

Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant. Psalm 25:14

“He that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.”

(1 Corinthians 9:10)



“I defy the Pope, and all his laws; and if God spares my life, I will cause the boy that drives the plow in England to know more of the Scriptures than the Pope himself.”

William Tyndale

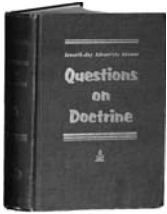
Prayer Request

While attending the *Questions on Doctrine* Fiftieth Anniversary Conference, I was impressed that although the different presenters represented some extremely diverse theological positions, there seemed to be a sincere desire among each one to see unity. All participants were very cordial and friendly, desiring to somehow find an answer to the prayer of Jesus in John 17 when he prayed, “that they may be one, even as we are one (v. 22).”

True biblical unity must be based upon the Word of God: “Till we all come in the *unity of the faith*, and of the knowledge of the Son of God (Ephesians 4:13).” We cannot biblically unify with those who are not following truth: “Can two walk together, except they be agreed (Amos 3:3)?” We have been told: “We are to unify, but not on a

In this issue:

<i>QOD</i> Conference Overview	p. 2
<i>QOD</i> and Systematic Theology	p. 11
The Doctrine of Revelation	p. 13
Youth’s Corner	p. 15
An Interview with WVG	p. 17
Lessons from New Testament Greek	p. 18
Announcements	p. 19



Questions on Doctrine 50th Anniversary Conference (An Overview) by Onycha Holt & Allen Stump



Andrews University is a pleasant campus, situated apart from the bustle of Berrien Springs, Michigan, but close enough to stores and thoroughfares so as to be convenient. Its flattened terrain is an enjoyable change from the hilly countryside of West Virginia, and to this was added the beauty of autumn foliage and the invigorating breeze of chilly mornings and evenings when approximately two hundred theologians, pastors, administrators, and laypeople gathered October 24-27, 2007, for the Fiftieth Anniversary Conference of the publication of *Questions on Doctrine* (QOD).

Inside the chapel of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University sat such people as Richard Rice, professor of theology at Loma Linda University; George Knight, a professor emeritus at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University; Angel Rodríguez, Director of the Biblical Research Institute; Denis Fortin, dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University; John McVay, president of Walla Walla University; Herbert Douglass, former teacher, editor, administrator, and pastor for the Seventh-day Adventist Church; the well-known Standish brothers, Colin and Russell; and so forth. What a wonderful place for anyone who loves the Advent message to be! What a great opportunity to gather gems of truth and food for thought and growth! And so, with great anticipation and eagerness, I awaited the first presentation, which was scheduled to be given by Dr. George Knight.

Dr. George Knight

Perhaps you are familiar with some of Dr. Knight's books. He has written biographies on A. T. Jones, Joseph Bates, and books about Ellen White, but the most germane to this conference is his annotated edition of *Questions on Doctrine*. Dr. Knight frankly stated at the conference that his life has been dominated by the events surrounding the *Questions on Doctrine* controversy. So, just what *is* this controversy all about? It will become clearer as we go along, but for now let it stand, as Knight stated in his presentation, that QOD is "undoubtedly the most divisive book in Seventh-day Adventist history." Knight quoted Walter Martin's statement that there were four crucial issues with the evangelical world concerning Adventists — (1) that the atonement of Christ was not completed upon the cross; (2) that salvation is the result of grace plus the works of the law; (3) that the Lord Jesus Christ was a created being and not from all eternity; and (4) that Jesus partook of man's sinful fallen nature at the incarnation. The rest of Knight's presentation focused on the reaction of M. L. Andreasen to QOD and the consequences of this reaction.

The following morning, Dr. Julius Nam; Dr. Russell Standish; Dr. Arthur Patrick; Dr. Ciro Sepulveda; and Dr. Alberto Timm were scheduled to present papers from various perspectives on the impact QOD has had on the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

Dr. Julius Nam

Dr. Julius Nam, assistant professor of religion at Loma Linda University, spoke on the SDA-Evangelical issues, and it was interesting to note in his paper that many more evangelicals "opposed Martin in his quest to include Adventism among evangelicals" than supported him, although "they did seem 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." Interesting that they looked with seeming favor on these two teachings.

Dr. Russell Standish

Nearly everyone at the conference agreed with Andreasen's position that much of the material in QOD is good and valuable. There are a few very vital areas, however, that engendered much concern in 1957 and continue to cause much distress to us today. Dr. Russell Standish, a physician from Australia and former missionary and hospital administrator, stated that "there is widespread agreement that this book has played a defining role in the *transformation* (emphasis supplied) of certain crucial Seventh-day Adventist doctrines" and that "we would be remiss if we did not consider...the great impact these alterations have had upon the entire body of our faith." Two of these important issues are the nature of Christ and the atonement. "That *Questions on Doctrine* altered the long-held doctrines of the human nature of Christ and the atonement is indisputable," Dr. Standish stated.

Dr. Arthur Patrick

When Dr. Arthur Patrick, however, presented his remarks immediately following Dr. Standish's, he stated that he had struggled (unsuccessfully) for twenty years to understand Dr. Standish's views on the ills of the church. Dr. Patrick, a senior honorary research fellow at Avondale College and former director of the Ellen G. White/Adventist Research Centre for the South Pacific Division, reported that he had recently conducted an informal survey and had found that "far less than ten per cent of retired and serving ministers appear to have any significant level of personal concern about the book [QOD]." Patrick then stated that "the majority of ministers are positive about the book. They estimate it was a useful attempt to explain Adventism to other

Christians and general readers.” His conclusion contained: “The *QoD* event confronted Adventism with twin demands of the twentieth century: the need for its faith to be sustained by *evidence* and the requirement for its faith to offer existential *meaning*. After thirty years sheltering from Modernism in the Fundamentalist camp, mid-century Adventism needed to recognize the strengths of an emergent Evangelicalism that was neither Fundamentalist nor Modernist. Those who believed that the Adventist past must control its future sounded the bugle of retreat passionately; however, from the vantage point of 2007, it is evident that reversionary options could not meet the exigencies of the changing situation (emphasis in original).” Interesting that in 1957 we needed to recognize the strengths of the Evangelicals (Babylon). Those “strengths,” which are founded upon their doctrine of the trinity, can only be their understanding of the atonement and the *lack* of work being carried on by Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary, the nature of Christ at the incarnation, and the ensuing implications these issues have on our understanding of perfection, the nature of sin, etc. We *do* need to sound a bugle of retreat!

Dr. Ciro Sepulveda

Dr. Ciro Sepulveda, chair of the History Department at Oakwood College, noted in his written presentation that the Adventist Church was changing during the first part of the twentieth century: “In the first half of the twentieth century, the Seventh-day Adventists experienced a series of transformations altering traditional Adventist values, ways of looking at the world, worship styles, and agenda. In a sense, the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*, in 1957, reflected the theological discourse of a group of Adventists who lived in a world very different from the world of the pioneers.” Later in his paper, Sepulveda stated: “The task of the new Adventism was to provide for the world a correct and enlightened theology.” So, there we have it. We needed to provide a “correct and enlightened theology.” We now have a more politically correct theology, it is true, but it is certainly not enlightened or correct.

Dr. Alberto Timm

Dr. Alberto Timm, professor of historical theology at Brazil University Center, gave a report on the way *Questions on Doctrine* was produced in Brazil. The book was printed in installments in Portuguese in *O Ministério Adventista* from 1960 to 1976 and in Spanish in *El ministerio adventista* from 1960 to 1978 (South American equivalents to *Ministry* magazine), but never in book form until 1986. The appendices were not included in the 1986 publication, however, due to “‘technical difficulties’ in trying to find already-translated statements of Ellen White,” but by the end of 2007 the complete book is scheduled to come off the press! In his concluding remarks, Dr. Timm stated: “In the territory of the South American Division, *Questions on Doctrine* has been regarded over the years not only as a genuine and

trustworthy expression of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, but also as a well-taken correction to the pre-*Questions on Doctrine* legalistic and perfectionist trends. This has been the case largely because theological training in that division has been strongly influenced by the anti-perfectionist ideas of scholars like Roy A. Anderson, LeRoy E. Froom, Edward Heppenstall, Raoul Dederen, and Hans K. LaRondelle. Furthermore, one cannot overlook the traditional South American tendency of respect and loyalty to the leadership of the General Conference, where *Questions on Doctrine* was actually conceived and produced.” Interesting!

Dr. Paul McGraw

In the afternoon session of October 27, 2007, Dr. Paul McGraw, associate professor of history at Pacific Union College, stated that “QOD was essentially a book for those in the Evangelical world. QOD was created to clarify Adventist theology to a skeptical Evangelical world...,” and he then proceeded to outline the evangelical reaction to the book.

Dr. Kenneth Samples

Dr. Kenneth Samples, a senior research scholar at Reasons to Believe, a science-faith think tank based in Pasadena, California, spoke next on the topic of “Evangelical Reflections on Seventh-day Adventism: Yesterday and Today.” Dr. Samples was a protégée of Dr. Walter Martin and most likely he was invited to attend the conference because he can speak with authority on the views of Walter Martin concerning *Questions on Doctrine*. He noted:

One of the most intriguing features about Seventh-day Adventism is that unlike Mormonism, Christian Science, and Jehovah’s Witnesses; the Adventist movement has shifted toward historic Christian and biblical orthodoxy...theologically speaking, the Adventist pioneers made some very bold claims...These early Adventists proclaimed to be “a special people, with a special message, for a special time!” They also declared themselves to be the “remnant church” that uniquely kept the commandments of God. In addition, they asserted that God was providing unique guidance to the early Adventists through the prophetic voice of Ellen G. White.

