



Detail from A. Dürer, *St. Jerome In His Cell*.

Convert to Scholar: An Odyssey in Humility

Jerry Gladson set out to wage war against untruth. Studying the Old Testament taught him humility.

by Jerry A. Gladson

I WAS NOT REARED A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST. I joined the church in my teens, through an evangelistic crusade. I argued with anyone who would debate me about Adventist doctrine. Adventists, I had learned, were people who had their theology straight. All that remained was to persuade the world of this extraordinary fact. I became obsessed with having most, if not all, of the right answers.

I wore this viewpoint like a badge all through public high school, where I attempted—against their will—to convince my peers; on to college, where I scorned all but the study of theology; and out into the ministry, where I labored as a pastor-evangelist for almost a decade. I felt myself to be a thoroughly convinced Adventist. But my faith has become more complicated, and that experience can

serve, in some respects, as a case study of faith development in the context of Adventism.

I have learned that faith is a struggle that inevitably takes place in a context of uncertainty. My doubts have often stimulated me to broaden my understanding of faith, to seek deeper levels of belief. I have discovered that faith is an ongoing, dynamic experience, not easily contained in creedal statements. Two events changed me from an Adventist with all the answers to one with less certainty and more humility.

Reframing Faith

I began graduate studies in Hebrew Bible at Vanderbilt University and, during my graduate work and afterward, found myself serving on committees of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference. I was a representative of the religion faculty of Southern College, where I taught from 1972 to 1987.

One of the reasons I went to Vanderbilt was to gather ammunition to hurl at the opponents

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of Adventism. If I could learn opposing viewpoints firsthand while mastering the methodology that led to them, I reasoned, I would have an inside track to refute them. The more seriously I took my studies, however, the more I became aware there were issues I had never considered.

Vanderbilt shook my overconfident, arrogant Adventism. I began to realize my formative relationship with the church had been uncritical and painfully naive. I had—although I would have vehemently denied it—blindly accepted my tradition. I firmly resisted the reframing of Adventism on which I had begun. I passionately argued with my professors and other students over whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch (a view they didn't accept), fought with them over the historical-critical method, all the while carefully keeping their theological conclusions at arms' length.

I pitied my professors because they didn't know the truth as I understood it. Wisely, they put no pressure on me to accept their opinions. "We'd be disappointed if you changed your views," James Crenshaw told me. "We only want you to demonstrate you can use modern, scientific methods in analyzing the Bible. What you believe about those methods is your own business." Professor Crenshaw, a leading authority in Hebrew wisdom, was my dissertation advisor.

A highly complex methodology, the historical-critical method (or simply "critical" method for short), uses the scientific method adapted from the study of ancient documents. To ascertain more carefully the origin, mean-

ing, and significance of the biblical text, a critical scholar analyzes the history of the textual transmission, the literary forms, and the development of theological ideas, all against the background of the ancient Near Eastern or Greco-Roman world. Conservative scholars, including Adventists, have generally opposed the critical method because of its assumption that all events in history, including the miracles and other supernatural events mentioned in the Bible, can be explained in terms of natural cause and effect. Rudolf Bultmann expresses its critical viewpoint as follows:

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This closedness means that the continuum of historical happenings cannot be rent by the interference of supernatural, transcendent powers and that therefore there is no "miracle" in this sense of the word. Such a miracle would be an event whose cause did not lie within history.¹

While I could not bring myself to accept this closed view of reality, and thus give up belief in a supernatural Bible, I realized that critical scholars had noticed many details about the biblical text that conservatives, including Adventists, seemed to ignore. They pointed out that ideas of authorship in the ancient world differed from ours. In the ancient Near East, authorship tended to be a communal matter. An editorial modification, or even addition—sometimes even of an extensive nature—in a writing did not disturb anyone. Regardless of who wrote them, ancient books were essentially communal products.

I also saw, as critical scholars often suggested, that there was a bona fide development

of ideas within the Bible. Even when the canon reached its final status, these ideas were not reconciled. A good example is Ecclesiastes, mentioned below. This meant that biblical faith was genuinely pluralistic, quite unlike the monolithic claims of the Adventism I knew. To borrow Luther's words from his characterization of the Eucharist, God, in inspiring Scripture, worked "in, through, and under" human writing processes. As a result, the Bible is simultaneously human and divine.

