

# FAITH ON TRIAL

*A Documentation of 40 Years of Official Dialogue*

Letters to and from the General Conference  
In the Files of  
Donald K. Short and Robert J. Wieland



## **Special Edition for Interested Students of History**

This abbreviated edition of FAITH ON TRIAL  
is verbatim from the 1993 edition but contains  
only the comments of the authors without  
sixty-four photocopy exhibits in the original 304 pages.



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# PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

Several scholars at Andrews University have asked Donald K. Short and Robert J. Wieland to donate (or to will) to the Heritage Library their files of 1888-related correspondence of the last half century. We have preferred to release that correspondence now rather than wait until we die (if die we must). Rather than leave our files where only a few can see them in context and possibly misuse or misrepresent source material, we chose to release the entire file of correspondence with the General Conference pro and con, photostatically reproduced, totally unedited.

This collection was published in February, 1993, and copies sent to the General Conference president and others. At this date (July 2001) the edition is exhausted. A copy is probably available at most of our larger denominational libraries.

Rather than reprint it (303 pages), we have chosen to reproduce herewith the original 36-page summary (due to re-typesetting now expanded to 42 pages) of the history from 1950 on for the attention of those readers who would like to know what were and are the issues back of the writing of *1888 Re-examined*. If there should be a large enough demand for the reprinting of the entire book (*Faith on Trial*) we would not object.

In releasing this material to the Adventist public we expose ourselves to the judgment of our contemporaries. Some of our early letters demonstrate the zeal and exuberance of youth, but the thoughtful reader will judge them in the context of the entire history. Our decision to release this material is entirely our own and has no connection with any other individuals or committee. In particular, this is not a publication of the 1888 Message Study Committee. The two of us alone bear responsibility. Readers would be a blessing to us if they would contact us and show wherein they sincerely believe we err.



We believe our loyalty to leadership and to the principles of church organization is repeatedly demonstrated in the history of the past half century. We have always been respectful to leaders who we believe are “the anointed of the Lord,” even though we believe they at times have seriously misunderstood the 1888 message and history, and have at times unfairly judged our efforts to bring this to their attention.

The initial issue which prompted our first letter to the officers of the General Conference at the 1950 General Conference Session (reproduced at the end of this document) was the reality of Baal worship in our midst. The idea that we could be confused by a “false christ” in place of the true One has been resisted by General Conference leadership; nevertheless there is clear testimony from Ellen White that as a consequence of “our” corporate rejection “in a great degree” of the 1888 message, Baal worship would enter in among us (1SM 234, 235; TM 467, 468).

In *Adventists Affirm* of Spring 1993 Dr. Mervyn Maxwell tells of his being “annoyed” and “stunned” as a committee member when he first heard us present this to General Conference brethren. Before his death he published the article in which he repented of being so “annoyed” and frankly recognized the reality of Ellen White’s prediction of Baal worship infiltrating our ranks. *This matter of Baal worship is the central issue, and has been all this half century.* Was Ellen White right, or was she wrong?

As a reader and loyal church member, you have the duty of thoughtful study. Jesus said, “Judge righteous judgment.”

*Donald K. Short and Robert J. Wieland*

*July 4, 2001*



## Foreword

# HISTORY AT ISSUE

**Like the Jews we must face our past.  
Unlike the Jews, we have before us an “open door, and no man can  
shut it.”**

This is a documentary record of numerous attempts beginning in 1950 to persuade the General Conference to give to the world church the authentic 1888 message as “the Lord in His great mercy sent” it, to let the agents themselves speak whom the Lord employed. The record includes the General Conference response over these four decades.

In making this correspondence available the two authors who compile it are exposing themselves to the critical judgment of their contemporaries. Have these two authors been wrong in making their appeal? Or have they made it in a wrong spirit? And have General Conference leadership been right in rejecting their appeal? Surely thoughtful readers can readily discern where the problem lies.

Each passing decade has added further details of serious importance to this on-going history. All the participants who were originally concerned in 1950 have gone to their graves—save these two. Shall they also go to their graves—leaving the record buried? What is their duty?

We have been urged to make this record public before we go to our rest, unless soon the church is prepared “as a bride adorned for her husband” and we with her have the high privilege to witness the Lord’s second advent. In either case, this is a record vitally concerned with Seventh-day Adventist mission. And these two authors would rather face judgment before they close their life record than afterwards. Perhaps their current readers can view these four decades more objectively than they can, and thus help them discern where they went astray in conceiving or expressing their convictions.



Again, this documentation may be especially relevant today as some “independent ministries” and separationists challenge loyal church members to withdraw their support and even membership from the organized church. Because the authors of this essay are loyal to the organization of the church they have no sympathy with such a suggestion. But they believe that the documentation of this issue of 1888 may illuminate some of the original sources of our present disunity and may strengthen ties of loyalty which are now being severely strained.



## Chapter One

# THE INITIAL APPEAL

The year was 1950. The place was the Civic Auditorium in San Francisco, where the forty-sixth session of the General Conference convened from July 10 to 22. Among the more than 850 delegates to “this great world conference” came these two missionaries from the Southern African Division who were home on their first furlough after serving for a number of years in the East African Union Mission.

One was a mission director in Kenya at a station which at the time professed the largest membership in Africa, while the other served as mission field president in Uganda. Both were deeply concerned with the spiritual needs of the church in Africa. Although they had known each other from college days at Southern Junior and Washington Missionary College, they had had no special association over the years, having seen each other but once at a workers’ meeting in their Union.

As a coincidence they went on furlough together traveling with their families from Mombasa on the S.S. *Llandoverly Castle*, through the Red Sea, the Mediterranean, and finally on to England. In due course they arrived at the Theological Seminary in Washington where they were to spend the winter and spring months of their furlough time in study, ending with attendance at the General Conference session just before returning to Africa.

Their experience at the Seminary in 1949 was unique. While the missionary from Kenya took courses in church history, the one from Uganda attended classes in theology where he heard some (to him) troubling concepts. When he discussed the matter with the Seminary president, he was told he must forthwith leave—being perhaps the only ordained minister ever so expelled from the seminary. This traumatic experience became an occasion for sleepless nights of earnest prayer, study, and surrender. (He spent the winter



months of his furlough time in research into the 1888 history and message, and in writing a book manuscript which seventeen years later found publication as *In Search of the Cross*.)

Forbidden at the White Estate to delve into Ellen White's unpublished writings on the subject of 1888, he made efforts to contact surviving retired ministers who had known Ellen White personally, to ask permission to read what unpublished material from her pen that they might have. In due course he amassed a considerable file of then-unknown material on the subject.

A book review in the February 1950 *Ministry* aroused his interest for he was convicted that it evidenced serious confusion regarding the gospel of righteousness by faith. He wrote to the Ministerial Association leaders and then to the General Conference president expressing concern that we as Adventists not lose the uniqueness of the "third angel's message in verity." In general, his letters were not well received, although the president did respond with what seemed to be genuine appreciation. But several letters from Elder W. A. Spicer expressed warm support for his concern encouragement which was crucial in a time of agonizing perplexity.<sup>1</sup>

When they arrived in San Francisco the first meeting the two delegates attended was the Ministerial Association in Polk Hall, west of the main auditorium, July 6 to 10—four days prior to the regular Session. The platform for this meeting had a royal blue

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<sup>1</sup> The specific issue was whether E. Stanley Jones correctly understood true righteousness by faith and could give Adventist ministers help in proclaiming it. This author maintained that his fundamental concepts were tainted with Spiritualism. Spicer agreed, writing: "Thank God you saw the evil in his book. I regard him as doing about the worst work of any modern religious agent. . . . If others would protest as you have done, it might do some good." During the summer of 1950 he published a frank article in the *Review* detailing his concern. Spicer, an ex-president, at that time was one of our most highly respected leaders. His encouragement at this early stage in the face of General Conference discouragement was an intimation of coming decades of continuing tension and confusion.



curtain backdrop with a motto in letters of gold, "Aflame for God." During these ministerial meetings the theme, "Christ-centered preaching," was promoted. The two missionaries from East Africa were impressed with the vast array of activities, booths, placards and massive arrangements for the meetings. This was their first General Conference session to attend. It would not be the last.

Elder J. L. McElhany, president of the General Conference for fourteen years, withdrew. Because of illness on the way to the conference, his opening address on Monday evening, July 10, was read by his secretary, Elder A. W. Cormack.

One-fourth of his sermon was direct quotation from Ellen White. His own concern was evident as he used a portion from *Life Sketches*, pp. 323, 324: "Those who believe the truth must be as faithful sentinels on the watchtower, or Satan will suggest specious reasonings to them, and they will give utterance to opinions that will betray sacred, holy trusts. The enmity of Satan against good, will be manifested more and more, as he brings his forces into activity in his last work of rebellion; and every soul that is not fully surrendered to God, and kept by divine power, will form an alliance with Satan against heaven, and join in battle against the Ruler of the universe."

Before using this part of a much longer quotation he stated his own conviction in these words: "The greatest dangers we face today are not from without but from changing emphasis and shifting attitudes from within." He followed his Ellen White quotation with the solemn question to the conference: "Is it too much to expect that all those who stand as leaders in this movement shall, in the way they teach and in the manner in which they live out the principles of this message, clearly reveal that they are sanctified by the truth?"

He went on to quote from his address at the 1946 General Conference: "I lift my voice today in solemn warning against any attempt from whatsoever source to set aside, to modify, or to compromise these great principles of truth that have made this movement what it is."

As Elder McElhany laid down his responsibilities, the session voted Elder W. H. Branson to be the next General Conference president.





**July 11, 1950.** It was in this context at the Session that the two young missionaries from Africa wrote their letter to the members of the General Conference Committee. They wrote in response to an urgency voiced in a public announcement that if any delegate had a burden on his heart, express it. Elder L. K. Dickson had declared in the Sabbath worship service preceding the session that “we must make a right turn at this session where we took a wrong turn in 1888.” These two authors sensed that world conditions were in crisis; the new atomic age might usher in another world war; it’s time to get serious.

That letter, over four pages long, set in motion a dialogue and precipitated issues that have remained unresolved for over forty years. The letter is quoted in full as Exhibit 1. It challenged the General Conference Committee with sober considerations. Some major points:

- There is great confusion in our ranks today because much so-called “Christ-centered preaching” is in reality anti-christ centered preaching.

- Through the three-fold union of apostate Protestantism, Romanism, and Spiritualism, Satan will take the religious world captive and modern evangelists will present a “Christ” that is identifiable with the God of modern Spiritualism.

- Lip service is paid to our distinctive doctrines but they are repeatedly disparaged as secondary, this “Christ” being considered primary; thus a vague mysticism is permeating Adventism calculated to deceive the very elect.