However, closer historical and theological examinations reveal that the beliefs that coalesced to form primitive Seventh-day Adventism, in the wake of the failed Millerite movement, were far from biblically orthodox. The theological views of the primitive Adventist movement (though hardly unified and systematic) reflected a non-or anti-Trinitarian view of God, a semi-Arian Christology, a message of restorationism, and a strongly legalistic understanding of the gospel. From the standpoint of historic Christian or creedal orthodoxy, the primitive Adventist movement was a theologically cultic movement or a heretical sect in its basic theology...And yet, the next century saw Adventism’s doctrinal views undergo analysis and change. Ellen G. White *apparently*

played an important, if not critical, role in helping the Adventist church move toward theological orthodoxy. It has ultimately embraced a fully Trinitarian theology with an orthodox understanding of the person and nature of Christ and a belief that Christ's righteousness in the atonement is granted to the believer through faith alone (emphasis supplied).

Dr. Samples concluded his presentation with four positive features of the theological discussions that followed the publication of *Questions on Doctrines* and then stated that "Walter Martin, a friend and critic of Seventh-day Adventism, would be quite pleased to see the new edition of this book."

Elder Larry Christoffel

Larry Christoffel, administrative pastor of the Campus Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church in Loma Linda, California, since 1986, reported on his meetings with Walter Martin and Kenneth Samples in a paper entitled "Evangelical Adventism—*Questions on Doctrine's* Legacy." Elder Christoffel defines Evangelical Adventism in the following manner:

Evangelical Adventism would have the church focus on Christ's vicarious, substitutionary work, including His life of obedience, and especially climaxing with His death on Calvary. For evangelical Adventists, "justification" means the satisfaction of all the law's claims in the final judgment through the doing and dying of the God-Man Jesus Christ in behalf of believing sinners. We, as sinners, deserve death, yet He took our sin and guilt upon Himself, dying in our place. The law demands perfect obedience from the one who would be justified, but we have none to provide. The obedience of Jesus *and the character* He developed living on earth is placed to the account of the believer (imputed) covering his or her inadequacies. God accepted the life and death of Jesus in our behalf and raised Him from the dead. Seated at God's right hand in heaven, Jesus Christ is our righteousness, presenting us as righteous in His person to the Father. For evangelical Adventists this is the gospel (emphasis supplied).

This reveals an interesting aspect of the *QOD*/New Theology philosophy that sanctification involves imputed righteousness with *character* being accounted to us instead of being formed within us by the working of the Holy Spirit! How amazing!

Elder Christoffel concluded his paper with: "*Questions on Doctrine* and the evangelical-Seventh-day Adventist dialogues and the men who participated in and who supported them deserve our profoundest gratitude for moving us toward our God-ordained purpose for being."

Dr. Donald Dayton

Dr. Donald Dayton, an independent scholar who has taught at Drew University, Asbury Theological Seminary, Northern

Baptist Theological Seminary, and Azusa Pacific University, spoke next. It is interesting that Dr. Herbert Douglass said at the time of his own presentation that the attendees of the conference might be better off if he (Douglass) sat down and we all read the last five to six pages of Dr. Dayton's presentation instead. Dayton's paper is entitled "Some Reflections on Adventist Identity by a 'Sympathetic Outsider' on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Publication of *Questions on Doctrine*." Because much of his oral presentation did not follow his printed text, the last five to six pages were not presented to the audience verbally; however, the content on these pages are of great value.

Planned or unplanned, the presenters of this conference brought about two widely contrasting views from the evangelical speakers. On the one hand is Dr. Samples, a reformed Calvinist antinomian, and on the other is Dr. Dayton, who exhibits an affinity for Wesleyan holiness which emphasizes the need of sanctification and overcoming sin in the daily life of the Christian. Dayton explained the necessity of understanding the sinful nature of Christ and extensively reviewed the contrast between Wesleyan and Lutheran theological thinking on this topic and how each theology has affected the religious movements that have followed them. He states:

I am inclined to read the comments of Ellen White about the role of Adventism in "completing" or "continuing" the Reformation...[as] a call to extend the "reform" agenda beyond doctrine (and justification) to the life of the church and individual Christians (to sanctification)—in effect, to add "sanctification" to "justification." Thus I tend to view the movements that led to the "shaking of Adventism" (attempting to give a "Lutheran" reading of the tradition) as fundamentally mistaken. I would wish that Adventism had been more careful in its cultivation of its own heritage and logic. If it had done so, it might have anticipated themes of the "new perspective on Paul" and helped us all break out from under the Lutheran reading of the New Testament. Here I find clues to what I consider the fundamental theological calling of Adventism.

The Lutheran reading that he calls "fundamentally mistaken" is the theology of faith only (justification) without any corresponding works (sanctification). It is interesting to note that Luther could not reconcile the book of James to the writings of Paul in Romans and Galatians. Luther, therefore, refused to consider the book of James to be a part of the biblical canon.

A part of the "the Lutheran reading of the New Testament" is a carryover from Augustine's teaching of original sin and that sin is not primarily the transgression of the law but is instead a state of being or the nature of man. This subject has, as we shall see in the next few months, great implications upon our understanding of the incarnation, the plan of salvation, and the overcoming of sin and the sanctification of the believer, as well as how it shapes our thinking on many other doctrinal themes.

Dayton then concludes:

For me, the fundamental question that Adventism raises has to do with the status of Judaism and the Old Testament in Christian theology. I have been increasingly concerned that the classical “ecumenical consensus” of the fourth century too radically cut these roots in its contextualization to Greek metaphysics and culture—with disastrous results for Western culture. One has only to contemplate the virulent anti-semitism of the late Luther or to reflect on the period of the holocaust where the German culture denigrated the Old Testament and Jewish law as a “primitive” form of religion. I cannot help but view these themes as consequences of the Lutheran view of the “law” (whether intended or not). One of the great theological problems of our time is to redress this situation and rethink the Christian relationship to the Old Testament in more positive terms...

I fear that Adventism may sell its heritage for a mess of pottage.

This harbors a ring in our Adventist ears of an Ellen White statement:

In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history (*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 196).

We will be discussing in a future issue the concept of “a ‘primitive’ form of religion,” but for now, we need to ask ourselves, “Are we willing to be denigrated and even treated as the Jewish people (and others) were treated during the holocaust because our beliefs do not line up with antinomians over the Old Testament and God’s law? Is God’s Word that important to us?” It is our prayer that the answer is an immediate and resounding “Yes!”

Dr. Herbert Douglass

That evening Dr. Herbert Douglass spoke to the conference, presenting a paper entitled “The QOD Earthquake—Attempted Merger of Two Theological Tectonic Plates,” in which he charted the course of the emergence of the book *Questions on Doctrine*. He also explained the “tectonic plates” of Calvinism and Arminianism and how Adventists do not fully fit into either one.

The fundamental problem in 1957 was that the participants unwittingly tried to merge two different theological systems without realizing all of its ramifications. When Adventists try to overlay their theology on the Evangelical grid...many areas simply won’t fit.

Adventists merging with Evangelicals will have their understanding of soteriology, of the atonement, of the sanctuary, of the humanity of Christ, and of the nature of sin all affected. These truly are “colossal issues!”

Dr. Richard Rice

The next day, Dr. Richard Rice, professor of theology and philosophy of religion at Loma Linda University, presented a paper entitled “*Questions on Doctrine* and Questions about Christ.” He began with a quotation from Karl Barth: “Show me your christology and I will tell you what you are.” Rice stated: “No point of doctrine is more central to Christian faith than its understanding of Jesus Christ...It is no wonder, then, that an early section of *Questions on Doctrine* is devoted to “Questions About Christ.” He later states, with quotes from *Questions on Doctrine*:

The christology of *Questions on Doctrine* clearly fits the standard Christian orthodoxy. Christ is identified as the second person of the heavenly trinity, “comprised of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” He is “one with

the Eternal Father—one in nature, equal in power and authority, God in the highest sense, eternal and self-existent, with life original, unborrowed, underived.” He “existed from all eternity, distinct from, but united with, the Father, possessing the same glory, and all the divine attributes [*Questions on Doctrine*, 1957 edition, p. 36].”

Rice continues then with a discussion on the trinity:

This is quite a statement, considering the fact that it took many years for Seventh-day Adventists to embrace the Trinity. Some early Adventist leaders directly opposed the idea. For Joseph Bates it was unscriptural, for James White it was an ‘absurdity,’ and for M. E. Cornell it was a fruit of the great apostasy that also included Sunday keeping and the immortality of the soul [George Knight, “Adventists and Change,” *Ministry* (October 1993)]. In fact, according to one Seventh-day Adventist historian, early Adventists were “about as uniform in opposing trinitarianism as they were in advocating belief in the Second Coming [Mervyn C. Maxwell, ‘Sanctuary and Atonement



Dr. Herbert Douglass addressing the conference

in SDA Theology: An Historical Survey,' *The Sanctuary and the Atonement: Biblical, Historical and Theological Studies*, ed. Arnold V. Wallenkampf and W. Richard Leshner].”

Dr. Rice states that while the church took an “orthodox” position on the nature of Christ in his divinity, a vigorous debate followed concerning the humanity of Christ. He states:

...all Adventists agree that Christ was genuinely human, that he was tempted, that he could have sinned, and that he never yielded to temptation. Adventists also generally agree that the humanity Christ assumed in the incarnation was affected by sin. The question that remains concerns the precise condition of his humanity. Was Jesus born with an inclination to sin or not?

Dr. Rice then discusses the issues he has now brought up, appealing to a proposition of Robert Spangler that while “[e]veryone agrees that Christ experienced the consequences of sin in some respects but not in others; the challenge is to identify the two.” Then Rice discusses the various issues of Calvinism and Arminianism and demonstrates the development of christology in Seventh-day Adventism. He concludes with these remarks:

Those who insist that Christ provides us a perfect example have an important point, of course. He overcame temptation by trusting in divine power—the same resource available to us. But unless his humanity is drastically different from ours in its basic orientation to God, he would inevitably have sinned, just as the rest of us do. And in that case, he could not have been the savior: he would himself have needed a savior.

Following the Barth directive, we can see what Rice is.