I gradually came to what I considered a "modified" critical view; that is, a view of Scripture that fully affirms its divine element, while recognizing the human methods used in its production.² Eventually, I would discover that many other leading conservative scholars had already reached similar conclusions.³

As with most internal conflicts, this simmered beneath the surface for a long time. I remember the day—almost the exact time—when it finally erupted. Sitting in an old stuffed chair, a remnant left over from a living-room set we had long discarded, I was reading Rudolf Bultmann's essay, "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?"⁴ The reading was part of an assignment for a seminar on Bultmann, one of the last courses in my Vanderbilt curriculum. Bultmann pointed out that no one approaches the biblical text without presuppositions that are determined by complex features in his or her life experience. One must take great care, however, not to allow these presuppositions to determine the interpretation of the text.

It suddenly dawned on me that all along I had been allowing my Adventist presuppositions to filter out any new insights—particularly of a theological nature—that I might have gained from my graduate studies. As a result, I had not seriously listened to *anything* I had studied at Vanderbilt. I remembered a comment often made by one Adventist scholar who held a doctorate in theology from a non-Adventist university. "For every page I was assigned in non-Adventist literature," he

boasted, "I read one page in Ellen White to counteract it. As a result, I've come through my doctoral studies with my Adventist faith intact."

Of course! Whether he realized it or not, he had deliberately closed his mind! If Adventists fail to listen seriously to other theologians, I wondered, how can they honestly expect these same theologians to take seriously their claims? The enormity of such a simple question, with all its implications, towered menacingly before me. If I wanted to be honest, should I not listen seriously, not only to Bultmann, but to my professors as well? At least, shouldn't I try to understand their point of view?

As a result of years of Adventist conditioning, I instinctively grasped the dangers of such openness. Horror stories of those who had drifted from the church after earning non-Adventist university degrees flashed before me. And I was seeking a non-Adventist doctorate in Bible! I was studying the *source* document of the faith in such a setting! Already, my studies had generated many questions that I couldn't answer. But I knew, if I wanted to pursue truth, I *had* to take the risk. I had to get under Adventist presuppositions to what one of my professors was fond of calling, "the question beneath the question."⁵ That spring afternoon was a turning point. It was a metamorphosis that would lead me to look at my church of origin in an entirely new—and disturbing—light.

Trials of Faith

At first, these profoundly disturbing questions didn't reach the inner core of my life because I was sure an Adventist theologian—somewhere—had the answer. As questions arose, I "filed" them away until I could find the answers. When I was asked to serve on some of the Biblical Research Institute committees, I took heart. The institute's committees brought

together the finest Adventist theological minds to research critical issues facing the church. Surely here, I thought, I would get the answers I desperately needed.

The first committee on which I worked studied the issue of women's ordination. We produced nearly a thousand pages of biblical, historical, and theological research, and finally concluded there were no theological impediments that should keep the church from ordaining women. After voting to send that conclusion on to the General Conference, some of us were crushed when the church leadership announced that our committee had concluded the exact opposite: there were no theological reasons why we *should* ordain women! Eventually, of course, the church set aside our research completely and recommissioned a new study. It was my first experience with the way politics shapes and determines theology—even Adventist theology.⁶

Although I enjoyed my work on the Biblical Research Institute committees, it was a disillusioning time for me because I discovered that the finest minds in Adventism had no better answers than I for the theological problems facing the church. My graduate training had already raised several problems relating to Adventist interpretation of Daniel and Revela-

tion for which I had no solution. To my great surprise, I discovered that these dedicated Adventist scholars, many of them far older and more experienced than I, had few or no solutions either. Several years before Desmond Ford's disclosure, the committee had identified, but not satisfactorily resolved, a number of problems in our interpretation of Daniel 8:14.⁷

Even more disconcerting was the way the committee was often compromised by church leadership. They seemed to expect the committee to provide impressive research to bolster or reach already agreed-upon conclusions. I had been taught by my early Adventist teachers that one should try to follow the evidence wherever it led. One should be open to new directions.⁸ Sadly, I did not often see this spirit of honesty in the work of the committee.