- The incident of Dr. Kellogg’s apostasy involving “deadly heresies,” “doctrines of devils,” and “spiritualistic sentiments” confirms that Seventh-day Adventists can be deceived.

- The spiritualistic sophistries which deceived Dr. Kellogg and a great proportion of the leaders then were a forerunner of the almost overmastering attempt of Satan to lead us into Spiritualism as we near the end.

- The peril of this deception is confirmed by numerous statements from Ellen White.

- This refined Spiritualism constitutes a species of virtual Baal



worship that has been gradual and unconscious.

- This departure into Baal worship is the consequence of not discerning the light of righteousness by faith revealed in 1888 (*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 467, 468).

- Highly refined Spiritualism is a counterfeit species of righteousness by faith in opposition to the true revival such as Jones and Waggoner and Sister White brought in 1888.

- This modern Spiritualism is not discerned by our people and can set up a false god, a false “Christ,” and a false “Holy Spirit.”

- The type of Christian experience being preached among us today is practically that advocated by popular evangelists and is a manifest departure from the truths taught in the Bible and *Steps to Christ*.

- Our dear people need to have this important matter clarified and nothing before this gathering can possibly be as weighty with serious import.

**July 18, 1950.** After one week with no answer they wrote another letter on July 18 (Exhibit 2). The “unofficial” sentiment suggested that they not be allowed to return to Africa until the matter was “cleared up.” Their second letter pointed out that they had not challenged a tenet of Adventist doctrine but were only appealing for a return to the faith endorsed by divine leading in our history: “We freely confess that it may not be impossible that we are indeed the most stupid fools ever to attend a General Conference session. But, if we are, it should be most easily possible for you to show us wherein, logically and rationally and truthfully, our conclusions are utterly erroneous. This matter is very serious; either we are terribly right, or we are terribly wrong.”

Nearly two pages of their four page letter are quoted from Manuscript 15, 1888, written in November at the time of the 1888 conference and addressed to: “Dear Brethren Assembled at General Conference.” In this, Ellen White made a plea to exercise “the spirit of Christians” and not to let “strong feelings of prejudice arise.” She supports the message that was given at this session by declaring: “Dr. Waggoner has spoken to us in a straightforward manner. There is precious light in what he has said.”



This second letter closes with an appeal: “Let the Cross be restored to the everlasting gospel. Let Israel behold the Lamb of God, rather than this false Christ, this Babylonian Baal, held up before them at the present time.”

**July 20, 1950.** On the last day of the conference a letter came to these two missionary delegates (Exhibit 3). The officers acknowledged the letters of July 11 and 18. With a “sympathetic spirit” they suggested that “it seems that both of you are passing through a spiritual conflict in relation to this movement of which you are a part.” The officers could not fathom the possibility “that, as Israel of old, we are today worshipping at the altars of Baal instead of the true God of Israel.” They acknowledged that “we have not had time, in the busy hours of this session, to give the matter any consideration. But we believe that before either of you should plan to return to Africa that we must have an understanding with you.”

Their letter closed with a solemn declaration: “Brethren, you are on dangerous ground. You are on the path that Satan trod in your spirit of accusation which led to his being cast out of heaven. . . . We cannot see that God has placed you in His church as a critic of your brethren, but we want to help you and save you to your work in Africa.” Solemn words, to drive us to our knees!

**August 3, 1950.** Because the missionary from Uganda had been expelled from the seminary he was staying in Florida. The other from Kenya was in the seminary apartments in Washington. This meant that two separate replies were sent to the General Conference. The letter from the Florida address is dated August 3, 1950 (Exhibit 4). This two and one-half page letter is frank. It raises the question, “Can you point out statements that were either unkind, un-Christian, or evidencing irrelevant personal thrusts? If, doctrinally and historically, we should eventually be shown to be right, do not the exigencies of the present crisis require forthright, frank, honest treatment?” Their return sailing date to Africa was in limbo—awaiting directions from the brethren.

**August 6, 1950.** The reply from the missionary in Washington was one and one-half pages (Exhibit 5). The reason for their letters was stated: “We were convinced that to continue to be silent was



to be dishonest to our convictions. We have not spread this matter abroad but placed it before the highest body we know so that the proper consideration could be given to it. The brethren will have to judge if this is ‘not cooperation’. We stand ready to counsel with the brethren. We respect our experienced leaders but it should be remembered that age has never made error into truth. ... Awaiting your directions.”

**September 5, 1950.** A letter from the same General Conference associate secretary under date of September 5 set out the immediate plan (Exhibit 6). The General Conference officers suggested that a small committee have an interview with the two missionaries. This was set for September 13, at 3 p.m.

**September 13, 1950.** After more than forty years it is not certain who was present except the two missionaries and among others, one vice-president and one associate secretary of the General Conference, one associate secretary of the Ministerial Association, and the secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate. A three-page “Outline of Procedure” was to guide the interview (Exhibit 7). There was more in the “Outline” than could be covered in one interview; to try to make the matter clear the two missionaries requested that they be allowed to present written evidence of confusion in contemporary concepts. They were convinced that much precious light had been lost since Minneapolis—honest deceptions had crept into the church. During the meeting the secretary of the White Estate affirmed positively that the presentation of righteousness by faith at the 1888 General Conference “was accepted.” Those who had initially opposed the message made their confessions within five years and the opposition ceased.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> By the time of the 1988 Minneapolis Centennial it was “officially” recognized that the message had not been accepted and that Ellen White was publicly defied at the 1888 meeting. Elder A. L. White’s position was to become for decades the dominant General Conference rebuttal to these authors’ appeal. He based his opinion on the position expressed by his father. Elder W. C. White, who



**September 14, 1950.** The day after the interview a further paper was presented to the Special Committee (Exhibit 8). This laid the ground for the manuscript that was to be discussed over the next several decades.

### *Why “1888 Re-examined”?*

The authors knew they must explain themselves as clearly as possible or face dismissal from the ministry. In that sense, the manuscript was written in self-defense, as a follow-up to the original letter of July 11. They voiced their convictions with documentation from Adventist history. Their manuscript in two parts delivered to the Special Committee contained some five hundred Ellen White exhibits, and in its finished form ran to 204 pages legal size. It was outlined, written, and typed over a period of six weeks, yet contained far more than the committee had anticipated. It had been written in Florida and Takoma Park, was typed by paid stenographers and duplicated commercially, partly in Washington and partly at Southern Missionary College. It had no title page, no date, and no authors listed. The presentation was specifically written for this Special Committee of the General Conference, who were given fifteen mimeographed copies. The authors wanted them to have clear, full evidence of their deepest convictions.

**September 29, 1950.** There is no way to know what transpired in private discussions of the Special Committee as they considered “1888 Re-examined.” However, under date of September 29, the associate secretary sent a letter indicating that a booking had been made for the Kenya family to sail back to Mombasa on October 27 (Exhibit 9). Although the manuscript was not fully completed at

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perhaps unknown to him had in 1905 confessed his mistaken view of the post-1888 developments (see Appendix C of *1888 Re-examined*, pp. 198-201). Dr. Arnold Wallenkampf’s account of the 1888 history in his *What Every Adventist Should Know About 1888* (Review and Herald, 1987) refutes A. L. White’s position, emphatically affirming the rejection.



this time and the “official action” of the committee was still in the future, it was “definitely” planned that this booking be accepted, and so it was. Exhibit 10 is the letter of acceptance for the October 27 booking. There were unknown factors pending, but these would be cared for in due time.

**October 5, 1950.** The associate secretary confirmed that the booking was in order. Also even though the last portion of the manuscript was not in their hands they considered there was no need for another interview. This meant that both families could go back to Africa (Exhibit 11).

*“To the Members of the  
Special Committee”*

**October 5, 1950.** As the committee was considering the manuscript, certain other facts needed consideration. An accompanying statement was submitted on October 5 (Exhibit 12). This four-page letter delineated serious problems that were evident at the Session just past, pointing out dangers then which have become rather operational procedures in our ranks at the present time.

October 17, 1950. The associate secretary of the General Conference sent a joint letter to the two missionaries now officially cleared to return to Africa (Exhibit 13). But the manuscript required more time for study. Consequently: “We feel that because of the content of the manuscript and the nature of the problems involved that the manuscript should have wider study than we have thus far been able to give it. We are, therefore, recommending that your manuscript be referred to the Defense Literature Committee of the General Conference for further study and investigation. ... In saying this we do not in any sense agree with your conclusions, but we believe when any of our brethren have made such a thorough study on the question as you have, that the matter should not be passed by lightly.” Of concern was the possibility of “agitation among the workers,” but assurances had been given to the leaders in Africa that this would not happen. This letter was received in New York the day before the *S.S. African Planet* sailed for Africa. A reply from the Kenya missionary was written onboard ship enroute to Walvis Bay.



**November 3, 1950.** The reply to the question of “agitation” is given in this letter (Exhibit 14). The two workers would have discussion with fellow missionaries only in reply to their direct questions, and in cooperation with the leaders.

Their concern was clear: “Indeed if the General Conference Committee after careful study considers the premise and conclusion of the paper to be erroneous, there remains no place in this world for us to take the matter and no amount of agitation would avail anything.”

**November 29, 1950.** This cordial letter from the associate secretary was the beginning of relations as usual (see Exhibit 15). It closed with: “There is a great work to be done, and we are living in solemn times.”

In the meantime both missionaries arrived back in East Africa. By some unforeseen providence they were assigned to the same mission station in Uganda. One continued to serve as the president of the field and the other was to serve as acting treasurer during the regular treasurer’s furlough. As the weeks and months went by they felt a growing concern as to what the brethren would finally say about the manuscript for the General Conference was “the highest authority on earth.”

Could it be possible that buried in the Ellen G. White vault were some statements that contradicted or superseded the many statements these authors had cited in the manuscript about the 1888 rejection? They had written it without access to the Ellen White vault, in fact access had been denied. They had used many published statements such as *Testimonies to Ministers*, etc., but all the citations from unpublished Ellen White materials had come from various unofficial sources, retired workers, and duplicate copies of original typings that she had placed in the hands of trusted workers in her lifetime. (All of these documents are of course now freely available in *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*. Our using these unpublished materials had even evoked from the White Estate a threat of possible legal action against us.)

The two missionaries went about their work in Africa sensing that a sword was dangling over their heads.



## Chapter Two

# SUNSHINE AND STORMS

**June 10, 1951.** Because rumors have a way of traveling in our church, even to Africa, questions came up among the missionaries in East Africa. The authors brought this problem into focus by a letter to a General Conference departmental secretary (Exhibit 16), requesting that if the authors needed to be “straightened out in general, that the brethren convey to us their criticisms.” They were waiting on an official reply to the manuscript.

