areas of criticism found in Martin's book. Taking into account the venue in which these articles were printed, the purpose of these articles was to provide clear Adventist responses to the questions that Martin might have raised in the minds of Adventists. In essence, the articles were designed to reaffirm Adventist beliefs for Adventists, rather than to convince a non-Adventist of the correctness of Adventist doctrines. By this time, this series must have been accompanied by a fair amount of fatigue for Adventist pastors and leaders. It had been more than seven years since Martin first visited the General Conference. Throughout that period, Adventists were actively engaged in interdenominational dialogues, mostly consisting of doctrinal apologetics. By mid-1961, Adventists were inundated with articles in the *Review and Herald* and *Ministry* (as well as *Questions on Doctrine* itself) that dealt with some aspect of interdenomi-

national issues. In addition, the ongoing Andreasen controversy was having a demoralizing impact for many. Therefore, it is not surprising that after this series of articles in *Ministry* (which did not add anything substantive to the information already included in *Questions on Doctrine* and other denominational publications), serious discussions of apologetics went into hibernation.

It was Froom's *Movement of Destiny* that reawakened the ghosts of the Adventist-evangelical conferences, *Questions on Doctrine*, and the Andreasen controversy. This volume, colored so strongly by its hyper-apologetics, holds little merit as a work of history, but it has a significant value as a case study in one Adventist philosophy of doctrinal development. As shown in *Movement of Destiny*, Froom's view of doctrinal development was decidedly evolutionary. For him history consisted of a series of unfolding truths and revelations that augment the fundamentals of Christian faith, which he called the eternal verities. It was in this stream of growth and development that Froom found the historical place and meaning for the Adventist-evangelical conferences and *Questions on Doctrine*. Adventism, for him, was a movement of destiny that continually sought to reach a higher plane of understanding and expression.

This evolutionary view of history unpacked in *Movement of Destiny* was fundamentally different from the view implicit in Andreasen's writings of the *Questions on Doctrine* era. For Andreasen, the history of doctrines was a constant battle against degeneration and apostasy, rather than an evolutionary advance. He believed that theology, if not fiercely protected, would regress and become corrupted. Thus, the goal of theology for Andreasen was restoration—restoration of what he viewed as the pristine theology of the pioneers of Adventism.

The manifold contrast between Froom and Andreasen captures perfectly the two major types of Seventh-day Adventist reactions to the Adventist-evangelical conferences and *Questions on Doctrine*. On the one hand, most Adventists, like Froom, welcomed the events of 1955-1957 and embraced them as an advancement of self-understanding and an opportunity for long-overdue acceptance by other Christians. They saw this period as an occasion for refinement and maturity as a church. On the other hand, some Adventists, like Andreasen, resisted the changes that were taking place as a result of the dialogues with the evangelicals and viewed them with profound apprehension. Equating change with infidelity, they maintained that the rapprochement with evangelicals would result in theological contamination and compromise, leading to loss of identity as Adventists.

The tension between the two camps was by no means resolved with the publication of *Movement of Destiny*, an important landmark that signaled the end of the *Questions on Doctrine* era. The Adventist-evangelical conferences and *Questions on Doctrine* remain as important reference points of self-understanding for contemporary Adventists.

## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956 were a landmark event in the history of the relationship between Adventists and evangelicals. For the first time in history, the conferences brought the two parties together for a series of serious dialogues that resulted in major evangelical figures embracing Adventism as a Christian church. The conferences also led to the publication of *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* through which Adventists expressed their beliefs in the most systematic manner up to that point. These events generated the initial series of intense reactions among evangelicals and Adventists between 1956 and 1971. During this period, each side was sharply divided in their reactions. For evangelicals, their primary concern was whether or not Adventism could be accepted into evangelical fellowship. But for Adventists, their debate lay with the question of whether or not *Questions on Doctrine* properly represented Adventist beliefs. As a result, four major camps emerged in reaction to the conferences and the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*: (1) pro-Adventist evangelicals; (2) anti-Adventist evangelicals; (3) pro-*Questions on Doctrine* Adventists; and (4) anti-*Questions on Doctrine* Adventists.