Dr. Roy Adams

Dr. Roy Adams, an associate editor of the *Adventist Review*, next presented a paper entitled “The Theology of *Questions on Doctrine*: Issues Surrounding the Nature of Christ and the Atonement.” Adams discussed the position *QOD* takes, presented quotations from Ellen White, and reviewed M. L. Andreassen’s reaction to *QOD* and Andreassen’s “Final Generation” concept. In conclusion, Adams states: “We do not cut Jesus down to our own size for the purpose of using Him as example. That approach is as unproductive as it is unwarranted. He is our example, whether we wish it or not—our supreme example. But much as we need an example, we need a Savior more. And to have a Savior, we must maintain with Ellen G. White and the best theology in Christendom that He is in all things like unto us, sin only (experientially and inherently) excepted. Our continuance as an authentic Christian communion could hang on just this one point.” What can he mean by an “authentic Christian communion?” Saying Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are but having a different nature seems to be oxymoronic.

Dr. Colin Standish

The next presentation was given by Dr. Colin Standish, founder and president of Hartland College and who has served in academic and administrative positions at Avondale College, West Indies College, and Columbia Union College. His paper was entitled “Seventh-day Adventists Answer *Questions on Doctrine*: The U-Turn in Doctrine and Practice.” He began his speech with the perplexity he faced when he read “**Took Sinless Human Nature**” in the appendix of *QOD*. He then discussed the prophetic gift of Ellen G. White, the nature of the atonement, and he asked us to remember that “Barnhouse and Martin had narrowed down their ‘tests’ as to whether the Seventh-day Adventist Church was a cult to just four areas,” — whether or not the atonement of Christ was completed on the cross, whether or not salvation is the result of grace without the works of the law, whether or not the Lord Jesus has existed from eternity and therefore is not a created being, and whether or not Jesus partook of man’s sinful fallen nature at the incarnation. Dr. Standish then proceeded to discuss these four areas and concluded his paper with:

Not only have our church’s doctrines been compromised on the role of the Spirit of Prophecy, the completed atonement in the heavenly sanctuary, and the fallen human nature of Christ, these alterations have opened the floodgate to allow many of the beliefs of Augustinian Catholic doctrines to infiltrate into our church.

Too bad the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a denomination has failed to understand that the most crucial Catholic doctrine to infiltrate them is the doctrine of the trinity.

The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of Catholic faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church. In the New Testament there is frequent mention of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. A careful reading of these scriptural passages leads to one unmistakable conclusion: each of these Persons is presented as having qualities that can belong only to God. But if there is only one God, how can this be?

The Church studied this mystery with great care and, after four centuries of clarification, decided to state the doctrine in this way: in the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—truly distinct one from another. Thus, in the words of the Athanasian Creed: “The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three gods but one God (*Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, p. 16; 1994).”

Dr. Woodrow Whidden

Following Dr. Colin Standish’s presentation was Dr. Woodrow Whidden, professor of systematic and historical theology at the Adventist International Institute for Advanced Studies. The title of his message was “*Questions*

on Doctrine: What Should Be the Enduring Theological Legacy?” His “paper is about the controverted aspects of *QOD*’s atonement theology and its legacy,” and that there is a “perfectionistic SDA theological tradition” as seen in “historics” and in the “1888 Study Committee” as well as a “clearly discernable line to a Reformationist/Arminian Adventist theological tradition... These two traditions have developed two, essentially distinctive



Elder Whidden making a point during a break

versions of Soteriology, Christology and Eschatology in the SDA Church.” Whidden affirms that “the two most controversial legacies of *QOD* are that it sparked new discussions of (1) what Adventists mean by the expressions ‘final atonement’ and (2) the ‘fallen, sinful human nature of Christ.’” He further expounds upon these statements with: “The key theological contribution of *QOD* was to propel Seventh-day Adventism onto a track which demanded further clarification of its Christology and its theology of Atonement and Soteriology.” Whidden then goes on to address these issues as they relate to perfection and the final generation, concluding that “I sure want to be responsively ready if the perfectionists are right. I just think Jesus will be there making up for my ‘*unavoidable deficiencies*.’ Let’s just not presume on it, but keep leaning on Him daily for both justifying and sanctifying grace (emphasis supplied).” In his unscripted oral presentation, Whidden made it clear that we will need the grace of Christ for forgiveness of sin after probation closes. He is able to adhere to this theology because he does not define perfection based upon overcoming sin.

Elder Larry Kirkpatrick

Larry Kirkpatrick spoke next. Elder Kirkpatrick is the pastor of the Mentone Adventist Church in southern California and webmaster for GreatControversy.org. The title of his paper is “A Wind of Doctrine Blows Through the Church: The Alternate Hamartiology of *Questions on Doctrine*.” In this paper he stated:

For the first time, *Questions on Doctrine* offered Adventists a doctrine of sin that was both evangelical and unscriptural...

The nature of Christ and the atonement are truly important issues. And yet, we recognize that the more central presupposition underpinning the theological disagreement encompasses how the church views the concept of sin... Therefore, this document pursues the development

of the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of sin from past to present, punctuated by the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*, pausing to review and respond to the evidences given by the book in favor of its alternative hamartiology.

Kirkpatrick documented that the main support *Questions on Doctrine* uses for its version of the doctrine of sin is found in Ephesians 2:3 and Romans 3. Kirkpatrick examined these verses and gave a very formidable rebuttal to the position of *Questions on Doctrine*.

Returning to *Questions on Doctrine*, we reject the assertion that men are condemned on the basis of birth-nature rather than their personal choices to rebel. Paul *does* present humankind as condemned in Rom 1-3, but *because of personal choices* and never on the basis of any doctrine of original sin. He says relatively little concerning the mechanism by which men become guilty, but what he does state clearly points to chosen acts of rebellion (1:23, 25-27, 30-32; 2:1-3, 6-15, 21-23, 25-27, etc.)

The biblical passages offered in behalf of the *Questions on Doctrine* authors in support of their new view do not sustain it. On the basis of what may have been only superficial thought... the denomination was expected to adopt the concept of birth-condemnation. Here, then, was a new doctrine offered, ironically, in a book almost urgently represented as bringing no doctrinal changes (emphasis in original).

Elder Kirkpatrick later explains that in 1980, with a new fundamental belief, the Seventh-day Adventist Church “affirmed a change in human nature after Adam’s sin and the persistence of the new condition through generations—but stopped short of declaring our birth-nature guilty or condemned.” He concludes his paper with these thoughts:

The rejection of *Questions of Doctrine*’s modification of the single most significant theological element (the doctrine of sin) in the core of the Adventist system, foretells inevitable abandonment also of viewpoints falling along the same axis, on the nature of Christ and an insistence that the atonement was finished at the cross with only the application of benefits following.

With the exception of his understanding of the doctrine of God which we believe to be the most fundamental theological element, Elder Kirkpatrick is logical and correct in showing the cause and effect of adopting a false understanding of the nature of sin and what this false doctrine leads to.

Elder A. Leroy Moore

A. Leroy Moore is a retired minister and college teacher, and the co-founder of Lavoy Missionary College in Alberta, Canada. During one of several question and answer panel discussions at the conference, Moore stated that he had devoted the last fifty years of his life to the issues of *Questions on Doctrine*. He is one of the most outspoken

supporters of the book and its theological concepts and is the author of *Questions on Doctrine Revisited*. He presented a paper entitled “That They May Be One.” In it, he discusses the issues that divide the Adventist Church and concludes that “only in seeking to love and prefer one another do we permit the Holy Spirit to unite us in the balance of truth. This requires that we constantly bear in mind that our perfection is in Him Who is our ‘righteousness’ and is available only as, by His grace we seek to be ‘one’ ‘in Him.’”

Dr. David Larson

Dr. David Larson, professor of religion at Loma Linda University and son of the late Ralph Larson, spoke on “Comments by a Left-Wing Neo-Andreasenite.” In this paper, he reviews some of the negative consequences of the book *Questions on Doctrine*, but he also sees the publication of this book as

...a small and partially flawed part of our denomination’s huge attempt in the last half of the twentieth century to improve the quantity and quality of our theological resources. Publishing the *SDA Bible Commentary* was another...creating Andrews University...sending our people to places like Berkeley, Fuller, Claremont, Chicago, Andrews, Vanderbilt, Duke, Princeton, Drew, New York, Columbia, Yale, Boston [is another]...Despite its many disappointments and disasters, some of which were the predictable results of rapid change in a small group, the endeavor as a whole has been an overwhelming success. Few denominations have accomplished so much in so little time and with so few resources. Although I don’t believe in many miracles, I believe in this one. *QOD* was a part of this larger miracle and for that I am grateful.

Dr. Denis Fortin

Friday evening began with Dr. Denis Fortin, dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University presenting his paper entitled “*Questions on Doctrine* and the Church: Where Do We Go From Here?” In this document he stated: “The publication of *Questions on Doctrine* fifty years ago unknowingly forced the church to refine its theology of atonement, its understanding of the divine/human nature of Christ, and of the meaning of the experience of salvation.” He discusses the nature of Christ and then makes this interesting statement: “I think the theological debate over the nature of Christ is really about the doctrine of sin.” Anyone who has been a student of theology will understand that no doctrine is held in a vacuum or isolated from others, and, as has been pointed out by Elder Kirkpatrick, the doctrine of sin is very foundational and Dr. Fortin is absolutely correct that “[w]hat we assume and presuppose about sin has a deep impact on how we view the human nature of Christ.” He concludes his paper with these thoughts: “So my recommendation to the church is that more books like *Questions on Doctrine* need to be published; it is good for us to learn how to express our beliefs in a way that



Some of those from Smyrna getting a seat early. Most meetings were standing room only.

others will understand and it is good for other Christians to hear what we have to say.” It should come as no surprise to us that, in his oral presentation, Dr. Fortin emphatically stated that the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary supported and taught the theology of *Questions on Doctrine*.

Dr. Mervyn Warren

Dr. Mervyn Warren, provost and senior vice president of Oakwood College, spoke on the topic of “Putting the Question to *Questions on Doctrine*: ‘Will It Preach?’” He believes that “the most lasting practical value of *QOD* to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its mission lies in the answer to the question: ‘**Will It Preach?**’” (emphasis in original) His “premise affirms that one of the most critical and consequential yardsticks for measuring the value of any theo-religious material is: ‘Will it engage the pulpit?’ Will it pass the test of harmony with Scripture? Does it contain necessary nutrients for hungry people who desire to be fed and fortified in private and public worship?” and he concludes his paper with “an optimistic ‘yes!’” that *Questions on Doctrine* will preach.