**December 6, 1951.** After they had waited more than fourteen months, an undated eleven-page letter came to Africa, postmarked December 6, 1951 (Exhibit 17). The delay was due in part to some of the committee members being on overseas appointments for long periods of time. The committee’s negative report on the document highlighted their concerns:

“The manuscript gives every evidence of earnest, diligent, and painstaking effort; but we feel concerned over what appears to us to be a very critical attitude concerning the leadership, the ministry, and the plans of work in God’s cause.”

- (The manuscript states in more than one place: “The message of 1888 was neither a reemphasis of the views of the pioneers of the advent movement on justification by faith, Wesleyan or whatever they were; nor was it ‘the same doctrine that Luther, Wesley, and many other servants of God had been teaching’” [p. 46]. It was the “third angel’s message in verity”). To this the committee replied: “Such a conclusion, we believe, is not in harmony with Scriptural teaching, nor is it in accord with the writings and counsels of the Spirit of prophecy.”

- Three and a half pages occupy quotes from an “older, experienced, and highly honored” worker who was eleven years old at the time of the 1888 conference. His conclusion: “It is my belief that the doctrine and the [1888] truth of justification by faith





took hold of our people to a marked degree. ... I am convinced that the message of justification by faith took hold of our people at that time, and served to rescue them from the doldrums which had set in the 1880's, and prepared them to receive and participate in the mighty forward movement throughout the world which began with the great Conference of 1901."

- The reply cites numerous publications in subsequent years by E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones as proof that the message was proclaimed; but more important, what they expounded is now available "in more effective form, in the writings of the Spirit of prophecy and in other of our publications." (This last point is a long-standing issue that is as yet unresolved).

- The reply notes that the manuscript affirms that "there is before the remnant church a heavy account to settle. The sooner the issue is faced squarely and candidly the better (p. 2). ... A recognition of the significance of our denominational history in the light of Spirit of Prophecy declarations, is essential before the loud cry can be recognized, and received. Could any other kind of 'loud cry' than that which would follow a denominational repentance 'Tighten the earth with glory'? What glory for *God* would there be in it?" (p. 137). But this concept of corporate and denominational repentance is rejected emphatically: "We do not believe that it is according to God's plan and purpose for the present leadership of the movement to make acknowledgement or confession, either private or public, concerning any of the mistakes made by the leadership of a by-gone generation. ... Your proposal is not according to God's plan in His dealings with His people."

- The manuscript noted Ellen White's prediction of Baal worship as a result of rejecting the 1888 message (*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 467, 468), and asserted that we face that danger of confusion with a false christ and Baal worship in our books and presentations. This is also stoutly denied: "Such a charge that the ministry is in any sense of the word, following the pattern of Baal worship, is entirely false and unfounded. It is our conviction that this charge is not only without foundation, but that in making it, you have done a gross injustice to many of our trusted, honored, and Spirit-



filled workers. Such charges remind us of those who, in the days of the Saviour, charged Him with casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. Our earnest counsel to you is not to stand as critics of your brethren.”

- The report urged that our need was not to consider “the mistakes of a previous generation” but rather, “Can we not recognize in the call made at the recent General Conference the call of God to His people today? This appeal went around the earth, and from both leaders and people there has been a remarkable response from all over the world. ... Out of this has grown a strong and determined resolve under God to finish quickly the work He has committed to His people.”

[The call that went out from this session was two-fold: (1) claim the reception of the latter rain of the Holy Spirit by simply assuming that we have it irrespective of a lack of repentance or preparation, and (2) double our church membership: “[If] we will reach out today, and every day, and lay hold of this promised blessing and receive the Holy Spirit according to God’s promise, we ought to go back from this meeting with a cry to our churches to double our membership between now and the next session. ... If we can only enter into that experience where we have tongues of fire as we preach to men, thousands will come in a day” (*Review and Herald*, July 17, 1950, p. 117)].

- The Defense Literature Committee report closed their reply with a finality that perplexed the authors and seemed to defy history and all that Ellen White had said about 1888. Their assessment: “We see nothing new in your manuscript. ... Two years after the General Conference in 1888 God was working on the hearts of men, and ... many of the leaders and of the people happily responded to the appeals that were made. ... If you accept this counsel ... you will not wish to press your rather critical views nor to circulate them any further.”

**February 27, 1952.** This Defense Literature Committee report unequivocally decided that “1888 Re-examined” was error and that at least part of the paper was “false and unfounded.” What shall we



do? More study, more prayer, more seeking the Lord for guidance as to duty, more surrender.

The authors wrote a four-page response (Exhibit 18): “We acknowledge the General Conference to be the highest body God has placed on earth and therefore the matter is now their responsibility—being the properly constituted watchmen upon the walls of Zion. ... While we make this statement of submission to the General Conference we also wish to be frank in saying that we do not believe the reply as given to us will bear analysis. Therefore to go into your file before it is closed on this matter we submit the following and quite needless to say time will soon prove how ‘false and unfounded’ or how dreadfully true our convictions are.”

Nine specific points are covered in the letter. Number 2, one of the more lengthy, points out that “it is not wrong to believe that the last generation of mankind will have a ‘more mature concept of the everlasting gospel than has been perceived by any previous generation of human beings’,” just as surely as Paul preached a more mature understanding of the gospel than Abraham. “Certainly Paul or Luther or Wesley did not preach the ‘third angel’s message in verity’.”

Point number 6, with over one page of considerations, deals with the biblical record supporting the need to recognize and profit from mistakes of past generations. This has come to be known as “corporate repentance.”<sup>3</sup> Twelve different texts are cited as proof that this is true. The biblical accounts indicate that true repentance and confession brought blessing to Israel.

As far as the authors could know at the time, this was the end of the dialogue: “In closing we would say ... surely God will soon

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<sup>3</sup> Although opposed at the time and frequently since, the idea of corporate repentance has been presented in a positive light in *The Power of the Spirit (Review and Herald, 1991)*, co-authored by a former General Conference president and an Ellen G. White Estate Associate Secretary, and in a powerful article by the editor in the February 1993 *Ministry* entitled “Laodicea and Corporate Repentance.”



give judgment in His own way according to His will and we shall be proven terribly wrong or dreadfully right. We leave the case in His hands.”

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**March 13, 1952.** In the spring of 1950 Elder W. A. Spicer had encouraged the authors with hearty support for their unpopular convictions. Early in 1952 came some interesting word from the Spirit of Prophecy that amounted to confirmation beyond question.

The *Review and Herald*, March 13, page 6, published a manuscript release never before seen in public. Originally when this letter had been written in Australia, June 6, 1896, Ellen White’s secretary had made a notation addressed to Uriah Smith: “The enclosed pages present a few points which were opened to Sister White last night, and which she wished sent to you.”

This statement written more than seven years after the Minneapolis Conference settles forever that there was “in a great measure” determinative rejection at and after the 1888 Session; it was the work of Satan; and “in a great degree” it had kept the message away from our people and “prevented them from obtaining the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart.” Furthermore: “The light that is to lighten the whole world with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been kept away from the world.” This, during that period of seven years which the General Conference had just assured us saw genuine official acceptance and powerful proclamation of the 1888 message!

This confirmation of church leadership rejection of “most precious” light was published later in 1958 in *Selected Messages*, Book One, pp. 234, 235. The two missionaries were assured now that there was nothing in the writings of Ellen White that took a different position about our denominational history than had been stated in “1888 Re-examined.” But this was only 1952 and years of dialogue awaited them yet in the future.

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As time went on the 1888 manuscript with no title page, no date, no authors listed, spread around the world. To stop it seemed



impossible. Lay members who saw it viewed official attempts to suppress it as an exercise of “kingly power” and a denial of the principles of Christian liberty. Official condemnation of the manuscript unsupported by convincing evidence precipitated among them an unprecedented loss of confidence in the leadership of the church. The more readers were convinced that the basic thesis of the manuscript was supported by Ellen White and historical evidence, the more astounded they were by persistent General Conference rejection of it. This breakdown of leadership credibility became especially evident in the Australasian Division.<sup>4</sup>

In 1956 a Seventh-day Adventist couple in the American West, without any permission, duplicated 90 copies of the manuscript. For many, this obviously increased the awareness of Adventist history. The authors wrote to individuals asking them to please leave the manuscript alone and not circulate it; it was written for the attention of the General Conference whose task it is to lead out in denominational repentance. But by 1957 church members were sending inquiries to the General Conference. What was wrong with the manuscript? Why had they rejected it?

The authors had to give assurance to the brethren that the agitation was not of their making. They expressed the firm conviction that a denominational repentance and humbling of heart before the Lord should be initiated by the world leadership of the church and not be neglected by them so that only the laity could take the lead. They maintained that the breakdown of confidence in leadership was not the result of telling the truth about our history, but of leadership suppressing that truth.

If there was any truth in the manuscript, it would “be recognized in due time. Conversely, if there was indeed nothing in it of real value as the reply of the Defense Literature Committee in 1951 pointed out, it would be expected to die a natural death, as anything without the Lord’s blessing usually does.”

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<sup>4</sup> Documentation of this tragic development has been assembled in a separate file entitled, “Does ‘1888 Re-examined’ Lead to a Rebellious Offshoot Movement?”



Before the year 1957 was over, readers were pressuring the General Conference to make a reasonable and credible reply to the manuscript. A letter from one of the General Field Secretaries, September 24, makes this plain.

**September 24 and September 9, 1957.** The authors received a three-page letter from a Seventh-day Adventist local church elder in the West, A. L. Hudson (Exhibits 19 and 20). This church elder was concerned that the General Conference refused to reply to his questions. His opinion was that the manuscript had started something that was now out of theirs as well as the authors' control. This church elder considered the official opposition taken by the General Conference to be against "the purposes of God." He proposed to bring the matter before the church at large in an official way, which he tried to do subsequently, February 3, 1959.

In the meantime other considerations were coming into focus.

*Forty-eighth Session  
General Conference of  
Seventh-day Adventists  
Cleveland Public Auditorium,  
Cleveland, Ohio  
June 19 - 28, 1958*

Eight years had gone by and now the same two missionaries from Africa were once more delegates to a Session. They had heard rumors in Africa that a second General Conference condemnation of their manuscript was in preparation. Very early in the Session one of the general vice-presidents showed them a draft copy of an official report that was to be released subsequently. As it turned out, this document of 49 pages would later be published in September. It was produced under the authority of "a committee appointed by the officers" and was entitled, "*Further Appraisal of the Manuscript '1888 Re-examined'.*"

When the authors read the draft at the Session they informed the vice-president that in its present form the document would



bring embarrassment to the General Conference. This conversation was followed by a letter dated June 23, 1958 in which the authors detailed the points that were so obviously false that they would humiliate leadership if made public (Exhibit 21). However as the officers had planned, at the end of the summer "Appraisal" was published with none of the corrections which the authors suggested were necessary in order to avoid the tragedy of General Conference embarrassment.