While these inner conflicts tore at me, critics of Southern College demanded that its theology professors give clear and certain answers to many of the issues that had begun to surface in the Adventist Church. Many of these, such as the investigative judgment and the nature of Ellen White's experience, had been on the agenda of the Biblical Research Institute for several years. When we tried to point out that things were more complicated than they appeared, these persons took their campaign to the Southern Union administration and college board. For these critics, some of them church administrators, genuine faith could not exist in tension with uncertainty. Although the best theological minds in Adventism had no convincing answers for the matters facing the church, certain members of the Southern College religion faculty, including myself, were tried, condemned, and tarnished for life because they could not bring themselves to deny that problems existed. They were caught between the "Yes" and the "No" Paul Tillich describes so eloquently:



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The theologian is obligated to be critical of every special expression of his ultimate concern. He cannot affirm any tradition and any authority except through a "No" and a "Yes." And it is always possible that he may not be able to go all the way from the "No" to the "Yes." *He cannot join the chorus of those who live in unbroken assertions.* He must take the risk of being driven beyond the boundary line of the theological circle. Therefore, the pious and powerful in the church are suspicious of him, although they live in dependence upon the work of the former theologians who were in the same situation. Theology, since it serves not only the concrete but also the universal *logos*, can become a stumbling block for the church and a demonic temptation for the theologian. The detachment required in honest theological work can destroy the necessary involvement of faith. This tension is the burden and the greatness of every theological work.⁹

Stages of Faith

Eventually, I discovered James Fowler's hierarchy of faith stages, and learned that my experience at this stage of faith development was perfectly normal, whatever church leaders or college critics might think. Fowler identifies seven stages of faith:

Primal faith, a sense of intimacy and trust within the family developed in the first two years of life.

Intuitive-projective faith, a preschool stage in which a child, through appropriating the symbols, stories, and liturgical life of the religious tradition in which it is nurtured, begins its first efforts to find meaning.

Mythic-literal faith, a childhood acceptance of the rules and implicit values of the family's faith community.

Synthetic-conventional faith, in which an emerging self-identity seemingly compels an adolescent to challenge her or his tradition and to try out alternative patterns of belief or nonbelief.

Individuative-reflective faith, a reappropriating in early adulthood of the faith of one's community in personally revised form.

Conjunctive, or paradoxical faith, where life ceases to be black or white, and takes on shades of gray.

Finally, *universalizing* faith, where one embraces humankind, with its welter of beliefs and religions, in an attitude of universal acceptance.¹⁰

Like all archetypal theories, Fowler's developmental scheme fails in specific instances of faith development.¹¹ Not everyone's faith develops in precisely these stages.¹² Nevertheless, after more than a decade of research, Fowler has provided a highly attractive model of what happens to a normal person over a lifespan, one that I wish to use as an interpretive context for how my faith and that of many others in contemporary Adventism has been nuanced.

It is the sixth stage, the *conjunctive*, that is especially relevant. In this stage people gradually come to realize that the answers they have received from their tradition, along with those they have worked out on their own, don't always work. Questions and paradoxes abound. Fowler borrows from Carl Jung the idea of *conjunctio oppositorum*, the "conjunction of opposites," to designate the new polarities that come to characterize this stage of faith. Faith moves beyond either/or categories to the richness and ambiguity of truth. It becomes open to the truths in other faith communities. Truth cannot be approached from a single perspective—even an Adventist one—but is best perceived in a dialectical interplay. Even then, the paradoxes can neither be reconciled nor comprehended. Alluringly, at the heart of reality a mystery persists.

Such a paradoxical, yet mature, developing faith ought to be celebrated in the church as an evidence of spiritual growth. Provision should be made in our polity and local church programming to meet the spiritual needs of people in the various stages of faith.

Persons hung up in a literalistic stage of faith development sometimes persecute and "purge" from the church others in a different

faith stage. Unfinished spiritual and psychological needs are imposed on the church at large, sometimes with disastrous effects. Some of the polarities within the North American Adventist community over the past decade have resulted from just this dynamic.