We conclude our remarks on Dr. Warren’s position by stating that his basic point is well-taken. Spiritual themes and concepts must be able to feed the flock, they must resonant to the heart, but because the controverted points of *Questions on Doctrine* fail the biblical test, *Questions on Doctrine* will not preach in the true biblical sense. It will sermonize. It will feed the flock but not the bread of life or living water. It, instead, provides the moldy bread of Gibeon and water from polluted cisterns.

Dr. Jon Paulien

The last speaker for Friday evening was Dr. Jon Paulien, dean of the School of Religion at Loma Linda University, and his paper was entitled “*Questions on Doctrine* and the Church: Present and Future.” He began his paper with a question:

The basis issue of the *Questions on Doctrine* controversy, it seems to me, revolved and still revolves around an unspoken subtext. I summarize that subtext in the following sentence: *Is there more than one right way to think?* I

have little doubt that our earliest Adventist pioneers would have instinctively answered *No* to this question. In their minds truth was basically clear and unchanging. It seems to me, however, that the answer of Adventist history as a whole to this question has increasingly been *Yes*. Very early on a considerable diversity of expression can be seen in the pages of the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. And it has become increasingly evident that Adventist understanding of truth was both developing and fragmenting throughout our history (emphasis in original).

There are some theological areas that can be looked at from different viewpoints, but core fundamental issues are black and white and not gray. Early Adventists believed in foundational absolutes in theology that did not have five or ten versions, some of which could readily contradict the others.

Dr. Paulien concluded his presentation with an analogy to the early church:

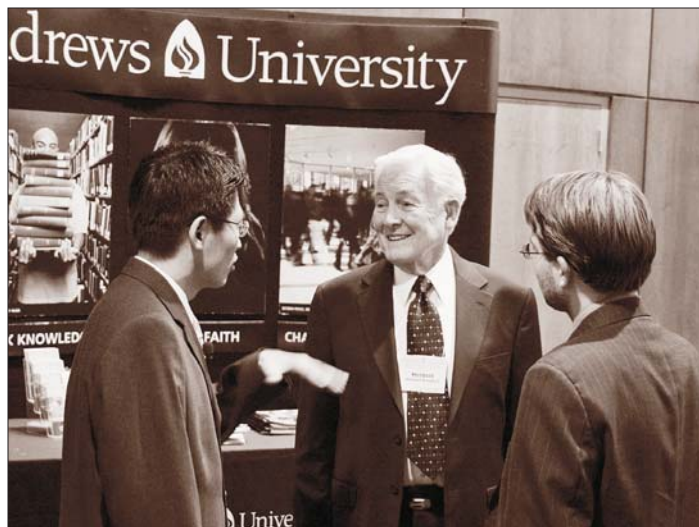
The death of the apostles led to a fragmentation of direction in the early church. Some five different groups came into existence in the second century, each with a different solution to the problem of church unity...

Adventists today stand in a similar relation to the death of inspiration as did the early church. When the prophets are dead the church shifts from the living voice to the written word. Believers struggle to apply words from another time and place to their own time and place. Back then and again today there are different approaches to the challenges of doing theology without the guidance of a living voice.

Dr. Paulien closed with a question: "Will we do any better" than did the early church? We will do better if we remember that even though the prophets of the Bible died long ago and even though Ellen White rests in her grave awaiting the resurrection morning, their words are made alive in our hearts and minds today by the *living* voice of the Spirit of God! There is nothing dead about these words!

Dr. Angel Rodríguez

The *Questions on Doctrine* Fiftieth Anniversary Conference closed on Sabbath, October 27, 2007 with a communion service and a presentation by Dr. Angel Rodríguez entitled "Looking Back: Profiling the Future." The text of his presentation was not included in the package given to each participant of the conference, a package which included the texts of all the other presentations, minus the devotional thoughts Thursday and Friday mornings by Nikolaus Satelmajer, editor of *Ministry*, and Dr. John McVay, president of Walla Walla University, respectively. A call to Dr. Rodríguez's office revealed that the text is not available at this time. Perhaps his thoughts of the morning were not completely written down, but Dr. Nam has informed us that texts and videos of all presentations will be



Julius Nam talking to Elder Douglass with Michael Campbell listening

available in January 2008. For now we offer the following reports about the morning. First by Elder A. Leroy Moore:

Dr. Rodríguez's message on Sabbath morning, after all presentations were completed, was a beautiful call to unity in worship to which every participant could and did heartily respond. *It was based not on the doctrines of the nature of Christ and atonement*, which were the primary issues, but was a call to contemplate the actual incarnation as Christ humbled Himself before the entire universe in providing atonement for a fallen race (in a report posted at <http://www.sdanet.org/archive/2007/Nov12007/0026.html>; emphasis supplied).

We also wish to include Dr. David Larson's comments about the Sabbath morning communion service:

"Dave Larson and I wept unashamedly as we received communion together ministered from the front by Angel Rodríguez, Colin Standish and George Knight (if the significance of this teamwork eludes you ask either of us)," wrote Jon Paulien, Dean of the School of Religion at Loma Linda University, to his faculty about Sabbath Morning, October 27. "I have long prayed to experience a day like this."

Were our tears for the needless pain our church has suffered since the publication of *Questions on Doctrines* fifty years ago, or for the visible prospect that it is ending? Both!

"Look!" Jon had whispered. I then really saw what previously I had only looked at. Angel Rodríguez, Director of the General Conference Biblical Research Institute, was standing behind the Bread and Wine of the Lord's Supper. Colin Standish, the President of Hartland Institute who is an eloquent spokesperson for the school of Adventist thought that finds *QOD* objectionable, stood beside him to our right. George Knight, a retired historian of Adventism and prolific writer who is an equally persuasive advocate

of much of QOD, despite the historical shortcomings that he has confirmed, was at his other side, to our left (in a report posted at http://spectrummagazine.typepad.com/the_spectrum_blog/2007/10/qod-conferenc-4.html).

We are saddened to think that this “beautiful call to unity” was not based on truth! We all long for the day that we can be united, but only on truth brothers and sisters, and the joining of the divergent strands of theology behind the communion table, knowing that it is a joining based on membership in a body alone and not based on truth is a cause for tears to flow “unashamedly.”

Conclusion

In the history of Adventism there have been some extremely momentous events such as the 1888 General Conference, the 1919 Bible Conference, and the publication of *Questions on Doctrines* in 1957. The Fiftieth Anniversary Conference of this publication brought together for the first, and perhaps only, time a wide diversity of Adventists seeking real solutions to very real issues or problems. We realize that this written summary of the conference proceedings is pale compared to the reality of having actually been present at the conference, but we hope that this summation has in a concise way provided an overview and outline of the presentations and themes of the conference, which we will be addressing in more detail in future months. We found all the conference participants to be friendly and cordial toward each other, despite some having great theological differences, and all demonstrated Christian-based respect and dignity toward one another.


In closing, we would like to consider a portion of the address made by Elder Jan Paulsen, General Conference President, to the Fall Annual Council in October 2007:

Some time ago a senior person in our church, one who has given much to our church and for whom I have the greatest respect, came to my office and urged me to convene a re-study of some of the theological issues which were published in the Book “Questions on Doctrines” – issues which he felt have created distress and, in his view, misrepresented the position of our church. It had to do particularly, but not only that, with the nature of Christ. We talked about it, and I had to tell him that I would not convene such a restudy. – I appreciate that it troubled him, as it may some others these days.

The book was an attempt to answer specific questions put to us by representatives of the evangelical community in North America. Elder Figuhr was GC President at the time, and some of the finest minds of our church were consulted and were involved in formulating our answers which were published in that book. But there were some who differed. Opinions were strongly held. Adventists always do that. While I suppose that maybe 98% of the book was considered to be a wonderful statement of where we stood and stand as a church, it was the other 2% that

caused charges of apostasy to fly. — I understand that an event is coming up to mark the fifty years that have passed since the publication of that book. I have questions about the constructive value of having that event, particularly as I see on the list of participants the names of one or two presenters whose track-record has been to attack aggressively the church and charging particularly those of us who are leaders of leading the church into apostasy.

Maybe the time will come, although it will not be at my urging and it will not happen on my watch, when church leaders will restudy the sensitive points of this issue. But I think there is a reason for why we have chosen generous language in describing our position as a church on the nature of Christ. The uniqueness of Jesus Christ (Wholly God and wholly man – no one else matches that of the “only-begotten” One) leads us to that. I just cannot imagine a post-modern person in Europe, a business man in Asia or Latin America, any more than a farmer in Africa will care one iota whether Christ had the nature of man before the fall or after. The realities of the world in which we live have other concerns and other priorities which occupy us.

Brothers and sisters, it is not to perpetuate division or controversy that we report on this Fiftieth Anniversary Conference, but it is because of the sweet urging of truth tugging strongly at our hearts. We disagree with Elder Paulsen. We know there are people all over this world who love truth and who are found daily bending over their Bibles and deeply studying the beautiful truths found therein, just as the Bereans did long ago, whether they be businessmen in Europe or Asia or farmers in America, and we pray that the importance of the issues discussed at the conference and reported on here will be understood by all. If not, please feel free to send questions or comments to us, for we are interested in what you have to say. It certainly is a sad state of affairs if *any* one of us does not care an iota about the nature of Christ, for, as Dr. Rice has stated, “No point of doctrine is more central to Christian faith than its understanding of Jesus Christ.” 



“Prayer Request” continued from page 1
platform of error (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 15, p. 259).”

May we pray that our study of God’s Word and willingness to submit to that Word be the basis for total unity among God’s people and that we might be found in full harmony as a people. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity (Psalm 133:1).”