*"Further Appraisal of the Manuscript  
'1888 Re-examined'"*  
*September, 1958*

This document states that prior to the Defense Literature Committee considering the manuscript, the original Special Committee had found the authors' manuscript to be faulted by: (a) "inadequate sources of information," (b) "total lack of Biblical background or sources," (c) "sets forth no positive teaching of righteousness by faith and contains a number of contradictions," (d) "conclusions set forth in the document could not be accepted," and (e) it should have "deliberate checking and study" by the Defense Literature Committee.

Now after more than seven years, "Appraisal" had concluded that (a) "the authors have revealed considerable amateurishness in both research and use of facts;" (b) there is "a consistent pattern throughout the manuscript of using quotations out of their setting;" (c) "'1888 Re-examined' is a serious reflection upon the literary ethics of its authors;" (d) "Chapter XIII ... is honeycombed with so much fallacious reasoning that the reader utterly fails to discover what the authors are attempting to prove;" (e) "there is no justification for the sweeping charges set forth in the thesis of this manuscript. Had the authors succeeded in substantiating their charges, their work might have been worthy of serious consideration. Having not only failed to substantiate such charges, but having proved themselves guilty of distortion of facts and misapplication of statements from the Spirit of prophecy, the authors of '1888 Re-examined' have



produced a manuscript that is detrimental to the church, derogatory to the leaders of the church, and to uninformed individuals who may happen to read it.”

There is no way to know just how far the influence of the manuscript had gone in the English-speaking church. People copied and distributed portions at random. Someone in Australia reproduced sections which turned up in East Africa as attributed to “an unknown teacher.” The November 1958 issue of the denomination’s missionary journal *THESE TIMES* carried an article about Baal worship under the regular monthly heading, “Pageant of Prophecy” which included on page 33 a lengthy verbatim quote from *1888 Re-examined* from the chapter, “The True Christ vs. the False Christ,” without attributing the source. Some editor considered the material to be truth sufficiently clear to be worthy of publication in one of the church’s leading missionary journals.

*“An Answer to  
Further Appraisal of the Manuscript  
“1888 Re-examined”  
October, 1958*

The charges made by “Appraisal” were very serious. But they failed to deal with the content of the manuscript, deeming it sufficient to discredit the authors’ integrity. “Appraisal” rested its case on a charge not even mentioned in the first Report, that is, alleged unethical use of Ellen G. White statements, which it was assumed discredits the manuscript. The Defense Literature Committee report of 1951 had condemned the manuscript because it was too “critical” and would lead to unsettling confidence in the church leadership; but it too did not deal with the subject matter as such. Now again in 1958 no specific consideration was given to its subject matter beyond rejecting it, this rejection being considered sufficient once the charge of misusing Ellen White’s writings is established.

Again, more prayer, more study, more seeking the Lord for guidance. Should the authors keep silent? What was duty? Should





not the actual subject matter be given attention? Is it the Lord's will that they accept condemnation without consideration?

They decided to explore sixteen specific charges in a 70-page response. They respectfully submitted that there is no question but that they had used Ellen G. White statements honestly, reasonably, and in harmony with her expressed intent. "The more research is continued, the more completely is this vindication evident in statements hitherto unknown."

When the authors' "An Answer" became available in October 1958 to anyone interested, the General Conference suddenly withdrew "A Further Appraisal" from circulation, and it has never been available since.

A church member who had been in correspondence with the General Conference over a period of time wrote to the officers and pointed out their untenable position. He addressed his letter to the Secretary but also sent copies to two other General Conference personnel and to the manuscript authors. The authors set forth their convictions to this member, with copies to the same brethren. In this letter of October 24, 1958, the following paragraph had to set out their stand:

"We are therefore faced today with making our position clear. It is this. For eight years we have made every endeavor to respect the positions of our brethren in the General Conference. When we requested individuals not to reproduce the manuscript, it was because of this respect and deference. We have never desired to enter into controversy with the General Conference or to appeal the discussion to the church at large. We do not relish even the thought of controversy. But God forbid, that out of respect or deference to certain leaders or their leadership, we should deny truth. Actually we do not believe a very large segment of the General Conference is even acquainted with the manuscript '1888 Re-examined,' hence 'Appraisal' represents the reply of a very small group of men. Nonetheless it is issued under the name of the General Conference and must be accepted as such. For this we are very sorry, but thus history is being made. As the record will show, our brethren have had repeated requests over the past eight years to face up to the issue, all



of which has been to no avail. We can therefore no longer endeavor to shield our brethren in this matter, come what may.”

This paragraph the brethren received with grave concern. They considered it to be a “declaration of war.” Consequently they called for another meeting for November 17, 1958. The next day after the meeting the authors sent a letter of summary to the committee, lest they leave any misunderstanding.

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**November 18, 1958.** This letter of summary is Exhibit 22. The issues of eight years are still pending, and concern a correct theological understanding. Meanwhile, church members continue to wonder why the General Conference persistently repudiate the manuscript.

**November 18, Letter No. 2.** The content of “Appraisal” continues to be under discussion. Again the authors point out that thoughtful readers will sense that the official attitude toward the manuscript is untenable and will bring embarrassment to the General Conference. They are concerned that the brethren not break down leadership credibility with the laity (Exhibit 23).

**January 21, 1959.** As the time for return to Africa drew near, the authors sent a further statement to the General Conference which assured them that they would refrain from agitation and “resign the whole matter to the disposition of Providence” (Exhibit 24).

**January 22, 1959.** Transportation back to Africa was approved, and the Southern African Division was so informed. The General Conference expressed confidence that “these matters” were now in the past and “permanent good will accrue to the cause” if no further discussions take place and if the authors keep quiet about their convictions (Exhibit 25). The officers were pleased for they understood the phrase “the disposition of Providence” to mean exclusive General Conference control. The authors understood that it could conceivably mean more than that, but time must tell. How can we be sure which way the Holy Spirit may choose to lead?

**May 1, 1959.** Both missionaries were back to their assignments in Kenya by the month of June. The East African Union Committee later voted the one who had been in Uganda to be president of the



field in Central Kenya, and returned the other worker to continue as manager of the East African Publishing House. “1888” was in the Lord’s hands now, and the authors could devote their full attention to African matters.

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But peace was not to come so easily. Upon their arrival in East Africa they found a letter from the General Conference president (Exhibit 26). This was perhaps the first specifically expressed concern from the highest officer of the church. He saw a problem in the free circulation of the manuscript in whole or in part “to create issues.” The president requested a letter to “give definite instructions that you do not authorize any one to circulate the manuscript or quote from it, and that you have left the matter in the hands of the General Conference brethren.”

How could the authors respond honestly? Conscientious, loyal church members were concerned, for they saw the obvious import of seventy years of history since 1888. Further, they saw what the inspired agent of the gift of prophecy had said in her available writings about the 1888 history. Lay members who loved the church, and were loyal to it through and through, recognized truth. But they were sadly convinced there were agencies in the General Conference that suppressed and denied it.

In the months of correspondence that were to follow, the president, in writing to us, made frequent reference to Ellen White’s counsel regarding brethren of experience” in *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 293: “The only safety for any of us is in receiving no new doctrine, no new interpretation of the Scriptures, without first submitting it to brethren of experience. Lay it before them in a humble, teachable spirit, with earnest prayer; and if they see no light in it, yield to their judgment...” Many times the authors re-read and pondered the entire testimony to “Brother D” (pp. 289-297).

The crucial question was, Who are the “brethren of experience”? Are they exclusively General Conference personnel, as the president insisted? Or could they include other experienced, thoughtful, consecrated ministers and laity?

Elder W. A. Spicer had encouraged the authors in the



beginning, and since then scores, yes hundreds, of “experienced” people in all walks of Adventist life had endorsed the basic thesis of the manuscript, some of them professors in Potomac University (the seminary). Where was the truth?

Again, the date of Ellen White’s testimony to “Brother D” was 1884. If Ellen White had applied that particular counsel to silence Jones and Waggoner four years later, they would have been crushed, for “in a great degree” the General Conference “brethren of experience” had condemned their message.

Someone had written,

“The man who once so wisely said,  
‘Be sure you’re right, then go ahead,’  
Could well have added this, to wit,  
‘Be sure you’re wrong before you quit.’”

The authors felt driven to study and re-study the evidence, seeking a humble spirit to respect the counsel of the church’s highest officers while also praying for the grace of guidance from the “Wonderful Counselor.”



### Chapter Three

## THE FIVE ANONYMOUS JUDGES

**June 14, 1959.** The authors wrestled with a serious task to make their stand clear as they replied to the General Conference president. They must be submissive to “the highest authority on earth,” yet they must also be honest (Exhibit 27). They stated: “The passage of time has deepened our conviction that the thesis of this manuscript is correct and true. In particular this was confirmed after our further research following our reading of ‘Appraisal’. ... We consider that our reiterated purpose to submit to the authority of the General Conference should not be interpreted as a retraction of our position, nor a modification of our convictions regarding the manuscript.”

Three numbered paragraphs summarized their reply: “We definitely do not approve of the publication of the manuscript against your official opposition to it”; “(2) The General Conference Committee themselves have thus far not fully grasped the significance and import of the manuscript. ... We dare not act as conscience for workers or lay members in good and regular standing ... who feel a burden to appeal to the General Conference for a more careful consideration of the matter”; (3) “The phrase we used, ‘disposition of Providence,’ requires that we not only take our hands off the manuscript to avoid any agitation or promotion of it, but also refrain from repressing other loyal Seventh-day Adventists who may be motivated by Providence entirely independently of ourselves, to appeal the matter to you.”

**June 29, 1959.** The General Conference president considered “the disposition of Providence” to be exclusively, “solely,” General Conference control. There seemed no possibility that the Lord might work in any other way. He wrote further (Exhibit 28): “I had hoped, dear brethren, for a clear-cut statement from you to the effect that you had left the matter of your manuscript in the hands of the General Conference brethren, and that you were trusting in



the Lord to work things out as He deems best. ... I had expected that you would manifest faith in the Lord's guidance and confidence in your brethren by placing the matter in the hands of the General Conference brethren solely to be guided by their counsel." He considered that the manuscript had been given sufficient careful consideration because a selected group at great expense and effort had done this. He saw the General Conference functioning as God's voice and authority on earth.

**September 25, 1959.** Several weeks passed before the authors sent a reply to the president. They were not certain if a reply was expected; however, they wrote one in a most serious vein (Exhibit 29). The two-page letter respectfully pointed out that although he had stated that the manuscript has been given careful consideration, a near decade of attention to it had thus far failed completely to consider the actual subject matter. Eight points were listed which with one exception had been ignored; the exception being that it was denied that the message had been rejected, but no support was given for that bald statement. This letter, to the chief officer of the church, was one of the most serious they wrote over a period of years.