### Pro-Adventist Evangelicals

The pro-Adventist camp among evangelicals was limited to Donald Grey Barnhouse, Walter Martin, E. Schuyler English, and Frank Mead. Among the four, Martin was by far the most active and prolific in his defense and promotion of Adventism as an evangelical Christian church. In his articles in *Eternity* and *Our Hope* in the 1950s and his books published in the 1960s, *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* and *The Kingdom of the Cults*, Martin maintained the conclusion that he and Barnhouse had reached in 1956 regarding Adventism—that the movement needed to be removed from the list of non-Christian cults that evangelicals had agreed upon through consensus. Martin insisted that the Adventism of mid-twentieth century was essentially different from that of the nineteenth century.

The crux of Martin's argument lay in his analysis that Adventism's adherence to historic Christian orthodoxy as propounded in *Questions on Doctrine* was sufficient to de-classify the denomination from the catalog of cults. He divided Adventist teachings into three categories: (1) those adhering to the cardinal doctrines of historic Christian orthodoxy, (2) those held as a minority position among orthodox Christians, and (3) those held uniquely by Adventists. He argued that Adventists find their Christian identity in claiming those teachings belonging to the first category. He asserted that the beliefs belonging to the second and third categories, while heterodox, did not offset the essential orthodoxy of Adventism. Adventists, he insisted, had the right to differ from other Christians on those doctrines belonging to the second and third categories. Throughout this period, Martin never deviated from this conclusion.

### **Anti-Adventist Evangelicals**

Those who opposed Martin in his quest to include Adventism among evangelicals were numerous and quite vociferous in their opposition. Following the lead of William Irvine and others from the first half of the twentieth century, evangelical writers such as Donald Hunter, Louis Talbot, M. R. DeHaan, Harold Lindsell, Herbert Bird, John Gerstner, Norman Douty, Russell Spittler, J. Oswald Sanders, Jan Karel Van Baalen, Anthony Hoekema, Gordon Lewis, and Irvine Robertson reflected the anti-Adventist sentiment that prevailed among evangelicals.

Writing for major evangelical publications and publishing houses, these critics attacked the basic premise laid out by Martin in his writings. These writers could not see Adventism as presented in *Questions on Doctrine* as evangelical. Rather, they saw the book largely as a recasting of Adventism of old which Protestant anti-cult specialists had always deemed cultic. While they did come to recognize that certain teachings of Adventism (such as the teachings on the Trinity and the divine nature of Christ) had been mischaracterized by evangelicals, the evangelical critics disagreed with Martin on how the doctrines of Adventism belonging to Martin's second and third categories ought to be viewed. In contrast to Martin, these critics (all of them Calvinists) were in essential agreement that these teachings counteracted the orthodox claims of Adventism and thus presented in themselves insurmountable barriers to fellowship with evangelicals.

### **Pro-*Questions on Doctrine* Adventists**

Adventists who were involved in the conferences with evangelicals and the publication of *Questions on Doctrine* were naturally favorably disposed toward these



events and the beliefs expressed through them. As the Adventist-evangelical conferences progressed and *Questions on Doctrine* was published, R. R. Figuhr, president of the General Conference, was personally involved in the process and gave his unequivocal support for the efforts made toward rapprochement with the evangelicals. Though some concerns were raised by a few leaders in the pre-publication phase of *Questions on Doctrine*, Adventist leaders in general viewed these events as a positive breakthrough that raised the standing of the Adventist church in the Christian world.