Editor

Questions on Doctrine and Systematic Theology

by Allen Stump

Perhaps the most famous, and now most used, non-Ellen White quotation ever framed in Adventist theology was penned by George Knight when he wrote that *Questions on Doctrine* “easily qualifies as the most divisive book in Seventh-day Adventist history.” A basic history of *Questions on Doctrine*, hereafter known as *QOD*, was provided in the November 2007 issue of *Old Paths*, so we will not reproduce it here. If you are not familiar with that history, I urge you to go back and read that first.

Before writing on the *Questions on Doctrine* 50th Anniversary Conference (October 24-27 – Andrews University), I wish to acknowledge the wonderful job that Michael Campbell, Jerry Moon, and Julius Nam did in organizing the conference and in the manner that the conference was carried out. These men were fair, open-minded, and honest in their attempt to bring a representative body of speakers together that could give a wide perspective to the history and theology of *Questions on Doctrine*. In their words, the purpose of the conference was to “be a scholarly dialogue among those who have invested much of their professional lives in the study of the history and theological issues surrounding *Questions on Doctrine* (*Questions on Doctrine* 50th Anniversary Conference Schedule Brochure).”

Each presenter was asked to prepare a written copy of his presentation before the conference for inclusion into a notebook that would be given to each official attendee of the conference. Since neither the audio recordings nor the video presentations of the conference have been released at the time of this writing, I will be quoting and making reference to the printed versions of the presentations, unless otherwise noted. As we continue to write over the coming months on this subject, we will quote and reference the verbal discussions where needful, as they are scheduled to become available in January 2008.

The presentations were made by brethren that I would group within three main categories: Adventists pro *QOD*, Adventists con *QOD*, and non-Adventist Evangelicals who were invited to give an “outside” perspective.

I would like to begin, as Elder Whidden might say, by “laying my cards on the table.” I want to outline for you, my reader, what I wish to begin addressing in this issue of *Old Paths* and what you can expect to see in the upcoming issues.

For those who may not be familiar with my position on *QOD* and its teachings, I want to clearly state that I think that there are several areas of *QOD* that have serious defects and which have become mainstream theology in the church today. I believe that these defects are serious enough to be issues that can affect one’s salvation and are, therefore, not only worthy, but needful, of consideration.

Herbert Douglass was one of three keynote speakers for the conference. In his presentation, he made some interesting

observations concerning Roy A. Anderson, W. E. Read, and LeRoy Froom, the main Adventist leaders in the dialog with the evangelicals that resulted in the book *QOD*. He stated:

R. A. Anderson was a revered homiletician and public evangelist. His preaching became a mountaintop experience for large audiences on several continents. During the 1950s he was editor of *Ministry*, the monthly magazine that all Adventist leaders and pastors would avidly read. But he was not a trained theologian.

W. E. Read knew his biblical languages and was a highly respected and valued church administrator— but not trained in systematic theology.

[LeRoy Froom’s] ... productive capacity was enormous; his towering energy made him a leader in any conversation. But, he too was over his head in systematic theology.

After mentioning his warm personal friendships with Froom and Anderson that continued despite theological differences, Douglass remarks:

But the facts are that our Adventist trio, untrained as theologians, was no match for Martin and Barnhouse, specialists in Calvinistic-Evangelicalism. What made the situation in 1955 even thornier was the deliberate decision to ignore M. L. Andreasen, the senior Adventist theologian for decades. Andreasen had been head of the Systematic Theology department of the Adventist Seminary for years, retiring in 1949. He had written numerous articles and at least 13 books, some of which have never been surpassed. Well-known as an authority on the sanctuary doctrine, he was the author of the section on the book of Hebrews in the *Seventh-day Adventist Commentary*.

Dr. Douglass was expressing his belief that “FREDA” (Froom, Read, and Anderson) did not really stand a chance from the beginning against the evangelicals of Dr. Donald Barnhouse, Walter Martin, and Dr. George Cannon, due to a lack of not being trained in systematic theology. Systematic theology has been defined as the discipline of theology that:

... seeks to organize the various Christian doctrines in a logical way, so the discussion of one topic leads naturally to the consideration of the next.

The systematic character of theology involves more than arranging the different Christian doctrines. Theology also seeks to show how the different aspects of Christian faith are related to each other. Everything we believe has an influence on everything else we believe. What people think about God, for example, will affect their view of the end of history, and vice versa.

The different Christian doctrines are not like building blocks, having exactly the same size and shape, capable of

any sort of arrangement. They are more like the pieces of a puzzle. They fit together one way better than another, and it is only in relation to the others that the value of each piece emerges. This analogy breaks down, however, because the pieces of a puzzle have only one way of going together, and there is no one pattern to which Christian theology conforms. At least, no theologian claims to have found the perfect pattern yet (Richard Rice, *Reign of God*, pp. 10, 11).

In a personal conversation with Dr. Douglass the day after his presentation, I asked him if one needed to be a professionally trained theologian in systematic theology to be able to study with evangelicals who were so trained. Could not someone well trained in the Scriptures be able to defend his position from the Bible with them? Dr. Douglass stated his conviction that most people could not, unless they were very good students who had a good overview of the big picture. Then, he said, they could defend the faith.

During his presentation, Dr. Douglass made reference to page 423 of the book *The Great Controversy*. There we read:

The subject of the sanctuary was the key which unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844. It opened to view **a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious**, showing that God's hand had directed the great advent movement and revealing present duty as it brought to light the position and work of His people (emphasis supplied).

Here is surely the key for the Advent people. "The subject of the sanctuary was the key" to "a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious." This is basically the definition for a systematic theology. Here we find the way to bring our doctrines into a complete chain that is harmonious and connected.

So we may take courage and heart to know that no theologian, however brilliantly trained in the thoughts of men, can defeat a Bible-trained layperson who has the sanctuary key to the big picture. The Apostle Peter challenges us to be "ready always to give an answer to every man [including trained theologians] that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear (1 Peter 3:15)." Remember that "All His biddings are enablings (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 333)." Paul states that we are to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15)." When Jesus was only twelve, he was found in the temple teaching the rabbis and doctors, those who had been trained in the systematic theology of that day. William Tyndale declared: "If God spares my life, I will cause the boy that drives the plow in England to know more of the Scriptures than the Pope himself!" A plowboy who possesses the Holy Scriptures and whose mind is worked by the Holy Spirit will be able to give an account for his faith that even the trained theologians cannot gainsay.

Certainly, with the help of God, we may be "people of the Book" that need not be behind anyone, trained theologian or not. Is this the reality of God's people at this time? I must sadly admit that I seriously do not think it to be so. But let us not blame God, for he has given us his Word and his Spirit so that we might understand him and his plan for humanity. Let us acknowledge that we have failed to take advantage of the opportunities given us of God and apply ourselves to the study of God's Word and the Testimonies as never before.

Remember that the sanctuary is the key that unlocks all else. Our discussions on righteousness by faith and our experience with God is taught in the typology of the sanctuary. Paul exclaimed that the Jewish people had the gospel preached to them. "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it (Hebrews 4:2)." Paul describes this gospel throughout the book of Hebrews in the light of the sanctuary.

The truths taught through the sanctuary will help us to be able to sift our way through the maze of confusion that Babylon presents to the world.

In the next issues of *Old Paths* we will be looking at a system of progressive truths that build upon each other and perfectly interlock together. Our system is not designed to be complete, but rather tailored to the need we have of the considerations of the issues involved in the *QOD* debate. We will build in the following pattern:

- The Doctrine of Revelation
- The Doctrine of God (Theology)
- The Doctrine of Sin (Harmartiology) and Law (Nomosology)
- The Doctrine of Christ (The Incarnation-Christology)
- The Doctrine of Man (Anthropology)
- The Doctrine of Salvation (Soteriology)
- The Doctrine of Last Day Events (Eschatology)

In laying our cards upon the table, I will now outline some of the main points that will be discussed in each of the above sections. These areas will include, but will not be limited to, the following:

In Revelation, we will see that the Bible is to be the basis of our study, but we will also see the place and the value of the Spirit of Prophecy writings of Ellen G. White.

In the study of the doctrine of God, we will look at the necessity of knowing the truth about God and how the trinitarian doctrine is subversive to the atonement.

In the doctrine of sin, we shall explore the biblical definition of sin and how the concept of original sin does not have biblical support. In our study of the law of God, we shall see the law as the transcript of God's character and that its importance is not diminished any in the New Covenant experience but, rather, is an embodiment of the righteousness of God.

In the Study of Christ, we will explore further into his Sonship, but we will especially deal with his nature in the incarnation and in what degree was he truly tempted as man. We will look into expressions of Ellen White such as “propensities,” “passions,” and “tendencies.” Was Jesus really a Saviour that was tempted in all points as we are?

Our study of man will explore his fallen nature and what the Bible says about the need of man to maintain a constant connection to Christ for his life and righteousness.

The doctrine of salvation will examine the concepts of justification, sanctification, and glorification. How does a man become right with God and how does he stay right with God? What is perfection and how does having a proper or improper understanding of perfection affect the Christian?

The doctrine of last-day events will discuss M. L. Andreasen’s concept called “Last Generation Theology.” We will look at its value and why its basic principles are important for the last generation. We shall examine why this doctrine is not well-accepted by those who support and promote *QOD*. We shall also explore a few flaws within this concept.

In the upcoming studies, we will at times be extensively making reference to *QOD* and materials from the 50th Anniversary Conference. However, instead of examining each presentation on an individual basis, we will be looking at


sections from within a single presentation or many presentations that have a bearing on the matter.

As we prepare to enter into this study, we would like to quote Evangelical Dr. Donald Dayton, an independent scholar from Pasadena, California, who spoke at the conference. He noted:

Barth argues that if we take the NT seriously and understand that Christ is the genuine revelation of the nature of God, we must reason in an *a posteriori* rather than in an *a priori* manner (emphasis in original).

Specifically, Dayton mentions the issue of the incarnation:

That is to say that the one thing that we know about God from the NT is that God is the kind of God that becomes incarnate – and that we reject the practice of importing assumptions that make this either impossible or difficult.