**December 18, 1959.** Increasing agitation in Australia over the manuscript gave cause for another letter to the president, with a statement which might be used to make clear the authors' loyalty to the church (Exhibit 30).

**January 13, 1960.** The president considered that their statement did not go far enough (Exhibit 31). He wanted the manuscript to come totally under the control of the General Conference, and that the authors "definitely refuse permission to anyone else to use it unless it is released by the brethren [General Conference] in whose hands it has been placed. ... The only logical thing therefore, as I see it, for you to do is to forbid its use by anyone outside of the General Conference."

By this time the manuscript had gone around the world. It would live or die by virtue of its content, and live only if some ministers and church members could be willing to study the issues irrespective of General Conference control.



**January 31, 1960.** As tension mounted in the field, the authors reviewed the record of the past decade, and so sent another letter to the president (Exhibit 32). This two-page plea and statement of conviction said in part: “If reasonable sound evidence means anything, surely the past ten years ought to speak clearly. We believe this has been eloquently stated by you,—‘If God wants this material circulated, you may be sure that no one on earth can impede its circulation.’ To this we would say a solemn, ‘Amen,’ and it should be added—not even the General Conference can impede its circulation if it is God’s will otherwise.” The letter closed with an appeal: “Is it not time to make ... acknowledgement and in humility come before the Lord with sincere repentance and confession of our failings present and past and forthwith to present the matter to God’s people as a whole?”

**December 15, 1960.** Rejection of the authors’ appeal by the General Conference brought perplexity to lay members who believed it was valid. Problems with different individuals were on the increase because of their conviction that the manuscript was basically true. Near the end of 1960, the General Conference president visited Africa. The two missionaries wrote a letter to him while he was in East Africa (Exhibit 33). Their previous document, “An Answer” of October 1958, had not been acknowledged by the General Conference. Thus there was a vacuum. In a two-page letter of December 15 they put forth some very serious questions: “Just where do we stand now with the General Conference? Must we continue another decade or so under what is virtually the ban or shadow of their condemnation? We have been informed, we think quite reliably, that no less than three attempts were made at headquarters to remove us from the mission field because of the manuscript.”

(In the meantime the missionary at the East African Publishing House had been transferred to the division publishing house in Cape Town).

**January 26, 1961.** While in East Africa the General Conference president had had a brief dialogue with the author working in Kenya, and when he returned to Takoma Park he wrote about this, mentioning further problems with an individual in California making



“unauthorized use” of the manuscript. This called for a letter to the party concerned, with a copy sent to headquarters with a covering letter by the authors (Exhibit 34). They said: “There are numerous ‘brethren of experience’ who have recognized the historical validity of our manuscript, among them scholars in universities and senior colleges. ... We do not want to run the risk of that ‘rebuke of the Lord’ that will rest upon those who dare to condemn truth.”

**February 10, 1961.** The president considered it sufficient that “two answers were given,” being the result of “very careful thought” (Exhibit 35) He then put the question: “Would you care to suggest just what kind of answer you feel is still forthcoming?”

**March 20, 1961.** The authors acknowledged this letter (Exhibit 36): “For the record it should be clearly understood that the manuscript we presented to the brethren has not to date been considered for *content* insofar as any reply we have received indicates.”

**April 12, 1961.** The president repeated that he thought those who studied the manuscript had done so carefully (Exhibit 37). They “felt that the reference to inappropriateness of certain quotations, as well as certain historical facts referred to, had a definite bearing on the content and that the content would naturally be affected by the accuracy or inaccuracy of statements, as well as certain historical facts surrounding the whole 1888 experience and following it.” In other words, “brethren of experience” say that the 1888 message was accepted by leadership; the manuscript says it was not; it follows therefore that the manuscript cannot be true. He suggested: “Write out briefly the various points that you think should be considered and that contain the heart of the manuscript.”

**May 17, 1961.** Again the president wrote with great concern about the manuscript getting around in North America (Exhibit 38). He wanted instructions sent that the manuscript was not to be circulated. His verdict warned of “drastic action”: “I am afraid, dear brethren, that unless this word is forthcoming from you without delay, some rather drastic action will have to be taken.” The authors knew what such “drastic action” might mean.

**May 25, 1961.** Their reply noted with concern the president’s





letter of May 17th. To try to assist and to cooperate as far as possible without violating conscience, they sent a further statement which the brethren might use (Exhibit 39).

**June 8, 1961.** The president continued to be disappointed and perplexed (Exhibit 40). He considered that since the authors wrote the manuscript, they must automatically be responsible for the independent way it was being distributed. They must therefore bear the blame for a breakdown of confidence in leadership. In fact, the General Conference would not give attention to a proposed summary of the manuscript until the authors made a further, stronger statement affirming total control of the document by the General Conference: "Before the brethren will want to give serious consideration to the points that I requested you to state, I think such a statement should be forthcoming. It need not be long but it should be pointed, without any diluting, additional statements."

**June 21, 1961.** The authors prepared a statement: "To Whom It May Concern," and sent it with a covering letter (Exhibit 41). They made a serious comment: "May we also mention again, and we say this with respect, that it may not be what is written in the manuscript which breaks down confidence in the church or its organization, which you mention; but what can easily have that very effect is for the General Conference to maintain unsubstantiated condemnation of what loyal and thoughtful Seventh-day Adventists find it impossible to consider as anything but simple, obvious truth. Such a situation can be extremely serious." Was this statement libelous? Leadership have considered even the suggestion of their responsibility to be anathema.

**July 27, 1961.** The original manuscript, *1888 Re-examined* totaled 204 pages but the "Summary" was reduced to 20 pages double-spaced. This the authors sent under separate cover to the General Conference with a letter (Exhibit 42). The authors requested that if possible this resume be placed in the hands of a larger group of "brethren of experience" to include scholars who will view the matter objectively and consider the thesis on its merits as historical research, and that the number include at least a few laymen. To make this record complete this "Summary" of 20 pages is included as Exhibit



43.

**August 2, 1961.** The president's letter of over two pages implied that the authors' suggestion was disrespectful, that administrators' scholarly abilities were indeed adequate, and that the authors should "leave the matter in the hands of [them as] 'brethren of experience,' believing that God will watch over what is right and true and that man cannot keep God's truth permanently from His people" (Exhibit 44). Viewing the church as a hierarchy, he stated that their request for laymembers' participation must be denied: "The wisdom of the suggestion that laymen be added to an evaluating group we seriously question. This is a matter that clearly should be dealt with by 'brethren of experience.' We are therefore not bringing this to any lay member."

**August 10, 1961.** The authors stated they do not say that our leaders are not "honest, sincere, conscientious, and unprejudiced," but that committee members unconsciously tend to uphold previous committee decisions and thus inadvertently approach a problem in a somewhat biased way (Exhibit 45). Unaware that more than three decades of discussion must yet go by, they added: "We fully accept your counsel to believe that the Lord's overruling Providence will cause truth to emerge and triumph in His own good time."

**October 18, 1961.** Because of continued use of the manuscript by unauthorized groups, the authors continued to send letters to try to solve the problem and to defend the General Conference from embarrassment. Kept informed, the brethren appreciated this as seen in Exhibit 46. The president also advised us that the "Summary" of the manuscript had been placed in the hands of five anonymous individuals for consideration.

**October 22, 1961.** Lay members continued to be convinced by the manuscript. So widespread was the knowledge of General Conference rejection that somewhere a rumor originated that the authors had been disfellowshipped, but this was, thankfully, not true (Exhibit 47).

**November 6, 1961.** Now, after three months, the president sent a five-page letter. It did not contain the long-awaited report of the five anonymous judges, but consisted only of excerpts from their



comments with no answers to the specific questions listed in the “Summary” (Exhibit 48). He highly recommended the five reviewers as capable for this work, and affirmed their soundness in the faith. Yet for some mysterious reason, their names have never yet been made known to the two authors of the manuscript. Thus they now found themselves in a no-man’s land of unidentifiable cross-fire. Judges should be known to the ones judged!

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This letter from the president is an important factor in the dialogue that covered ten years up to that time. He declines to give the authors any intimation as to who the reviewers are, or whether they had previous knowledge of the manuscript. He gives no clue as to whether all five are quoted, or where within the quotes one reviewer stops and another starts. The quotes as shown could be from only two people, but there is no way to know for sure.

The “short excerpts” demanded careful analysis theologically and historically, as well as in comparison with Ellen White’s comments regarding 1888. From the president’s view this anonymous report was intended to end the matter for all time even if the authors “are not fully satisfied.” The report as it stands is the evaluation of six people, the church’s first officer being one of them. Conclusion: the 1888 message and history are not now worthy of serious consideration by the church.

This Exhibit 48 holds a special place in our church history from 1950 and onwards, and also supplies much insight into the attitudes and understanding of Seventh-day Adventist “brethren of experience” over a period of extended decades. Common to all the official replies has been an almost total evasion of Ellen White’s identification of that message as the beginning of the loud cry and the latter rain. The president’s entire letter could well be quoted but only a few excerpts from the five reviewers can be given here:

- “There is no question about the sincerity and zeal evident in the appeal presented by these two men [the authors]. I feel, however, their search for the reason for the delay in Christ’s return is misguided. It seems to me that the message of 1888 was accepted by some and rejected by others, but for us to put forth such emphasis



upon the rejection of it as these two brethren do is not valid.”

- “What difference if the 1888 message was rejected? ... It seems unreasonable to call the present-day church to repentance on the writings of two men [Jones and Waggoner] who apostatized from this message. Surely the Lord has another way of arousing His people.”

- “To the best of my knowledge, no attempt was made in 1888 to have the church, corporately, go on record as accepting the message as presented at that time. The appeal was made to people as individuals, not to the church as a body. ... There was no ‘official’ acceptance of the doctrine, to be sure, but neither was there an ‘official’ rejection.”

- “The fact that Brethren Waggoner and Jones later apostatized implies an inherent instability of character which was doubtless present years before they stepped out of the church, and I would not for a moment consider it wise to place what they wrote during those years before our people generally.”

- “Is it true that the Holy Spirit was spurned and insulted by our ministers at and after the Minneapolis meeting? Is it true that Jesus was spurned and insulted in the person of His messengers? Is it true that in the dark decade following 1888 there prevailed a serious disregard of the Spirit of prophecy counsel on the part of the responsible leadership of the church?”