Mature Christian faith is able to live with uncertainties; immature faith denies they exist. In these discoveries, I found a new way to live in the church that, although unacceptable to many in church leadership, is definitely grounded in the biblical witness.

The Biblical Dynamic Of Faith

During this time of personal and professional anguish, I turned instinctively to Scripture, where I discovered in a new way that genuine biblical faith often keeps company with uncertainty. Scripture reinforces the dynamic, pluriform nature of faith. The Bible makes room for all stages of faith development within the household of faith. Even the conjunctive stage is amply provided for. Doubt and uncertainty never stand very far away from biblical faith.

One of the strangest books in the Bible portrays a faith struggling with uncertainty. The book of Ecclesiastes, so cynical and pessimistic that many people refuse to read it, challenged the smug, literalistic faith of its contemporaries.

Largely a series of musings on the orthodox thinking of the day, Ecclesiastes forces us to contemplate a faith that can hold tensions of doubt and belief together in an uneasy truce. Over and over, the author cites a conventional dogma of his time, then refers to his own experience as challenging or refuting it. Against those who claim to find a clear pattern of divine meaning in history and life, he writes: "I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun, and see, all is vanity and a chasing after

wind" (Ecclesiastes 1:14, NRSV). *Vanity* translates the Hebrew, *hebel*, "fleeting, insubstantial, futile." He corroborates his point by reference to the apparently endless, and therefore meaningless, cycles of life (verses 2-11). Nothing seems to be going anywhere; inane repetition characterizes human experience.

Against those who think they have the right theological answers, who are confident that they know the movings of God, he writes: "I have seen the business that God has given to the sons of man to be busy with. He has made everything appropriate for its time; moreover, he has put an enigma into their heart, so that man cannot find out the deed that God has done from beginning to end" (3:10, 11, lit. tran.). God has placed an enigma (*'olam*), or "obscurity," within the heart of humankind, leaving people in the lurch of crippling uncertainty.¹³

Against those who claim that life has an intrinsic balance in which the good get rewarded, the wicked punished, he demurs: "I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, wickedness was there, and in the place of righteousness, wickedness was there as well" (3:16, NRSV).

It hardly seems possible to get beyond the pessimism of this author. He appears overwhelmed by all the unanswered questions in his world. Only in the end does he return to his faith, which he places in sharp tension with his uncertainty: "The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for that is the whole duty of everyone. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14, NRSV).¹⁴

Because of its intense pessimism, Ecclesiastes has always been problematic for readers of the Bible. Yet, as Gerhard von Rad has observed:

One may even ask whether the church, if it had remained open over the centuries to the theological perspectives of . . . [Job and Ecclesiastes], might not have been able to con-

front the fierce attacks of modern man more effectively and more calmly.¹⁵

Ecclesiastes, in other words, provides an example of a person experiencing Fowler's *conjunctive* stage of faith. The author has to hold all kinds of paradoxes and tensions together. Here, the author seems to be at the extreme edge of his faith, teetering on the brink of "skeptical rationalism and tired resignation."¹⁶ He concludes, however, if we accept chapter 12:13, 14 as the author's final word: "I have all kinds of questions and doubts, *nevertheless* . . ." The presence of such a radical expression of uncertainty in the Bible should caution us against condemning those in the church who may exhibit similar tendencies.

Ecclesiastes is not the only biblical example of this searching, probing, and sometimes pessimistic faith. As Job, Habakkuk, many of the Psalms, and even certain New Testament passages show (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:7-18; 11:24-29), a faith that wrestles with doubt and uncertainty is precisely what the Bible means by "faith." If we have trouble accepting some of the things the church teaches or does, we are normal, thinking people. We are "Protestants," for that is what *Protestant* means: *ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda*, "the church, reformed, always undergoing reformation." If our faith is growing, it could not be otherwise. We should fear most of all a faith that blindly accepts everything without question. Such uncritical, accepting trust built the Nazi empire, and dragged the Soviet Union through 70 years of brutal despotism.