In the years between 1957 and 1971, Leroy Edwin Froom, W. E. Read, and Roy Allan Anderson, the three primary participants of the dialogues and key contributors to the original draft of *Questions on Doctrine*, were particularly active in their defense of the conferences and the book. In response to Adventist critics who felt that the book had deviated from historic Adventist orthodoxy, they were quick to assert that *Questions on Doctrine* did not teach any new doctrine, but was simply a new presentation of the same historic teachings that Adventists had long held. At the same time, the Adventist leaders responded to the evangelical criticism that the book contained the same heresies of Adventism's past by minimizing the theological deviations of Adventist pioneers and insinuating incorrectly that mainstream Adventists had always subscribed to the teachings contained in *Questions on Doctrine*. In concert with the pro-Adventist evangelical party of Martin, Barnhouse, English, and Mead, the pro-*Questions on Doctrine* Adventist leaders supported their church's attempt at rapprochement with evangelicals and at the redefinition of Adventism as an evangelical denomination.

### ***Anti-Questions on Doctrine Adventists***

Though there apparently were a number of Adventists who had grave concerns about *Questions on Doctrine*, M. L. Andreasen was a singular figure who voiced consistent opposition to the book and his church's move closer to evangelicalism. After reading Barnhouse's September 1956 article on Adventism in *Eternity* and Froom's February 1957 article on the atonement in *Ministry*, Andreasen began to hold the suspicion that the Adventist-evangelical conferences and the forthcoming publication of *Questions on Doctrine* were parts of a conspiracy to change traditional Adventist teaching on the atonement. When *Questions on Doctrine* was finally released, his suspicion that the General Conference leaders were emphasizing the place of the cross at the expense of the investigative judgment and its final generation implications was confirmed.

Thus, between 1957 and 1962 the elderly theologian waged a war against the General Conference with the goal of revising *Questions on Doctrine*. His primary mode of attack was the distribution of a series of open letters that contained sharp criticisms against Froom, Figuhr, and *Questions on Doctrine*. In the course of his campaign, Andreasen added the book's support for the prelapsarian view of Christ's human nature as another feature which needed to be excised. This latter point was particularly important for him in that he needed to have Christ possessing a human nature that is identical to all other human beings in order to establish his "final generation" theology. This theology, promulgated in Andreasen's earlier works, argued that it was possible to live a sinless life since Christ, sharing the same nature as all other human beings, lived a sinless life. In 1962, Andreasen, nearing the end of his bout with a terminal illness,

reconciled with Figuhr and the General Conference leadership on his deathbed. This, however, did not mean theological reconciliation or resolution, but merely an act of emotional closure to five years of bitter struggle.

### **The Four Camps beyond 1971**

With the publication of Froom's *Movement of Destiny* in 1971, the series of reactions by the original participants of the four camps came to a close. Evangelicals and Adventists proceeded differently in the years that followed. With each new printing of *The Kingdom of the Cults*, Martin reaffirmed his assessment of Adventism as evangelical, though he remained critical of the heterodox element within Adventism. A majority of evangelical anti-cult writers eventually followed suit and removed Adventism from the list of non-Christian cults. By the time of Martin's death in 1989, Adventists were being accepted by most evangelicals as fellow Christians, though not without questions about the peculiarities that set Adventists apart.<sup>1</sup>

The two Adventist camps, on the other hand, have not found a resolution to the struggle that began in the 1950s. Part of the problem has been the ambiguous stance taken by General Conference leadership on *Questions on Doctrine* since the election of Figuhr's successor, Robert Pierson. Since the Review and Herald Publishing Association

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<sup>1</sup>See, for example, Irving I. Zaretsky and Mark P. Leone, *Religious Movements in Contemporary America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974); Kenneth Boa, *Cults, World Religions, and You* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1977); idem, *Cults, World Religions and the Occult* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1990); J. Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults in America* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1992); Edmond C. Gruss, *Cults and the Occult*, 3d ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1994).

discontinued the printing of the book in 1975, the General Conference has neither repudiated the book nor defended it. While the status of the book as a whole may be uncertain within the church, it is clear that the book's stance on the atonement has been affirmed by the majority of the church. The church's statement of fundamental beliefs adopted by the General Conference in session in 1980 affirmed *Questions on Doctrine's* emphasis on the centrality of the cross and the delineation of Christ's post-1844 heavenly ministry as an application of Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, since 1971 the relationship between Adventists and evangelicals has increasingly improved as the latter gradually came to embrace Adventists into their fellowship. The resulting self-understanding of these Adventists has been to view Adventism within the larger flow of biblical Christianity and to regard themselves as evangelicals.