At this point the authors’ hearts were saddened. It was not they as unworthy missionaries from Africa who declared that the Holy Spirit was insulted, and Jesus Christ spurned. They were only calling

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<sup>5</sup> One’s mind went to the story of Jehoikim, the highest officer of the kingdom of Judah, cutting up Jeremiah’s scroll and casting it into the fire. Jeremiah 36:20-25. This one reviewer’s rhetorical but contemptuous questions were destined to be answered in the solid affirmative by one of a later generation of General Conference scholars—it is true, the Holy Spirit was insulted and Christ was re-crucified (Arnold Wallenkampf, *What Every Adventist Should Know About 1888*, R&H, 1988, p. 43).



attention to what the inspired messenger of the Lord had said.<sup>5</sup>

• The president concluded with the hope that this was now the end of the matter: “As I look over what these five brethren have written, I am forced to the conclusion, dear brethren, that our position in regard to your manuscript must be about that which our former evaluation committees reached. . . . May we hope now, brethren, that this matter may be considered settled?”

**November 13, 1961.** With a prayer for light and understanding the authors requested to see the full reports of all five of the anonymous brethren (Exhibit 49). They could not stifle their deep conviction that the “beginning” of the loud cry of Revelation 18 and the initial outpouring of the latter rain were indeed of tremendous importance.

**December 21, 1961.** As no reply was received after more than one month, the authors wrote again requesting the reports in full so that they might have the benefit of the full counsel (Exhibit 50).

**February 6, 1962.** After nearly three months the president replied: “I am not sure that much would be gained by sending the entire report of these men. One or two have said some confidential things that perhaps just as well not be publicized” (Exhibit 51). But another condemnation was in the offing. The letter goes on to say that a new book was in preparation, “*By Faith Alone*,” and “I feel it is quite an answer to the question[s] that you raise in regard to the 1888 meeting.”

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This new book released by Pacific Press in 1962 was actually an almost verbatim copy of the master’s thesis Norval F. Pease had written in 1945 entitled, “Justification and Righteousness By Faith in the Seventh-day Adventist Church Before 1900.” The authors had read this thesis in 1949 in the Seminary library. It supplied many references to original sources that were used in the manuscript, *1888 Re-examined*. Checking these references in context provided insight not recognized in the master’s thesis. Consequently the conclusion of his thesis was quite different from the authors’ manuscript of 1950. When the book was published, the General Conference president wrote the “Foreword.” There was a finality in what he said: “This book



sets the record straight.”

Even to this day church libraries in North America have many copies on their shelves, testifying to an intense effort of the General Conference administration to counteract the manuscript in the 1960's and put an end to further “unauthorized” study and agitation of 1888.

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**February 11, 1962.** The authors sent a letter to the Southern African Division officers regarding the use of their names in brochures being produced by dissidents, with a copy to the General Conference president (Exhibit 52). It reiterated their convictions that Christ is the true Head of the church and that eventually His gift of repentance will be received by the earthly leadership of the church: “One facet of these convictions is the firm belief that the General Conference as such and the loyal-hearted ministry of this movement in general will come to understand the significance of our history in the light of the Laodicean message, and in appropriate humility and deep contrition will clear the way for what the Lord desires to do for His people and for the world itself. This experience is what we have always referred to as ‘denominational repentance.’”

The fifth paragraph spoke plainly of how their twenty specific questions submitted had received not even one answer. Again they were forced to declare that the breakdown in confidence which leadership deplores is the direct responsibility of the General Conference: “We believe that it is precisely this attitude toward current issues which is inflaming militant segments of the church.”

**February 27, 1962.** The General Conference president took strong exception to this statement (Exhibit 53). He reiterated that the “document and conclusions have been given careful attention by good, reliable and experienced brethren on at least three separate occasions. . . . Now it is time for you to follow the counsel given us by the servant of the Lord,” that is, submit these unanswered, unconsidered convictions to “brethren of experience.” Such are confined exclusively to General Conference personnel, and henceforth these two authors must be silent.

**March 19, 1962.** After extended, prayerful thought, the



authors wrote another letter to the president, appealing once more for consideration of the actual issues (Exhibit 54). This four-page plea went back over the years and pointed out how the original Defense Literature Committee report of 1951 did not deal with specifics but insisted that the personal opinion of Elder A. W. Spalding be accepted rather than Ellen White's clear testimony. No specific consideration was given to historical subject matter other than to ignore it. \* The second report, "Further Appraisal" in 1958, obviously did not deal with manuscript content but rather attempted to prove that the authors were dishonest and used Ellen White material unethically. \* The report of November 6, 1961, supposedly in response to the "Summary" which listed numerous specific questions, did not supply a straightforward answer to even one of them. Nevertheless, we trust that "the Lord will lead, and in submission to you brethren *under Him*, we leave all in His hands" (emphasis added).

**April 2, 1962.** This four-page plea was to be the last—the next letter was a brief conclusion from the secretary of the president (Exhibit 55). He stated: "From my understanding of the attitude of the General Conference Officers they feel that no good purpose will be served in continuing correspondence over your manuscript. . . . The Lord in His own good time and way will indicate if any further steps should be taken in this matter." We had reached the end. According to this, the manuscript is now to lie forever buried.

**June 29, 1962.** The authors wrote again. They were sorry that the General Conference wanted to terminate correspondence (Exhibit 56). "We have confidence in the ultimate vindication of right." With this letter correspondence became dormant to a large degree for several years. Meanwhile, the authors continued with their assigned duties as missionaries in Africa. But the burden of these unresolved issues weighed upon them.

The author who worked in Nairobi remembers one day of fasting and prayer when he earnestly surrendered his soul to the Lord. In the dingy mission office in Simla House on Victoria Street he instructed the Africans to answer the phone that day and take care of the work; he must lock himself in his office to pray and study. Earnestly he begged the Lord for a piece of "bread," for the gift of



an objective understanding of the problem, the insight to re-read the manuscript with a mind open to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, for help to “see” it as the General Conference brethren see it, for the gift of their “mind” rather than his own, for the ability to see what was wrong with it. With the open Bible at hand and Spirit of Prophecy books as well, he carefully re-read the manuscript word for word. By the time the Kenya sun went down that evening, his mind was at rest. His conscience forced him to confess that the manuscript tells the truth. The heavenly Father is not cruel; He does not give a stone when we beg Him for bread.

About this time a General Conference officer visited the mission fields in East Africa. The authors requested him to take back a verbal message to the president, paraphrasing Job’s appeal (ch. 13:15), “Though the General Conference slay us, yet will we trust in them.” The reference to Job expressed their mingled confidence and perplexity, confidence that *at some time* before the return of Jesus there will be a denominational repentance, but perplexity that successive church administrations see no light in it.

Job could not understand why God was apparently condemning him. He longed for some ombudsman to mediate between him and the Almighty, confident that if ever he could have a valid court trial, God would vindicate the right. Job appealed from the “God” who was apparently condemning him to the God who he knew would at last vindicate justice. We were appealing from the General Conference of the present to some General Conference of the future, confident that eventually leadership would take a firm stand on the right side.

When *By Faith Alone* was published (Pacific Press, 1962), it did not address or settle the real issues. It stated the conviction of General Conference leadership that there is nothing unique in the 1888 message: “Where was the doctrine of righteousness by faith to be found in 1888 and the preceding years? In the creeds of the Protestant churches of the day ...” (p. 138). In contrast, the authors of “1888 Re-examined” insisted that the 1888 message went far beyond those “creeds,” inasmuch as Ellen White declared it to be the “beginning” of the loud cry of the third angel’s message, a message certainly not proclaimed by “the Protestant churches of the day.” It





is a message of righteousness by faith parallel to and consistent with the unique Seventh-day Adventist concept of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. This *By Faith Alone* fails to recognize. Thus the essential issue is joined, and remains unresolved to this day.<sup>6</sup>

**1966.** However, for some strange reason, general interest in 1888 did not die after the publication of *By Faith Alone*. As correspondence between the manuscript authors and church administration faded away to a large extent, a General Conference vice-president and member of the Ellen White Estate Board, Elder A. V. Olson, was preparing another book to condemn the manuscript. *Through Crisis to Victory, 1888—1901* was virtually completed when on April 5, 1963 a heart attack suddenly terminated his life.

The White Estate Board took steps to carry out the intent of the author to publish the book in March, 1966. The final editing was done by the Secretary of the White Estate. He also wrote the “Foreword,” making it clear that the book was called forth by the fact that some Adventists had reached “misleading conclusions” about the 1888 General Conference Session which needed to be corrected.

The book maintains that the period from 1888 to 1901 “was a period over which Providence could spell out the word *victory*.” There was initial opposition to the 1888 message, but it was largely reversed by the “confessions” that came in during the few years following 1888. Since 1901 there has been no serious leadership resistance to the Holy Spirit’s leading, and therefore 1901 was “victory.”

The book concludes with a ringing affirmation of leadership faithfulness to Christ; it’s not the hierarchy that is in need; the

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<sup>6</sup> In 1989 the North American Division officers published “An Appeal for Unity” in which it is declared that preaching “the doctrine of righteousness by faith in an end-time setting” will become a cause for disfellowshipping from the church. Speaking of “certain independent teachers” in the past, “the leadership was forced to separate them from the body. ... Such action would be taken reluctantly, and only as a last resort—for the sake of the unity and the success of the mission of the church” (pp. 5, 9).



Laodicean message applies to the laity; the delay in finishing the gospel commission is specifically the fault of uncooperative lay members (pp. 237-239; the basic thesis of “victory” in 1901 has now in recent years been thoroughly invalidated by General Conference scholars. In fact, the opening sermon of the 1990 General Conference Session in Indianapolis declared that it didn’t happen in “1901”).

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**May 8, 1969.** Interest in the field about the 1888 history could not be contained. The General Conference considered it well to run an article in the *Review and Herald*, May 8, 1969, to explain certain historical points, and these in particular with relation to the manuscript, “1888 Reexamined” (Exhibit 57). This same article carried a statement by the authors, R. J. Wieland and D. K. Short, which proclaimed to the world church their confidence in the eventual triumph of the corporate, denominated Seventh-day Adventist Church in the fulfillment of its divinely appointed, worldwide task. Thus their loyalty to the doctrines and the organization of the church was made clear.

This article by Elder W. P. Bradley also made reference to a new forthcoming book by L. E. Froom, which would deal with the historical experience of leaders in the 1888 era. Now another book was in the offing which would set the record straight. The name of this book to be published in 1971 by the Review and Herald was not known at the time.

**June 11-20, 1970.** The 51st General Conference session in Atlantic City provided a stage to promote Dr. Froom’s new book, named *Movement of Destiny*, a total of 700 pages largely concentrated on the 1888 history. The General Conference circulated a 32-page promotion brochure at the Session. “The Fascinating Story of *Movement of Destiny*” announces a tremendous potential for the book: “This is the story of building a book. ... There is nothing like it in all our annals—or any other annals for that matter. ... There is no hiding of facts, no build-up of fanciful fictions—just the simple truth. ... Faithfully factual. ... The inside story. ... Forthrightly told. ... Provides the inner meaning behind the outward facts. ... No apology, then, is made for gathering these ‘gems’—these priceless,



luminous historical facts—and rehearsing these truths in connected narrative form in *Movement of Destiny* as we stand on the verge of the great breakthrough.”