We all should be willing to acknowledge that it is very difficult to enter into any study without some bias. We all have backgrounds and prior studies that affect our perspectives. Beginning a study with a totally open mind is much more difficult in reality than in word. We may ask the God of all wisdom, however, to open our eyes so that we might see wondrous things from his law and to help us study and progress from biblical statements of fact to doctrine rather than starting with assumed doctrine and then trying to progress to supposed biblical facts. 

The Doctrine of Revelation

by Allen Stump

Because the readers of *Old Paths* are predominantly strong believers in the Bible being the word of God, we will not at this time cover the doctrine of revelation in detail. Its importance can be easily seen in reading different denominational statements of belief. In almost any denomination’s creed or statement of belief, the subject of inspiration (the Bible) is almost always first for it lays the foundation of what all other beliefs will be based upon.

The following phrases are found in over seven hundred collective references in the Bible. “Thus saith the LORD” (413), “The word of the LORD” (225), “God said” (46), “God spake” (13), and “word of God” (45). The title for the Scriptures, the “Bible,” comes from the Greek, *biblion* (βιβλίον) meaning book. The Bible is the book! Consisting of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, the Bible declares itself to be the reliable, revealed Word of God.

Through prophets, God gave his words to his people. “And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream (Numbers 12:6).” God instructed his people, “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt

teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7).”

God promised to speak his will to his people by his prophets, “Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets (Amos 3:7)” who faithfully recorded all his words.

The Bible claims to be the divine Word of God. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).” The expression “by inspiration of God” *theopneustos* (θεόπνευστος) literally means, “God breathed.” The Scriptures are the words breathed by God to mankind. Peter writes that the Old Testament was produced “not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:21).”

Being God breathed, the Bible in its original autographs (manuscripts) is free from error because its author, God, never errs. “The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times (Psalm 12:6).”

Not only has God given us pure words, but he has protected them: “I saw that God had a special care for His Word. He protected it. At different periods there were but a very few copies of the Bible in existence, yet He would not suffer His Word to be lost, for in the last days copies of it were to be so multiplied that every family could possess it (Ellen White, *Early Writings*, p. 214).”

While the Bible has never been lost, we acknowledge that there have been counterfeits and attempted changes made by men inspired by the prince of darkness in order to confuse and deceive God’s people.

I saw that God had especially guarded the Bible; yet when copies of it were few, learned men had in some instances changed the words, thinking that they were making it more plain, when in reality they were mystifying that which was plain, by causing it to lean to their established views, which were governed by tradition. But I saw that the Word of God, as a whole, is a perfect chain, one portion linking into and explaining another. True seekers for truth need not err; for not only is the Word of God plain and simple in declaring the way of life, but the Holy Spirit is given as a guide in understanding the way to life therein revealed (*Early Writings*, pp. 220, 221).

Careful research has shown that the *Textus Receptus (TR)* is the most accurate Greek New Testament. This was the Greek version of the New Testament that the Reformers used. The *Codex Vaticanus* and the *Codex Sinaiticus*, which most modern translations of the New Testament use, are of dubious origin and differ in thousands of places from the *TR*.

Jesus recognized the Old Testament as the revealed will of God to mankind and read and spoke concerning it as such. Speaking to the travelers on the road to Emmaus, Jesus’ use of the Old Testament confirmed his belief in its validity. “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself (Luke 24:27).” Concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus spoke with words that gave the prophecies of Daniel authenticity when he said, “But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains (Mark 13:14).” While denouncing the hypocritical works of the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus recognized specifically the writings of Moses when he told the people, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not (Matthew 23:2, 3).” See also Matthew 8:4; 19:8; Mark 12:26; John 5:45; 7:22.

God accepts the responsibility for communicating to mankind his word. Man obviously could never ascend to God’s level to learn of him, so God has graciously descended to our level to reveal himself to us. The Bible tells us that this revelation is most fully revealed in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1). He is the express

image of God (Hebrews 1:2). Jesus said that if we have seen him, we have seen the Father (John 14:9). Paul writes that, “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6).” The reflection of God in Jesus is so clear that Jesus said, “I and my Father are one (John 10:30).”

Not only do Christians accept the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament as inspired, but also the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. Peter called the writings of Paul Scripture: “...even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction (2 Peter 3:15, 16).”

All of the New Testament was written by apostles who had direct contact with Jesus (Matthew John, James, Peter, Paul, and Jude) or very close contact with those who did (Mark with Peter and Luke with Paul). These men provided a “living link” to Jesus. Most all professed Christians believe that the canon of Scripture closes with the death of the apostles.

However, the gift of prophecy was promised to the church by Jesus Christ until the second coming. (See Ephesians 4:11-13). According to the book of Revelation, the “testimony of Jesus (Revelation 12:17)” is “the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10).” Seventh-day Adventists believe that this gift was specially manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White. She consistently directed her listeners and readers to the Bible as their great source of revelation about God.

In our time there is a wide departure from their doctrines and precepts, and there is need of a return to the great Protestant principle—the Bible, and the Bible only, as the rule of faith and duty (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 204, 205).

Ellen White plainly declared that the testimonies she bore were not to replace the Bible: “That the *Testimonies* were not given to take the place of the Bible...(*Testimonies for the Church*, vol.5, p. 663).” “Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light (*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 125).” While Ellen White plainly declared the Bible to be the sole rule of faith, she did not deny the gift of revelation that God gave to her nor its place among the people of God.

I took the precious Bible, and surrounded it with the several “*Testimonies for the Church*,” given for the people of God. “Here,” said I, “the cases of nearly all are met. The sins they are to shun are pointed out. The counsel that they desire can be found here, given for other cases situated similarly to themselves. God has been pleased to give you line upon line and precept upon precept. But there are not

Continued on page 16, column 2

Youth's Corner

Our story today is about Bennie. Bennie and his brother Curtis were born in Detroit, Michigan. When Bennie was only eight years old, his daddy left the family and never came back. Bennie missed his daddy very much, but God was watching over Bennie.

After his daddy left, Bennie and his family did not have much money to live on. They were very poor in this world's goods, and Bennie's mother was not, according to the standards of the world, well educated. The only jobs she could get were cleaning people's houses and caring for children. Bennie's mother, however, was a Christian whose faith was strong, and she knew that all things would be fine because God was watching over them.

Bennie's mother was always encouraging her sons to do their best. When Bennie was trying something he had not done before, his mother would say, "Bennie, you can do it. You just ask the Lord and he will help you."

Shortly after his dad left, Bennie, Curtis, and their mother moved to Boston where she had family to live with. This area was not as nice as the area of Detroit that they had come from. There were very big cockroaches in their tenement that they could not get rid of no matter how hard they tried, snakes would get in the basement, and outside they saw rats as big as cats! That was not a sweet place to live, but Mom would remind Bennie and Curtis that God was watching over them.

One Sabbath morning, Bennie, Curtis, and their mother were at church and their pastor told them a story about a missionary doctor and his wife who were chased through the jungle by bandits. They were able to stay just a little ahead of the bandits by dodging trees and rocks. At last, gasping with exhaustion, the couple was stopped by a precipice in front of them. There seemed to be nowhere to go; they were trapped. But suddenly, right at the edge of the cliff, they saw a small break in a rock, just big enough for them to crawl into and hide! So they did. When the bandits got to the precipice, they saw nobody. To the bandits' amazement, the missionaries had just disappeared! The bandits screamed and cursed and then left. The couple had been hidden, sheltered, and protected in the cleft of the rock, and the pastor told the congregation that they also needed to be protected and sheltered by Jesus. Bennie and Curtis both responded to the appeal of the pastor and gave their hearts to Jesus.

After about three years in Boston, the family moved back to Detroit. There, Mom made plans to move back into their old house that had been rented out while they were in Boston.

When Bennie was in fifth grade, he did not do very well in school. He had made good grades in school at Boston, but the school in Detroit expected much more and he was not ready for such a school. It was soon clear that he was the lowest in the class.

On a mathematics test one day there were thirty problems. Bennie did not get a single problem correct. The students had

already begun to make fun of Bennie for being what they thought was stupid and when he had to call out his score of zero for the teacher, she thought that he said "nine" instead of "none." For Bennie, even nine was a good score and the teacher began to praise him for getting nine, but then the student who graded his paper cried out, "NONE" and the other students laughed and made fun of Bennie.

About this time, the school nurse where Bennie attended gave eye examinations to all the students. They found out that Bennie needed glasses, and after he received his glasses, Bennie found out that he could see the board from the back of the room properly for the first time! He was thrilled with this and began to work hard and he improved his grade in mathematics from an F to a D!

I know that might not sound like to good grade to some, but for Bennie, it was a start upward. Bennie told his mother about his improvement and she told him that while she was proud of his achievement, he could do better. So his mother began to help Bennie with his math each evening, helping him to remember his multiplication tables, and Bennie began to do even better in class. One day Bennie got 24 out of 30 of his math problems correct. He almost screamed out his answer when his turn came to give his score!

An important moment in Bennie's life came when his mother decided that he and Curtis watched too much television. She put a stop to it one evening when she walked in and turned off the set in mid program! "You can watch three programs a week," she told them! At first Bennie protested, but then he obeyed his mother because he knew that God wanted him to obey her and that she loved him.

To give the boys something useful to do since they would not be watching very much television, Bennie's mother told her sons that they would go to the library and read at least two books each week. After they finished reading each book, the boys would write a report about what they learned in the book and give it to their mother for review.

About this time, Bennie read some books about rocks and his science teacher brought a certain rock into his class. The teacher asked if any of the students could identify the rock. Nobody could—except Bennie! He knew it was obsidian rock. Not only could he identify it, but he also described how this black volcanic glass (that displays shiny curved surfaces when fractured) is formed by rapid cooling. All the students looked very impressed at Bennie and he began to believe that he did not have to be stupid but that maybe he could be as intelligent and smart as anyone in the class.

Bennie began to study very hard and he soon went to the top of his class. In a few years he was in high school, taking college preparatory classes, and schools such as Harvard and Yale began to try to recruit Bennie to attend their schools.