Faith and Contemporary Adventism

The challenges facing Adventism today are real. They will not simply go away. We besmirch our honesty when we deny them or pretend they do not exist. Many of my Protestant friends thoughtfully watch from the sidelines to see whether Adventism will somehow find the courage to deal openly with the issues confronting it.¹⁷ Despite several new attempts, some of which have originated with the Biblical Research Institute, we have not fully met the challenge of Desmond Ford's penetrating criticisms of the Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8, which he detailed in a 900-page thesis.¹⁸

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Neither have we dealt adequately with the questions raised by Walter Rea regarding Ellen White. Although his claims tended to be overstated, the church has gradually come to concede almost all his major points.

In 1990, Fred Veltman reported to the church at large his findings in two articles appearing in *Ministry* magazine.¹⁹

Careful to point out that he had examined only a small section of the *Desire of Ages*, thus making it difficult to generalize, Veltman concluded that Ellen White did use sources without giving credit, and that she, at times, even denied doing so. The *Desire of Ages*, he noted, was dependent on secondary materials. On the whole, an average of about 31 percent of the 15 chapters was in some way indebted to other material. Worse, her history, chronology, and theological interpretation—often cited confidently by

Adventists—were not always reliable.²⁰

In the area of church polity, the intransigent organizational structure of the Adventist Church should give everyone pause for concern. Plagued by bureaucracy, wasteful duplication, and resistance to change, the powerful organizational structure poses an even more serious threat to the future of Adventism than theological difficulties. The fact we have so few checks and balances in our denominational structure makes a new Davenport-like abuse of power not only possible, but likely.

Fortunately, we have new leadership. Whether this means a period of “glasnost” or “perestroika,” only time will tell. While maintaining order in the church, can the new administration bring into being a new day when a variety of versions of Adventism—a variety of faith developmental stages—can live together peacefully? Can it lead us past the reactionary attitudes that have all but extinguished the appeal of Adventism for the present generation? Are we poised on the brink of a renewed future for Adventism, or standing on the verge of its extinction? To be an Adventist today is for many to live a life of faith in a world of disappointment.

But whatever the future holds, I am convinced God is still present and active in the Adventist Church, as he is active in all communities who proclaim Jesus Christ. He is still active in our lives. Whether we can, as individuals, solve any of Adventism’s problems is irrelevant to our personal or communal standing with God. “If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9, RSV).

Adventists may have to live at a more humble, less arrogant level than in the past when we were convinced that we were totally right and the only people so blessed. A mature Christian faith, however, is able to live in peace with uncertainties. Like the writer of Ecclesiastes, the Christian is assured that God is somehow still there, even when the answers aren’t.

Disillusionment can begin the liberation of our souls. If we can see disillusionment as a challenge to wean us away from uncritical trust in an organization and center it upon God, it will be one of the greatest moments in our Adventist pilgrimage.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Existence and Faith* (New York: Living Books, 1960), p. 292.

2. Cf. my “Taming Historical Criticism: Adventist Biblical Scholarship in the Land of the Giants,” *Spectrum* 18:4 (1988), pp. 19-34, for a more extensive study of this method and its implications for Adventist theology.

3. E.g., Carl E. Armerding, *The Old Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); G. Eldon Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967). Evangelical scholar R. K. Harrison writes: “Many professional students of the Old Testament, including some scholars of the highest intellectual caliber, have come to the conclusion that it is becoming increasingly impossible to ignore or dismiss the results of honest scholarship and research any longer. Accord-

ingly they have begun to devote themselves to the task of ascertaining as far as is possible the actual facts of the ancient Near Eastern cultural situation, and against such a background are making a strenuous attempt to interpret the literary and other phenomena of the Old Testament” (*Introduction to the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969], p. 81).

4. *Existence and Faith*, pp. 289-297.

5. The exact expression is: “the problem beneath the problem of theological method” (Edward Farley, *Ecclesial Man: A Social Phenomenology of Faith and Reality* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975], p. 3).

6. Although he is discussing science, the words of Emil Brunner apply in principle as well to theological research: “The dynamic heir of positivist philosophy,

the totalitarian state, has taken hold of science and succeeded in making it serviceable to its own purposes: science has to take its orders from political power. It has to start from its ideological presuppositions and has to prove that they are correct. Whether these are the racial philosophy of the *Herrenvolk*, or the Marxian doctrine, makes no difference. In both cases it means the prostitution of science, which in the long run would mean its end" (*Christianity and Civilization* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948-1949], pt. 2, p. 18). It seems to me that Adventist leadership has, in effect, often imprisoned theological research within a political agenda.