However, the theological heirs of Andreasen have found such developments deeply troubling. Since 1971, several independent ministry groups have arisen within the Adventist church that have self-consciously embraced Andreasen's postlapsarian views and the accompanying theology of the final generation, which they believe is supported by the writings of Ellen White. Since their inception, these groups have warned against the evangelicalization of Adventism and have issued calls to the church at large to return to the Adventism of the pre-*Questions on Doctrine* era. Like Andreasen, they have seen the Adventist-evangelical conferences and the publication of *Questions on Doctrine* as the beginning of the end-time apostasy. From the perspective of these groups, the

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<sup>1</sup>See *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . : A Biblical Exposition of the Twenty-seven Fundamental Beliefs* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1988), 312.

prelapsarian view advocated by *Questions on Doctrine* and embraced by many Adventists is another sign of the apostasy that continues in the church. They view Adventism as a movement that is to be deliberately separate from other groups such as evangelicals. Their vision of Adventism is a movement that is preparing the final generation of Christians who will ultimately overcome sin.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, the debate over the self-understanding and mission of Adventism continues, and it remains to be seen if and how the two seemingly irreconcilable camps will achieve resolution of the issues and come to theological reconciliation within the household of Adventism.

### Concluding Observations

An analysis of the four camps that emerged in the aftermath of the Adventist-evangelical conferences and the publication of *Questions on Doctrine* yields some interesting observations.

First, the evangelicals that Adventist leaders were interacting with were, without exception, adherents of Calvinism and theological heirs of the Protestant fundamentalism of the 1920s. Much like their fundamentalist forebears, these evangelicals assessed other Christian groups with a rather rigid set of criteria. For the evangelicals that Adventists

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<sup>1</sup>See, for example, Ralph Larson, *The Word Was Made Flesh: One Hundred Years of Seventh-day Adventist Christology, 1852-1952* (Cherry Valley, CA: Cherrystone Press, 1986); idem, *Apostasy Is the Issue* (Wichita, KS: Steps to Life, 1993); Ron Spear, *Adventism in Crisis* (Eatonville, WA: Hope International, 1987); J. E. Ballagas, *The Seventh-day Adventist Crisis Confronted* (Mayaguez, PR: The Author, 1988); Colin D. Standish and Russell R. Standish, *Deceptions of the New Theology* (Hartland, VA: Hartland Publications, 1989); idem, *Adventism Challenged*, 2 vols., 2d ed. (Eatonville, WA: Hope International, 1990); idem, *The Evangelical Dilemma* (Rapidan, VA: Hartland Publications, 1994); John J. Grosboll, *None Dare Call It Apostasy* (Wichita, KS: Steps to Life, 1992).

were interacting with, these criteria included Calvinism. As they applied the fundamentalist-Calvinist grid to Adventism, the Adventist views on the law and the investigative judgment consistently fell out of line from the grid. Martin's key innovation lay in his recognition of Adventism's Arminian beliefs and his refusal to include his own Calvinist beliefs among the criteria for determining orthodoxy.

Second, the fundamentalist-Calvinist evangelicals that Adventists were interacting with represented the most conservative wing of evangelicalism and the brand of evangelicalism which was the closest to the Adventism of the 1950s. Though these evangelicals and Adventists differed in several areas of belief, the two groups were similar in their commitment to a literal interpretation of Scripture and a conservative approach to lifestyle. This means that fundamentalist Christians would have been natural targets for Adventist evangelists who appealed to the biblical literalism of fundamentalists in convincing them, for example, of Saturday as the true biblical Sabbath. For the leaders of these evangelical communities, Adventists must have seemed like the antichrist—a group close enough to pass as an evangelical church, but dangerously dissimilar. Thus, it is not surprising that most fundamentalist evangelicals were so vehement in their opposition to Adventism. The definition of Adventism as a non-Christian cult was in essence an act of self-preservation for these evangelicals.