Remember the story of the missionary doctor and his wife running away from the bandits? Well, Bennie did not forget that story either, and he decided that he wanted to be a doctor!

Bennie was accepted to Yale University, one of the most difficult schools in the country to be admitted to because of

the high requirements necessary. The costs to attend Yale University are enormous, but Bennie was such a good student in high school that he received a full scholarship to attend. That meant all of his expenses would be paid. Many of the students at Yale came from very rich families, but Bennie came from a family where his mother was called a domestic, which means someone who works cleaning houses or caring for children, doing “domestic” duties. God was watching over Bennie and had a plan for him.

Near the end of his fourth year at Yale, Bennie needed to apply for entrance into medical school. Most of the students applied to many schools, in the hope that they would get accepted by one of them. Bennie only applied to a few medical schools and one of them was the University of Michigan. Bennie wanted to go there because it was one of the finest medical schools in the country and because it would be close to his home. Bennie was sure that God wanted him to go there! When some of his friends at school found out that he was not applying to many schools, they asked him why he was so sure he would be accepted. Bennie told them, “My Father owns the school.” Since these boys came from rich families that owned large corporations and businesses, they thought that Bennie was speaking of his earthly father and they did not question his statement. But you know who Bennie was thinking of, don’t you? That’s right, his heavenly Father!

About this time, Bennie was asked by Yale University to do some recruiting in the Detroit area. Bennie and a friend were driving back late from Detroit one night after doing their work, and because it was late and Bennie was very tired, he fell asleep while traveling very fast. He suddenly awoke to realize that the car was leaving the roadway. He turned the wheel sharply to bring it back onto the road, but Bennie overcompensated and the car started to spin around and around. It finally stopped in the road pointed in the direction they had been traveling! Bennie was very scared, but he realized that God was still watching over him. God had a plan for Bennie.

One summer while at Yale, Bennie obtained a job working as a crane operator. This particular job involved the need for careful hand-eye coordination. Bennie was really good at this job, and he realized that it was actually a special gift from God to be able to use his hands and eyes together so well. Bennie decided that God wanted him to be a surgeon to be able to use this gift. The type of surgery that Bennie was most interested in, even fascinated by, was neurosurgery. This is surgery on the brain and the spinal cord.

Bennie was accepted at the University of Michigan and soon showed great promise as a doctor. Bennie did very well in medical school. At the end of his fourth year, he needed to apply for the next level of schooling, which was residency.

Bennie prayed for direction and applied to the Johns Hopkins Medical School. That year Johns Hopkins only accepted two students from one hundred twenty-five who applied for a residency in neurosurgery. Do you know who one of the two was that were accepted? That’s right, Bennie. And

Bennie did so well so quickly that he soon not only finished his residency but became a teacher at Johns Hopkins, as well as a great neurosurgeon working especially with children.

Today Bennie, that is Ben Carson, is considered by many to be the leading pediatric neurosurgeon in the world. Dr. Carson was listed by *Time* magazine as one of the top twenty physician scientists in the country. He has helped to separate conjoined twins that other doctors felt could never be separated, and he has been gifted by God to know new methods of helping people that nobody ever knew before. Dr. Carson knows that while he has worked very hard, he has a gift from God and he wants to use this gift for God’s honor and glory. He knows that God has a plan for his life and, above all, Dr. Carson wants to be used of God for that plan.

The Bible says that God has a plan for you too. To each person God has given gifts and abilities. Ben’s brother Curtis became an engineer, and their mother was a wonderful mother, the most important job in the world! We all do not have the hands and skills of Dr. Carson, but we can each use the skills that God has given to us. The Bible says that there are different gifts but the same spirit of God that gives these gifts. Let us be like the good and faithful steward in a story that Jesus told. The steward was given some talents and worked hard and used what the Master had given to him. When the Master returned to check on him, the steward had increased his talents and the Master was able to say, “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord (Matthew 25:21).”

Allen Stump

“*The Doctrine of Revelation*” continued from page 14

many of you that really know what is contained in the Testimonies. You are not familiar with the Scriptures. If you had made God’s word your study, with a desire to reach the Bible standard and attain to Christian perfection, you would not have needed the Testimonies. It is because you have neglected to acquaint yourselves with God’s inspired book that He has sought to reach you by simple, direct testimonies, calling your attention to the words of inspiration which you had neglected to obey, and urging you to fashion your lives in accordance with its pure and elevated teachings (*Life Sketches*, p. 198).”

Some today would wish to disregard her writings because she has died, saying that non-Biblical prophets’ ministries ceased upon their death. But does truth change? If God gave a truth that has an application in any time, can it be disregarded with impunity? The Advent movement is soon to come to a fulfillment. Can we dare disregard God’s special gift? The book of Revelation tells us that the Devil is especially wroth with the remnant that have the testimony of Jesus, the spirit of prophecy. This is a clear indicator that this important gift must not be neglected. (To be continued)

An Interview with Dr. William Van Grit

Pastor Allen Stump (AS): Dr. William Van Grit is a retired language professor, and he is with us today. Thank you for coming, Dr. Van Grit.

Dr. William Van Grit (WVG): It is a pleasure to be here.

AS: First of all, can you tell us where you were born?

WVG: I was born in the Netherlands many years ago.

AS: We won't ask you how many years ago, but we understand that you have been a language professor for many years. Will you tell us a little about your education, your background, and what languages you have studied?

WVG: I studied three languages while in elementary school—English, French, and German. In high school, which was seven years, I studied English, French, German, Latin, Greek, plus of course, Dutch. In this way we could be able to travel effectively, and we would be able to be called an educated person. In Europe, you are not educated unless you know at least a few languages so you can communicate with people when you travel to England, for example, or France and Germany, for those are the three big countries around Holland. The rest, of course, you can learn. I learned Italian, as well as Spanish and Russian. The more you learn, the better it is. It trains your memory. It gives you insights in other cultures and customs, and you begin to appreciate what other people have done for history and for society.

AS: You mentioned you studied Greek and Latin for seven years in high school. I understand your doctorate is in French and Italian.

WVG: Yes.

AS: You also have studied Biblical Greek.

WVG: I obtained a minor in Biblical Greek and Hebrew at Atlantic Union College in 1960. It sounds like an awfully long time ago.

AS: So that our readers have a better understanding of some of the complexities of the Biblical Greek language, in the English language there is one definite article, but how many definite articles are there in Biblical Greek?

WVG: How about twenty-four?

AS: Twenty-four!

WVG: There are twenty-four different articles, but that is true of most adjectives, most nouns. As you now know since you have recently studied some Greek, you have the nominative case, the genitive case, the dative case, and the accusative case in the singular and in the plural. Then you have masculine, feminine, and neuter forms, and many of

them are different. Some are similar, but many are different, so that means all the nouns, all the adjectives, all the articles have all kind of possibilities.

AS: Are there more verb forms in Greek than in English?

WVG: There are tons of irregular verbs. In English there are irregular verbs also, but we just use them automatically, without thinking, because we know the language, but in Greek you have to know the tenses of all the verbs, such as present tense, future tense, past tense, imperfect, perfect, pluperfect, passive, reflexive, middle, active. We have all these options available.

AS: I understand that you have taught in Germany.

WVG: I taught at Atlantic Union College. I taught at Pacific Union College. I taught at Southern Adventist University. I taught in Germany for eight years. I have gone to at least a dozen schools and universities. I studied twice in Russia—at Moscow Linguistic University and at the Pushkin Institute, taking advanced Russian literature, civilization and culture, conversation, composition, and language courses.

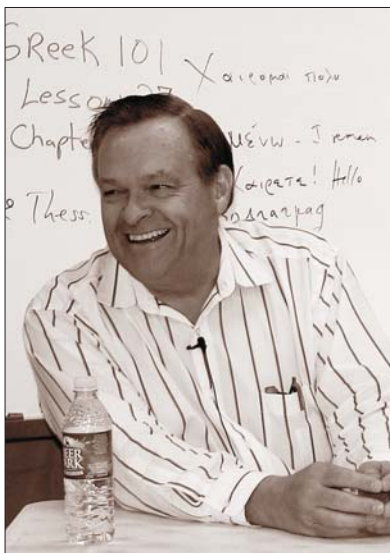
AS: Could I call upon your expertise in Greek for a moment? There is a word in the New Testament that has generated a lot of discussion. It is found in perhaps the most

famous Bible verse there is—John 3:16—and it is the word *monogenes*. Many theologians say that this word, which in the King James Bible is translated as “only begotten,” should really be translated as “unique.” Can you agree with this, and if not, why?

WVG: Well, when you look at the Greek, *monos* (μόνος) means “only” and *genos* (γένος) comes from *ginomai* (γίνομαι), which means “to beget or to be born, to be brought forth,” so *monogenes* can only mean “the only begotten or the only one brought forth.”

AS: Why do you think some theologians want to translate this word as “unique”?

WVG: Well, I think they want to give the Bible a Trinitarian slant. For example, in my NIV for John 1:18 it says the one and only God. First, it says he was with God, in the bosom of God, and then the one and only God. How can that be? The NIV talks about two gods in this case, and I think this is not the case in John 3:16. That is why you need to know the language. In other words, if you look at the New Testament Bible, you really ought to be able to analyze and show the meaning of certain words, and we have seen many verses in our study here that say the *one* God. Remember *eis o theos* (εἰς ὁ θεός)? It cannot mean “only” God because the word “only” would have to have been *mono*, not *eis*. *Eis* (εἰς) is the



Dr. William Van Grit

Lessons from New Testament Greek

word for one. There are many other cases where the verbs are twisted, verbs are slanted, to fit the philosophical religious view of the translators. Many translators, in fact, were actually unbelievers. They looked at the language but they were not very careful with their translation. The King James Bible is a pretty good translation. It is not a bad translation. It is the best we have.

AS: I know a lot of it is based on Tyndale's work.

WVG: Right.

AS: And, of course, the Bible says spiritual things are spiritually discerned. So we need God's spirit as we read and study.