Finally, the church is to be told the full story about 1888.

Meanwhile, the author of *Destiny* had been corresponding with the authors of “1888 Reexamined” in a serious attempt to persuade them to “cease, retreat, and retract” their convictions. He assured them that the entire leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist church condemned their appeal for denominational repentance, and that if Ellen White were alive she would blast them with her most devastating rebukes. For all their decades of prayer for the heavenly Father to help them see the truth, they remained incapable of seeing it. They must retract immediately, or his forthcoming book would expose them publicly to severe humiliation.

Never had they received such strictures. They responded with reiterated appeals to be allowed to see the Ellen White evidence that he said required their retraction. He refused to grant the privilege, insisting that they must take his word for it, and that his demand was made with the full endorsement of the General Conference brethren, the theological seminary, and the Ellen G. White Estate leadership. He had the material that required their retraction, but they were not to see it until the book is published. The authors replied that they could not retract their deep convictions based on Ellen White evidence that they had seen with their own eyes for reports of supposedly contradictory Ellen White evidence others said they had seen, but which they themselves were not permitted to see.

All they could do was to wait with bated breath for their imminent public pilloring (the relevant file of L. E. Froom correspondence is included in Appendix A).



## Chapter Four

# “AN EXPLICIT CONFESSION ... DUE THE CHURCH”

**Spring 1971.** When *Movement of Destiny* came from the press early in 1971, it professed even more than the prepublication brochure had predicted. Its author stated that “few books have ever had so many invaluable helping hands.” It was “commissioned by former General Conference President A. G. Daniells back in 1930, ... [and] approved by five General Conference presidents in succession, and many consultants.” The book was made possible by “the contribution of hundreds of priceless source documents from individual and institutional donors, archivists, librarians, and collectors, as well as by the affidavits of the actual participants in the 1888 Minneapolis Conference.”

And then in manuscript form “it was read critically by some sixty of our ablest scholars—specialists in denominational history and Adventist theology. ... By key Bible teachers, editors, mass communication men, scientists, physicians. And by veteran leaders with vivid memories and extensive backgrounds. ... Doubtless no volume in our history has ever had such magnificent pre-publication support.”<sup>7</sup>

The thrust of the book is brought into view in chapter twenty-two. Here the author states: “There is one contention that, regrettably, has periodically been brought forward that needs to be considered frankly in our quest for historic truth. Ever since the

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<sup>7</sup> The historical thesis of this book has in recent years been seriously invalidated by current official scholars. See Arnold Wallenkampf, *What Every Adventist Should Know About 1888* (Review and Herald, 1987); George Knight, *From 1888 to Apostasy* (Review and Herald, 1987), and *Angry Saints* (Review and Herald, 1989).



1888 tensions there have been recurrent harpers on the note that the Church, and primarily its *leaders*, actually rejected the Message of 1888—at and following that fateful hour of trial. ... [E]choers still persist, maintaining that the leadership of the Movement at that time, ‘rejected’ the message of Righteousness by Faith.” “[I]f the charge be not true, an explicit confession is due the Church today by promulgators of a misleading charge.” In view of our extended correspondence, these authors knew immediately who the writer had in mind.

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Notwithstanding their deep convictions, the authors of the manuscript had by this time decided they would never say another word to the General Conference about 1888 or repentance. The leadership had rejected their appeals as false and unfounded, and publicly labeled the authors as dishonest in their use of Ellen White quotations. Their continued pleas for consideration of the manuscript content and to publish the 1888 message itself had been refused. Correspondence over the years had proved fruitless. Why say another word?

But then comes *Movement of Destiny*. Here is a published demand that they now have a duty to the world church: “An explicit confession is due the Church” from them. Not one but two General Conference presidents endorsed this demand publicly.

Anyone who knew anything about our 1888 history knew who the accused “harpers” and “echoers” were. Leaders who were on the original reading committee remember that Dr. Froom’s original manuscript mentioned these authors by name. One reader pleaded successfully with the Review and Herald book editors at least to delete their actual names.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> When a book review of *Movement of Destiny* appeared in the Andrews University Seminary Series of January 1972, Wieland and Short were openly named as the ones referred to by Froom. This same book review observed that numerous problems “diminish the work as dependable history.”



**November 1972.** When one of the authors read the newly published book, he communicated to the General Conference officers specific information detailing reasons why the publication of this book would entail embarrassment for the leadership of this church. Thoughtful readers would find their confidence in leadership integrity shaken. Why precipitate a breakdown of confidence? Why provide ammunition to critics?

No response came. The answer was obvious: there was supreme confidence that *Movement of Destiny* had at last put the 1888 issues to rest. Nothing must be allowed to stand in the way of this book.

The authors waited for a year before responding to its public demand, certain that the officers who had endorsed the book would come to realize what a liability it was and withdraw it from circulation. Finally they decided it was duty to respond to such a public demand for a “confession.”

The booklet of 65 pages was entitled *An Explicit Confession . . . Due the Church*. The authors go back to 1950 and rehearse a series of facts, detailing how abundant Spirit of prophecy testimony declares that the opposition to the 1888 message was enmity against Christ of the same nature as the enmity the Jewish leaders manifested against Him at the crucifixion. The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary can never be complete until both Calvary and the 1888 incident of our history are fully understood by the responsible leadership of the church today and the tragic mistake in our own history is rectified by this generation.

They pointed out that although *Destiny* more than forty times asserts that there was “no rejection,” not one vital Ellen White documentation is given in support of this claim, whereas scores of her plainest statements contradict it. When in sacred history had the leadership of God’s people so contradicted the testimony of an inspired prophet as in this book with its “unprecedented” leadership support?

*Destiny* claimed to have “affidavits” from “twenty-six living participants at the 1888 Minneapolis Conference,” all of which affirm: “There was no denomination-wide, or leadership-wide rejection, these witnesses insisted.” However, not one of these “affidavits” is



quoted in support of this assertion; further, not one human being has seen them, because not one has ever surfaced to be seen. But how could even a thousand “affidavits” from uninspired “witnesses” affirming “acceptance” refute the inspired witness of a true prophet affirming “rejection”? Is Laodicea the “true witness,” or is it Christ Himself?

In direct response to the demand of *Destiny*, the authors of “1888 Re-examined” made their “specific confession”:

**November 1972:**

1. We confess the truth of our Lord’s words: “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing [the authors acknowledge that this appeal is specifically directed to the ministry and the leadership of the Laodicean church]; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

2. We confess and believe that the full truth of and the understanding of the tragic failures of our past denominational history give the brightest hope for a speedy finishing of the work in glorious victory in our generation.

3. We confess that we understand our Lord’s words in Revelation 3:19 to be a clear call to denominational repentance: “Be zealous therefore, and repent,” the “angel” representing the leadership and the ministry of His people.

4. We confess that a repentance on the part of this generation for the failures of a past generation is highly in order because (a) it is biblical; (b) Christ appealed to the Jewish nation for denominational repentance; (c) He appealed to the repentance of Nineveh as a model for Jewish leaders to follow in denominational repentance; (d) He taught the principle of solidarity of His Jewish generation with their ancestors in their guilt; (e) the writings of Ellen White recognize the biblical principle of corporate and denominational guilt, and the need for corporate and denominational repentance; (f) for example, the sin of Calvary is a sin for which we are all alike guilty.

5. We confess our complete confidence in the eventual denominational repentance for which we plead, and the triumph of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the final crisis.



6. We confess our hearty appreciation of the glorious truths of the 1888 message itself as found in the original out-of-print sources.

7. We confess ourselves to be the least and most unworthy of all the Lord's servants. "All this we confess!"

Five hundred copies of *Confession* were printed by a generous concerned layman who had himself extensively corresponded with the General Conference, A. L. Hudson. The plan was to send a copy to every administrator and leader in North America. But when the booklet was shown to the General Conference president, he urged that we not release it out of respect for the author of *Movement of Destiny* who was then mortally ill. The publication of its documentation would only hasten his death. The president proposed a special *ad hoc* committee to consider the issues raised. The authors decided they could not reject an appeal and plea by the highest officer of the church, especially an appeal for compassion for Elder Froom, to preserve his life.

**July 12, 1973.** A committee was to be called for discussion with both Wieland and Short (Exhibit 58). Wieland had since returned from Africa to the United States because of family considerations. The author of *Destiny* had assured him that he should be put out of the ministry, but by General Conference kindness he was allowed to serve on probation as pastor of a tiny isolated church in the desert. Short happened to be on furlough. The General Conference called the meeting for September 5-9, 1973, in the White Estate office. The notice invited the manuscript authors "to read carefully all the sources which our researchers have found to be relevant and have pursued." They did so, but saw nothing that was not already known.

The meeting was to be a "Study Committee," with certain committee members having been assigned to do research and present reports. It is a disheartening experience after twenty years to re-read those reports. They were contained in a "black book" distributed in advance to General Conference committee members, a three ring binder of over 300 pages gathered from many sources. They included: unpublished Ellen White statements; pages from *General Conference Bulletin*, 1893; *Review and Herald*; *Signs of the Times*,





G. I. Butler's, *The Law in the Book of Galatians*; the Bible texts which Jones and Waggoner read at the session in answer to J. H. Morrison's concern that righteousness by faith would overshadow the law; 18 pages from *Movement of Destiny*; plus quotations from standard books; and comments from some workers of the era.

This main report contains 72 pages of comments in a scholastic format as shown in Exhibit 59. A wealth of extraneous material sidesteps the thesis of the original manuscript. The conclusion of this overview of the manuscript merely reiterates all the previous reports, thus: "To acknowledge our failure in 1888 is therefore quite unnecessary" (p. 52).

The author gives evidence that he fails to comprehend the content of the manuscript, even to have read it accurately. This is shown by his frequent use of the term "corporate confession," whereas the manuscript never uses that term. It speaks of "corporate repentance." This confusion leads to erroneous postulations such as: "How many of the present day leaders should be involved in this corporate confession? All? But since it is possible for just a 'few' to impede the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, would it be possible that another [A. R.] Henry and [Harmon] Lindsay could cause the corporate confession to malfunction? If so, who would decide who these Spirit-less men were?" (p. 53). "Likewise, if corporate confessions are essential, how many should there be? At what points in the Christian dispensation should they occur? Is 1888 the only time since Christ that this corporate confession is needed?" (p. 56). These awkward misunderstandings lead to false conclusions and create tragic theological distortions. The issue of corporate and denominational repentance was not addressed.