Third, the evangelicals that Adventists were interacting with were in fact the only Christians who showed an interest in defining cults. Mainline, liberal Christians, on the other hand, showed no interest in defining cults or engaging in polemics of any sort. As Paul McGraw has suggested, fundamentalist evangelicalism—as the most conservative

wing of evangelicalism—was preoccupied with compiling the cult catalog to solidify its self-appointed place as the defender of the fundamentals of evangelical Christianity.<sup>1</sup> By defining Adventism and such groups as Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Christian Science, and Unity as non-Christian cults, fundamentalism was not only legitimizing its place in evangelicalism, but also asserting its place as the true center of evangelicalism.

Fourth, the inter-relationships between the four camps reveal three unlikely points of agreement between otherwise warring parties. The first such point of agreement centered on the question of whether *Questions on Doctrine* represented a change to Adventist theology. In the course of his attack against *Questions on Doctrine*, Andreasen concurred with Martin that the book represented a certain change in Adventist belief. For both, this assertion was central to their arguments, though for widely divergent reasons. Next, anti-Adventist evangelicals and General Conference leaders found themselves agreeing with one another that the book did not represent a change in Adventist theology. Their appraisal of historic Adventism, of course, was diametrically opposite—with the evangelicals calling it heretical, and the Adventist leaders asserting that Adventism had always been staunchly orthodox. Finally, the third unlikely point of agreement is found between anti-Adventist evangelicals and Andreasen. Even while asserting that *Questions on Doctrine* was a rehashing of old heresies, these evangelicals were happy to agree with Andreasen that the book was a deceptive ploy to present Adventism in a more presentable light.

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<sup>1</sup>McGraw, “Born in Zion?” 92-100.

Fifth, the Adventist-evangelical conferences that led to the publication of *Questions on Doctrine* were a process driven by the Adventist conferees' (particularly Froom's) desire to bring Adventism into evangelical fellowship. As such, an imbalance of power existed in favor of the evangelical conferees who assumed the role of adjudicators from the beginning. Exactly how much this imbalance of power in favor of the evangelical conferees and the desire of the Adventist conferees to please them affected the content of the book is impossible to ascertain fully. It does not seem that Martin and Barnhouse overtly flaunted such power or acted manipulatively in their interactions with the Adventists. However, the strong desire to present Adventism in a manner that was acceptable to the two evangelicals is readily discernible in the correspondence among Adventists involved in the editorial process of *Questions on Doctrine*. It seems that this dynamic must be taken into account when interpreting *Questions on Doctrine*.

Sixth, another problem associated with the *Questions on Doctrine* controversy among Adventists was the deliberate dismissal of evidence. This problem can be seen in both *Questions on Doctrine* itself and in Andreasen's writings in response to the book. In compiling quotations from the writings of Ellen White on Christ's human nature, the writers and editors of *Questions on Doctrine* left out many quotations that did not support the prelapsarian view. In addition, the editors' insertion of such subheadings as "Took Sinless Human Nature" and "Perfect Sinlessness of Christ's Human Nature" aggravated the problem since such conclusions were seen by some Adventists as a distortion of the overall witness of Ellen White on the issue. Such selective quoting would be pointed out



by Andraesen and numerous others who followed him and would lead to the discrediting of the entire document by many. Andraesen, however, was also guilty of unfair use of the evidence. Even when Figuhr pointed out convincingly that Ellen White, Froom, and Andraesen himself essentially agreed on their view of the atonement on the cross, Andraesen dismissed them and essentially manipulated Froom's words to support his own arguments. In both cases, it seems that the zeal to demonstrate a certain point led to selective use and manipulation of evidence.