7. E.g., the date at which the 2300 days begins; the manner in which the 2300 "evenings and mornings" is to be calculated; the date of the birth of Jesus; the date of the Crucifixion; the precise event to occur at the end of the period or the 2300 days; the uncertainty and basis of the October 22, 1844, date, and so on.

8. This statement must not be understood as deprecating tradition. The church exists through tradition, that ancient memory passed down through the generations. The church, however, must seek, without giving up either, to interface tradition with contemporaneity. Adventism, at least in recent years, has erred too heavily on the side of tradition, while remaining closed to new, vital insights into its faith and life.

9. *Systematic Theology* (3 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951-1965), vol. 1, pp. 25, 26. Italics supplied.

10. Perhaps Martin Luther King, Jr., or Gandhi, attained this level.

11. Fowler's hierarchy is based on Piagetian and Kohlbergian developmental hierarchies in its broad outlines. However, it coincides remarkably with the lived faith experience of most people. Fowler's own research takes the form of faith stories gathered from numerous people at various stages of life. Out of this data he has worked out his hierarchy.

12. One must ask, too, why he or she regards universalizing faith—which tends to melt religious distinctions down to an almost unrecognizable, amorphous whole—as the highest stage. A person at the highest level of faith, it seems, should be able to affirm a single tradition while simultaneously holding others in respect. Fowler's sixth level, in other words, could reasonably be posited as the highest level because it holds in tension contrasting views of reality.

13. James L. Crenshaw, "The Eternal Gospel (Eccl. 3:11)," *Essays in Old Testament Ethics*, ed. J. L. Crenshaw and J. T. Willis, eds. (New York: KTAV, 1974), pp. 23-49.

14. Because Chapter 12:13, 14 seems so out of harmony with the general tenor of the book, many

scholars think these verses have been added by a later writer, perhaps in response to the pessimism of Ecclesiastes. While it is impossible to determine exactly, additions of this type, aimed at setting up a dialectic, are known elsewhere in Scripture (cf. Proverbs 26:4, 5; 30:5, 6).

15. *Wisdom in Israel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), p. 239.

16. Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans. P. R. Ackroyd (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 494.

17. Cf. Kenneth R. Samples: "Our criticism of Adventism should not be interpreted as an attack from an enemy, but rather concerned words from a friend, who earnestly prays that the present leaders of Seventh-day Adventism will honor Scripture and the gospel of grace above their own denominational distinctives." ("From Controversy to Crisis: An Updated Assessment of Seventh-day Adventism," *Christian Research Journal* [Summer 1988], p. 14).

18. Desmond Ford, *Daniel 8:14, The Day of Atonement and the Investigative Judgment* (Casselberry, Florida: Evangelion, 1980).

19. "The *Desire of Ages* Project: The Data" (October 1990) pp. 4-7; "The *Desire of Ages* Project: The Conclusions" (December 1990) pp. 11-15. A less widely circulated, photomechanically reproduced full report had previously been made available on a limited basis from the Ellen G. White Estate. In an interview in the same December issue of *Ministry*, Robert Olson, emeritus secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate, concedes the major problems Veltman discusses. He then shifts the emphasis from the cognitive elements in Ellen White to the affective: "Her main purpose in writing was not to present historical facts, either biblical or otherwise. Her main purpose was always evangelistic" (p. 17). This represents a significant change from the way Ellen White has generally been regarded in Adventist history.

20. Awareness of this new, more ambiguous role of Ellen White in Adventist thinking is addressed sensitively by Richard Rice in his *The Reign of God: An Introduction to Christian Theology From a Seventh-day Adventist Perspective* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1985). Rice concludes his discussion by noting: "What we have learned requires us to re-examine our concept of prophetic inspiration. But those for whom her writings have been of great spiritual benefit are hardly inclined to discard them. Clearly, this is an area where more theological work needs to be done, and where the community needs to be more sensitive to the views of all its members" (pp. 204, 205).