WVG: The King James comes from the *Textus Receptus*, which is the best manuscript. It was used by the Waldenses and other Protestants, but there are still some errors in there. Some of the questions are about 1 John 5:7, 8. These verses actually were, as I call them, added.

AS: The theologians call that a gloss, don't they?

WVG: They call it a gloss. I call it a falsification. It is a deception by people that had a Trinitarian view.

AS: You have studied and done a lot of research on Matthew 28:19 also, haven't you?


WVG: I think this is also a verse that has been tampered with because it is the only verse that has this expression—baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. There is no other verse found in the same way in the New Testament, and the disciples never baptized in this way. Paul, Peter, John, and all the other apostles, they only baptized in Jesus' name. So you wonder, why didn't they obey Jesus' command? Were they disobedient or had they heard something else? So, I think this is another deception.

AS: Dr. Van Grit, we want to thank you again for being with us. We are appreciative of you. You have been here for two and half weeks giving us a concentrated course in Biblical Greek, and we appreciate it very much.

WVG: It has been a pleasure.

AS: I have one more question, though. Will you come again to help us?

WVG: I hope so. This year I think will be out of the question. It will be next year. November is coming to a close in two weeks and in December we will be visiting relatives. After that, we go to Puerto Rico for a few weeks in January. My wife is from there, and she has relatives there. She wants her mother to be there and enjoy the Puerto Rican culture and Puerto Rican food. I will enjoy it too.

AS: We pray that you and Sister Van Grit will have a blessed visit to Puerto Rico and we look forward to seeing you sometime in 2008. 

October 29–November 15 were some extremely busy days at Smyrna as we had the privilege of having retired language professor, Dr. William Van Grit, with us to teach an introduction to basic biblical Greek.

The days were packed with 12 to 15 hours of lecture, study, workbook exercises, and flash card drills. In the period of just under three weeks, Dr. Van Grit was able to provide instruction equivalent to almost 1 ½ semesters of biblical Greek as it would have been taught at college!

New Testament Greek, called the Koine Greek, has become a dead language in that it is not a language in use today that is undergoing change. While it has similarities to classical, as well as to modern Greek, it has many differences. Using a language that was common in its time, but then later dead and unchanged was a way that God could ensure that the language would not be confusing from the time it was written until Jesus would return.

The reasons for the study of Koine Greek are many. The ability to communicate is a wonderful gift from God and we were so blessed to have such a wonderful chance to learn more of the original language of the New Testament. Anytime communication is translated from one language to another there is always a chance that something will be lost or that a thought will not be fully carried over. As Christians we are not simply learning information from old documents, but, rather, we are to learn more about God and how to know him and his Son personally! The more correct and more fully we understand God's love letter to us, the better and deeper will be our experience with him. Therefore, the most basic reason for the study of Koine or biblical Greek is that we might have a better, clearer understanding of God's Word and then be able to share that understanding with others.

After learning the *alphabet* (from the first two Greek letters: alpha and beta), we continued by learning about nouns and their four different cases in three different declensions. We learned that while English has one definite article (the), Koine Greek has twenty-four! We continued with prepositions, adjectives, pronouns and then studied the different verb tenses.

While English is an analytical language where we use several words to convey an idea, Greek is a synthetic language where a single word can convey many ideas. For example the expression, "I will be known" can be conveyed with the single Greek word γνωσθήσομαι.

Most of the chapters in our text book, *Basis of Biblical Greek*, by William D. Mounce, began with an exegetical insight illustrates that knowing the language provides a deeper insight into the meaning of the biblical passages discussed. While we were certainly blessed by these studies, it

was our own personal study of God's Word that was so thrilling.

For example: Some well-meaning people, even among those who have claimed to believe the truth about God, have been deceived into believing that Jesus Christ had no pre-existence prior to coming into this world. They believe that God adopted the person we call Jesus, anointed him with his Spirit, and adopted him as his Son. A key element in this belief is a re-translation of certain key texts such as John 1:3:

All things were made *by* him; and without him was not any thing made that was made (John 1:3).

This verse clearly teaches that God made all things through his Son and he is before all things, and by him all things have their existence. The brethren who are teaching the error that Jesus had no pre-existence, though, proclaim that these statements should really be translated to say that all things were made "for" Christ and not "by" him. In question is the preposition *dia* (διά). *Dia* can be translated in one of two main ways. It can either mean "through" or "by," denoting the channel of action, or it can be translated "on account of" or "for," denoting the reason an action is taken. So how do we know the best way to translate *dia* in each case? Thankfully we are not left to guess if we know some basic Greek! The proper translation depends upon the case of the preposition's object. If the object is in the genitive case (equivalent to the possessive case in English), then it is translated as "through" or "by." If the object is in the accusative case (equivalent to the objective case in English), *dia* is translated "for" or "on account of." In John 1:3 and all other such verses in question, the object for *dia* is in the genitive case thus justifying the correct translation of John 1:3, as stated in the KJV, that all things were made *by* Jesus. The translation using "for" is just not allowed by the language!

Another very interesting exegetical insight that we discovered was in translating John 2:25. The text says that Jesus "needed not that any should testify of man: for he *knew* what was in man." The last phrase in the Greek is: "ἀντὸς γὰρ ἐγίνωσκες τί ἦν ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ." The verb is in the imperfect tense and it should be translated, "for he [Jesus] *was knowing* what was in man." In our workbook we had the following footnote concerning this verse: "Did you notice that the usual translation of the imperfect does not make a lot of sense in this verse?" However, I believe that the actual translation makes wonderful sense when we understand the import of the verse. It is declaring that during his life, Jesus was truly experiencing what it was to be a man and to know what was inside of mankind. The Bible declares that Jesus came "in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3)." What a wonderful Saviour we have who "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15)."

Another interesting point was discovered in Mark 10:18 where Jesus said, as translated in the Kings James Version, "there is none good but one, that is, God." The word for

"one" is *eis* (εἷς) which means one and the grammar allows for the construction of the verse to read, "there is none good but the one God." Interestingly, there is another Greek word spelled *eis*, but it has different accent mark and is written εἶς. Σίς is a preposition that means "into, in, among."

For those who could take full advantage of the Greek class, we feel a great gratitude toward our heavenly Father for allowing us the opportunity to learn so much in so little time about something so important as his Word.

I hope that these few thoughts have been both instructional and encouraging and that you will study all you can from the Scriptures to know God better, and if you are afforded the chance, study the New Testament Greek someday. If you are a student who hungers and thirsts after righteousness, I know that you will not be disappointed.

Allen Stump

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

FLORIDA CAMP MEETING

The annual Florida Revival retreat will be held this coming February 20-24 at the River Forest Campground, located in the southeast corner of the Ocala National Forest on the scenic St. Johns River. All are invited to attend.

The River Forest Campground is approximately six miles west of Deland and twenty-five miles northeast of Eustis. It is located near the St. Johns River on County Road 42, about ¼ mile west of Crows Bluff, off of State Road 44.

There are no RV hookups, but plenty of room for RV's and tents. There is a main building for meetings, showers, rest rooms, and, as mentioned earlier, a kitchen. If you can make it, please come. Mosquitoes may be present, so be prepared.

A lunch will be provided on Sabbath. Each one will be responsible for their meals, and a nice kitchen is available. You might wish to consider bringing simple fruits and pancakes or waffles for breakfast, and simple salads and bean dishes for dinner in quantities enough for your family. This way, if you choose to combine your meals with others, they will be compatible.

For more information, please contact Jerri Raymond, (407) 291-9565. Hope to see you there!

WEST VIRGINIA CAMP MEETING:

The annual West Virginia camp meeting will be held this coming June 10-14. More details will be published in the coming months.

PA CAMP MEETING DVDS AVAILABLE

Calvin Bickel has asked us to announce that the messages from the Northwestern Pennsylvania Campmeeting have been put onto DVD and are available. For details you may contact Calvin at: Seeds of Truth, P. O. Box 233, Cranberry, PA 16319. Email: seedoftruth@comcast.net. Phone: 814-676-8660

PERMIT # 35
WELCH, WV
US POSTAGE PAID
PRESRT STD

Address Service Requested


SMYRNA GOSPEL MINISTRIES
HC 64 BOX 128 B
WELCH WV 24801-9606 U.S.A.

INTERNET BROADCASTS

We want to remind our readers that we are broadcasting our regularly-scheduled Sabbath worship service at eleven o'clock (EST) each Sabbath morning and our midweek prayer meeting on Wednesday evening at seven o'clock (EST).

These broadcasts can be accessed on the Internet via Skype, a communication program, or by simply listening over the telephone. To access Smyrna Chapel services by the Internet, you need to have Skype installed on your computer. Downloading Skype is free and easy at www.skype.com. Skype allows communication on levels from chat to audio/video conversations. You may directly access our Skypecast and/or be involved in a chat session by going to our home webpage and following the simple directions. If you are currently running Skype on your computer, you may enter +990008275126052 on your Skype call window to access our broadcast.

In addition to being able to access the services directly from the Internet, you can also listen to the broadcast through

the telephone by dialing 1-605-475-8590 (new number) and when prompted enter room number 5126052. In Germany you dial 01805007620, and from the UK you dial 08701191313 and then enter the above-listed room number. Long distance charges do apply, but if you live within the United States and have free evening and weekend calling on a cell phone or a plan such as Verizon's Freedom Plan on a land-line phone, you may listen without cost. 

Old Paths is a free monthly newsletter/study-paper published by Smyrna Gospel Ministries, HC 64 Box 128-B, Welch, WV 24801-9606 U. S. A. The paper is dedicated to the propagation and restoration of the principles of truth that God gave to the early Seventh-day Adventist pioneers. *Duplication is not only permitted, but strongly encouraged.* This issue, with other gospel literature we publish, can be found at our web sites. The urls are: <http://www.smyrna.org> and <http://www.presenttruth.info>. Phone: (304) 732-9204. Fax: (304) 732-7322.

Editor Allen Stump—editor@smyrna.org
Assistant Editor Onycha Holt—onycha@smyrna.org