Finally, the *Questions on Doctrine* controversy illustrates the importance of the spirit of inclusiveness and of heeding voices of concern, particularly in relating to those on the other side of the theological spectrum. The editors and writers of *Questions on Doctrine* solicited critiques from others, but it appears that they largely ignored the detailed responses that did arrive. For example, Raymond Cottrell's critiques and warnings, which might have prevented much of the upheaval that followed the publication of the book, were mostly unheeded. Again, it is impossible to ascertain whether the tension between Froom and Andraesen resulted in the latter not being consulted in the editorial process of *Questions on Doctrine*. Even if the "snubbing" of Andraesen was not intentional, he could have been taken more seriously once he began writing Figuhr with concerns. But almost immediately Andraesen was seen as a nuisance and a hindrance to the process rather than a potential resource. It seems that Froom, Read, and Anderson were more interested in producing a document that would be acceptable to evangelicals than in crafting a consensus response that truly represented

Adventist beliefs. As such, the opinions of those who disagreed with them either in method or perspective were dismissed—resulting in a continuing legacy of discord.

### Suggestions

This investigation is far from complete. First, if access to Martin's papers is granted in the future and they reveal a previously unknown body of correspondence and documents by evangelicals, research in these papers could add significantly to the understanding of evangelical attitudes toward Adventists in the 1950s and 1960s. Second, whether or not more information is found in Martin's papers, a comparative study of the theological presuppositions and methodologies utilized by the critics of Adventism in the 1950s and 1960s would explain more clearly the nature of evangelical criticism. Third, a continuing study into the Adventist-evangelical interactions from the 1970s to the end of the twentieth century (perhaps up to and including the Adventist-Lutheran theological consultations that took place in the 1990s) would make an important contribution. An investigation that traces the gradual acceptance of Adventism by the evangelical world would be both interesting and illuminating. Fourth, a comparative research on the theological presuppositions and perspectives of the contemporary heirs of Andreasen would yield many fascinating results. It would be particularly interesting to evaluate the use of Andreasen by these groups and individuals. Finally, an examination of the rise and development of Adventist apologetics would make a valuable contribution. Such a study would place the *Questions on Doctrine* controversy within the flow of history and might offer further insights on how Adventists have defined and described themselves in relation to the larger world.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### **Unpublished Materials**

#### Essay on Manuscript Collections

A great bulk of the data for this dissertation came from various archival collections in North America. This essay provides a brief description of each collection and its significance to this research. Published materials are listed at the end of the bibliography.

**Center for Adventist Research,  
James White Library,  
Andrews University,  
Berrien Springs,  
Michigan**

The Center for Adventist Research at Andrews University houses some of the most important documentary collections pertaining to the study of Seventh-day Adventism. In 2004, the Adventist Heritage Center and the Ellen G. White Research Center—previously two distinct entities within the university library—were merged to form this center. It continues to serve as a branch office of the Ellen G. White Estate as well as an archival library for Adventist historical materials. Several personal collections preserved at the center provided invaluable resources for this research.

The Roy Allan Anderson Collection (C 152) contains copies of numerous letters between the conferees of the Adventist-evangelical conferences. It also has a full set of a pre-publication manuscript of *Questions on Doctrine* and a number of unpublished reactions to the book and the controversy that followed its publication. This is a major resource for any historical study on Adventism in the 1940s through the 1960s.

In addition to the Anderson collection, several other collections have been useful in the course of this research. The M. L. Andreasen Collection (C 115) has mostly biographical materials collected by Andreasen's biographer, Virginia Steinweg. While very helpful in understanding Andreasen the man, this collection does not yield much useful information for research on the *Questions on Doctrine* controversy. The Edward Heppenstall Collection (C 190) holds some letters and manuscripts that directly pertain to this research, though limited in their usefulness. The A. L. Hudson Collection (C 193) carries a number of letters and documents that shed some light on this research. The Iola Martin Collection (C 30) includes Norman Douty's correspondence in connection to his works on Adventism. Additionally, this center has a number of individual document folders—such as those with articles by Raymond Cottrell, LeRoy Edwin Froom, and later scholars—that deal directly with the subject of this research.

Several folders in the document files of the Ellen G. White Estate branch office section contain manuscripts that were of indispensable value to this research. They include files entitled “Andreasen, M.L. and Atonement,” “Andreasen, M. L., Biographical,” “Andreasen, M. L., Letters,” “‘Questions on Doctrine’ & the Martin-Barnhouse Episode,” and “‘Questions on Doctrine,’ Questions regarding, Andreasen,

etc.” Most of these materials are also available at the main office in Silver Spring, Maryland, and the other branch offices located at Loma Linda University in Loma Linda, California, and at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama.

**Christian Research Institute  
Rancho Santa Margarita,  
California**

Christian Research Institute is a countercult apologetics organization founded in 1960 by Walter Martin. Though repeated inquiries and requests were made, this organization would neither confirm the existence of Martin’s personal papers nor grant access to any of its archival materials. Thus, it is impossible to ascertain how much of Martin’s personal papers still exist and, among them, how much material may still remain that sheds light on the subject of this research.

**Ellen G. White Estate, Branch Office/  
Department of Archives and Special  
Collections, Del E. Webb Memorial  
Library, Loma Linda University,  
Loma Linda, California**

The Loma Linda branch of the White Estate houses two separate document file collections—Ellen G. White Document Files and Seventh-day Adventist Document Files. Most of the holdings in the former section are similar to those of the main office and the Andrews branch.

The Ellen G. White Document Files that contain unique materials relevant to this research are: “Barnhouse, Donald—Doctrinal Issues,” “Froom, LeRoy Edwin,” “Martin, Walter—Doctrinal Issues,” “Questions on Doctrine—Collection of Sources Used in

Appendix, Ellen G. White on the Human Nature of Christ,” “Talbot, Louis T./Bible Institute of Los Angeles/Barnhouse/Ellen G. White/Cult Ministry—Material Written.”

The Seventh-day Adventist Document Files that provide unique materials for this research include: “Correspondence regarding Questions on Doctrines (1932-1954),” “Correspondence regarding Questions on Doctrines (1955),” “Correspondence regarding Questions on Doctrines (1956),” “Correspondence regarding Questions on Doctrines (1957),” “Correspondence regarding Questions on Doctrines (1958),” “Correspondence regarding Questions on Doctrines (1959),” “Martin, Walter; Kenneth Samples; Donald Barnhouse (anti-SDA; ‘friendly critics’; evangelical theologians)/Questions & Controversy—Are SDA’s a Cult?/Christian Research Institute (Martin, director),” and “SDA’s Answer Questions on Doctrines—(book)—General Information/Correspondence/History of Publication/Barnhouse & Martin information.”

The Department of Archives and Special Collections has two personal collections of particular relevance to this research. The Raymond F. Cottrell Collection and the Tobias Edgar Unruh Collection include several letters, articles, and documents that inform this study, though lack of a comprehensive index to these collections makes it difficult for researchers to find materials expeditiously.

**Ellen G. White Estate, Main Office,  
General Conference of Seventh-day  
Adventists, Silver Spring,  
Maryland**

The main office of the Ellen G. White Estate not only oversees the publication of White’s writings but also maintains document files relating to matters of historical

interest to Adventists. The document files of the Ellen G. White Estate main office hold several manuscripts related to this research. Of particular importance were files catalogued under “Andreasen, M. L.,” “Martin, Walter—General & Misc.,” and “Questions on Doctrine Answered, Problems Re.” Minutes of the White Estate Board were another important resource. As stated above, copies of most of the materials at the main office can be found at the branch offices.

**General Conference Archives, General  
Conference of Seventh-day  
Adventists, Silver Spring,  
Maryland**

The General Conference Archives stores letters, minutes, reports, and other documents generated by and forwarded to Adventist church headquarters. The archives yielded the greatest amount of useful data for this research. Some of the materials found here overlapped with those from other archival collections, such as those at Andrews University and Loma Linda University, but there were many unique documents that proved to be crucial to this research. The following record groups and collections were especially helpful.

Record Group 1: Minutes of the General Conference (Executive) Committee from 1955 to 1975 contain many references to the Adventist-evangelical conferences, *Questions on Doctrine*, and M. L. Andreasen.

Record Group 11: Presidential correspondence collection, which includes both presidential and vice presidential papers, allows researchers an unparalleled access to the behind-the-scenes episodes, deliberations, and interactions. Of special value to this

research were documents generated during the tenure of President R. R. Figuhr and Vice Presidents A. L. Ham, W. E. Murray, A. V. Olson, and H. L. Rudy.

Record Group 16: Field Secretaries papers include those of L. E. Froom who left a large quantity of useful materials.

Record Group 21: Secretariat papers consist of letters, minutes of various committees, and reports from world divisions. Documents from "General Files," "Miscellaneous Documents," and "Correspondence: 1946-1962" yielded much valuable information.

Record Group 58: Ministerial Association papers contain an abundance of documents generated in the 1950s and 1960s that deal directly with the *Questions on Doctrine* debate, particularly those produced by Froom.

Record Group 261: Review and Herald Publishing Association reference files of D. F. Neufeld, Julia Neuffer, F. D. Nichol, and F. M. Wilcox hold materials of interest to this research.

Record Group North America 11: North American Division Presidential papers include a number of letters not found elsewhere, written mostly by Froom and Andreasen. Files of W. B. Ochs and A. V. Olson are notably rich in relevant documents.

Personal Collection 6: Raymond Cottrell papers have several folders on Froom, Andreasen, *Questions on Doctrine*.

Personal Collection 12: LeRoy Edwin Froom papers contain not only biographical information, but also letters, articles, and manuscripts produced during the time of the Adventist-evangelical conferences and the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*.



Personal Collection 63: Frank Yost papers include a number of letters exchanged between Yost and others concerning Yost's article in the July 21, 1958, issue of *Christianity Today*.

M. L. Andreasen Special Case Files, Boxes 11355-11359, contain a plethora of materials, particularly letters that add richly to the understanding of the struggle that Andreasen had with the General Conference leaders.

**Presbyterian Historical Society,  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

The Presbyterian Historical Society is the national archives and historical research center of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The society's headquarters in Philadelphia houses the papers of Donald Grey Barnhouse. The Barnhouse collection contains several folders dedicated to the Adventist-evangelical dialogues and their aftermath. All pertinent materials can be found in the folders entitled "Seventh-day Adventists, 1956-1957," "Seventh-day Adventists, 1958," "Seventh-day Adventists, 1959," and "Seventh-day Adventists, 1960-1962."

**Personal Collections and Recollections**

Documents in the private possession of two individuals have proved to be very helpful for this study. Raymond F. Cottrell's personal papers contain many letters and documents stemming from his interactions with Froom, Read, Anderson, and Figuhr. On February 24, 1999, I met with Cottrell and interviewed him on various contemporary responses to *Questions on Doctrine*. At that time, he gave me access to his papers among which the letters were the most useful. Cottrell died in 2003, and all of his papers will

eventually be housed at Loma Linda University. The tape recording and transcript of the interview with Cottrell are in my possession. The private collection of Larry Christoffel, associate pastor of Campus Hill Church of Seventh-day Adventists in Loma Linda, California, has also been beneficial for this research. Among the documents in his possession, the letters written between 1955 and 1960 by participants of the Adventist-evangelical conferences were helpful.

In addition to Cottrell, several individuals were interviewed as part of this research, including Donald Grey Barnhouse, Jr. (the son of the *Eternity* publisher), George Cannon (evangelical conferee in the Adventist-evangelical dialogues), Paul A. Hopkins (an administrator of Barnhouse's *Eternity* magazine and Evangelical Foundation), and Kenneth Samples (a former colleague of Walter Martin). However, none of the interviews yielded any significant new information.

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