Sadly, the authors were forced to conclude that the past twenty years of on-going discussions had only deepened the confusion and prejudice. The official historians, Spalding, Christian, Pease, Olson, and From, had not settled the matter, nor had the author of the "black book." The *ad hoc* committee by and large gave evidence of a growing impatient attitude toward the authors of "1888 Re-examined," and at the same time revealed unaltered support for *Movement of Destiny*.



Two members of the committee however, Mervyn Maxwell and Herbert Douglass, firmly supported these two authors.

Nevertheless, the committee met through the week, and even into the Sabbath hours. There were sober discussions. At this and subsequent meetings of these various committees one conclusion always emerged: the authors of *An Explicit Confession ... Due the Church* were advised and counseled not to release it. *Movement of Destiny* was to remain the officially endorsed version of our 1888 denominational history, and the authors must not make a public response to it, even though the officers had endorsed its demand that they do so.

In due time the General Conference republished *Movement of Destiny* with the demand for “an explicit confession” deleted, but with no change in its thesis. The committees that met over a period of years had accomplished nothing except to silence the authors.

However, the General Conference president during this time was keenly interested in spiritual revival and reformation. This accounts for the very serious calls to the world church which came out of the Annual Councils of 1973 and 1974. Those appeals were unprecedented in their earnestness.

The chairman of the ad hoc committee assigned papers to be prepared for further committee study.

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**April 1974, Cape Town.** The General Conference set up a study group called “Righteousness by Faith Committee.” Although neither Wieland nor Short were allowed to be members of this committee, yet they were invited to come and wait in the hall for their deliberations (Exhibit 60). Another group, as a kind of sub-committee, was to function as “Historical Background of the 1888 Experience Committee.” This committee of ten members included Short who was to prepare a paper in Cape Town for the coming meeting in February 1975. This paper of 104 pages came to be known as, “The Mystery of 1888” with a sub-title, “A Study of Seventh-day Adventist History in the Light of the Minneapolis General Conference of 1888.”



The “Introduction” sets out its purpose:

“The focal point of the entire study is the Minneapolis Conference of 1888. This event in ‘our’ church history demands a correct understanding. For too long there has been uncertainty and lack of unity. The great importance of this session is not based on the acceptance or rejection of a ‘doctrine’ by few, some, or many, but on the question whether the Latter Rain and Loud Cry was recognized and received or spurned and rejected. ... Really what did ‘we see’ in 1888 and what do ‘we see’ now? There are two diametrically opposed views. Either it was ‘a glorious victory and the beginning of larger and better things for the advent church’ or it was [as Ellen White says] ‘one of the saddest chapters in the history of the believers in present truth?’” (Christian, *The Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts*, p. 219; E.G.W. letter 179, 1902.)

The nine chapters and three appendices in this compilation present an alarming documented account of how we have attempted to re-write and distort our denominational history (Exhibit 61). The extent of this endeavor is manifested repeatedly in well-known denominational publications. In this study of the seven books published up to that time, *Movement of Destiny* receives the closest scrutiny, for it is this book that makes the greatest claims to “exalt truth.”

Example: of the claimed 26 “eyewitnesses” only 13 were in attendance at Minneapolis in 1888; the “affidavits” of these so-called “eyewitnesses” were made 42 years *after the session* but not a single complete sentence is quoted from these “affidavits” in support of the claim that “there was no rejection.” This kind of pseudo evidence would not stand in any law court. (Two authentic “eyewitness” reports by R. T. Nash and C. C. McReynolds have been in general circulation for decades; both clearly affirm leadership rejection).

**January 9, 19, 28, 1976.** “The Mystery of 1888” was soon known in the field. Individuals quoted it and in due course some wanted to publish it (Exhibits 62, 63, 64). The General Conference did not want it to be published. The author wished to cooperate with them, and so did not grant permission.



At the urging of an interested reader, in April 1984, ten years after it was compiled, it was printed by the author and a few thousand copies went into the field. It is now out of print.

Wieland was appointed a member of one of the other *ad hoc* sub-committees. He wrote a paper for the committee setting forth his convictions entitled “The Knocking at the Door.” When the General Conference called him in 1979 to return to Africa for further mission service, interested friends and lay members in America published it in book form.

Growing out of these special committees came a heightened General Conference interest in righteousness by faith. The Annual Council Appeals of 1973 and 1974 gave eloquent voice to it. In 1975 the president expressed to the authors serious interest in making the actual 1888 message available to the world church. At last the church would be permitted to know what was that “most precious message” that Ellen White said was the “beginning” of the loud cry of Revelation 18.

The authors of “1888 Re-examined” had believed for decades they were not “harping” on a personal agenda nor “riding a hobbyhorse” in their appeals to leadership. It was the True Witness of Revelation 3:14-21, not they, who declared that we need help in understanding and believing the true message of Christ’s righteousness. *In that respect* we were “wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.” The General Conference position had been the opposite: *in that respect* we are “rich and increased with goods, in need of nothing.” But now at last the president himself expressed a need for the world church to hear the message. All that the authors had ever requested was that the actual 1888-96 message be published as an anthology. We were nobody; we could drop out of sight. Now there was a bright hope that the authentic “most precious message” itself could be set free from its prison in the archives.

Then came the Palmdale Conference of 1976 where Dr. Desmond Ford presented convincing arguments to overthrow every unique 1888 concept.

The president thereupon reversed his former decision to promulgate the 1888 concepts. Dr. Ford was invited to America



where he was given a tall pulpit for the widespread promotion of his views in our denominational periodicals, workers' gatherings, and camp meetings.

Keen interest and enthusiasm for righteousness by faith had been aroused by the official 1888 study committees by the "Explicit Confession" episode. All that spiritual energy was now to be re-channeled and diverted into promotion of "Reformationist," Evangelical, Calvinist theology. The popular theology which the 1888 message had opposed a century ago was now to be set forth before the church as its true essence.



## Chapter Five

# THE 1988 CENTENNIAL

The file contains very little correspondence during the next decade, in fact it virtually ceased. The Ford views of righteousness by faith had virtually won the day.

However, church members in various places did not lose their interest in Adventist history. They sent copies to the authors of letters they had written to church leaders with the replies they received. Church officials in high position continued to have serious misunderstanding. Many church members and pastors were delighted to receive the “reformationist” theology which appeared to offer a credible alternative to the legalism which they thought had for so long confused and discouraged them. But some began to discern in this “reformationist” doctrine some inevitable tendencies toward antinomianism, and questioned if it was a true reformation and revival. However, it was widely heralded as the authentic 1888 message.

A letter in 1987 from a prominent leader in reply to a church member in the South states: “Enough of the principal leaders did accept so that Jones, Waggoner, and Ellen White were sent to campmeetings to preach righteousness by faith. Messengers opposed by leadership seldom get invitations from those leaders to take campmeeting time. Also, Jones and Waggoner were given very responsible positions within the church for the next several years. Not only did Olsen accept righteousness by faith, but so did Morrison, Butler and, gradually, even Smith.” This comment represents the typical syndrome—the message was accepted, everything came out fine.

But the truth of our history was beginning to emerge in new ways.

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**October, 1986.** After nearly forty years since church leadership was urged to re-examine our 1888 history, another significant event



was pending. The plan to hold a 1988 Centennial, voted by the Annual Council held in Rio de Janeiro, was reported in the *Review*, October 30, 1986. This “celebration” of the Minneapolis event was to take place in the same city, even from the same pulpit that had been used 100 years before. Church publications throughout the year were programmed to make reference repeatedly to this historic conference. Yet *the message itself* was destined once more to be suppressed and kept from the people.

Nevertheless, in the providence of the Lord, the denomination was at last to get a chance to know the full truth about *the 1888 history*. The Ellen G. White Estate chose to release and publish the four volume set, *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*. These four volumes with 1,821 pages settled forever what is “the testimony of Jesus” regarding this episode in Seventh-day Adventist history. It was not a great “victory,” as *From Crisis to Victory 1888-1901* had said, neither was there acceptance of the message as *Movement of Destiny* had asserted. From now until the second advent these four Spirit of Prophecy volumes will speak clearly to the church, confirming that we have in *our* history an unbelief comparable to the Jews’ history of Calvary.

Yet another happening in 1987 culminated nearly forty years of dialogue. With the pending centennial, the authors of the original 1950 manuscript, in response to urgent appeals from some pastors and laymembers, decided to make it available to anyone who wanted a copy. Could they be faithful “under God” to the cause of truth and not do so? *1888 Re-examined* was published as a revised and updated version with added appendices, and 9000 copies were printed. It was not long before there was need for another 5000. The sub-title of the book stated frankly:—“1888-1988—The story of a century of confrontation between God and His people.”

The February 1988 issue of *Ministry* magazine carried a book review by C. Mervyn Maxwell that was twenty-three column inches long. But this was only a portion of the original draft—which the editors deemed too favorable and therefore cut. But even so the review was very generous and insightful beyond anything officially published during the past forty years. It closed with history and



prophecy combined: “At the 1893 General Conference session an Ellen White statement promised that the 1888 experience will ‘sometime’ ‘be seen in its true bearing with all the burden of woe that has resulted from it.’ Wieland and Short hope that that ‘sometime’ is near at hand. They hope that the revised *1888 Re-examined* will prove to be a contribution in due season.”

That indeed expressed their hope, combined with the conviction that when God’s people will come to sense the truth of their history, they will respond to the convictions of the Holy Spirit, Laodicea is honest in heart, and will therefore overcome.

1987, Continued. With the centennial but a few months away, the Review and Herald published a 288-page book with a thesis obviously in sharp contradiction to the White Estate’s four-volume publication, *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*. The title of this new book was geared to condition the reader to believe there was apostasy inherent in the message and messengers the Lord sent to His people. The cover jacket title proclaimed: *From 1888 to Apostasy, The Case of A. T. Jones*. Added to this was a blurb: “A fatal flaw in his character turned him against the church.”

This biography is strangely biased toward painting Jones in as poor a light as possible. Like a blast of Arctic tempest, chilling derogatory comments abound: he was “egotistic,” “self-confident,” “abrasive,” “harsh,” “cocksure,” “sensational,” “extreme.” Subsequently the author stated clearly in another periodical his avowed purpose of destroying Jones’ credibility: “I was doing my best to demonstrate that Jones was aberrant from beginning to end” (*Adventist Currents*, April 1988, p. 43).

Such a cherished goal is unique for a biographer, doubly so in a centennial year appointed to honor his memory. Ellen White’s appraisal of Jones was decidedly different. The Adventist conscience cannot disregard it (Exhibit 65). Vigorously advertised and endorsed by the General Conference, the *Adventist Review*, and *Ministry Magazine*, this book set the tone for the centennial year and became the modern successor to *Movement of Destiny*.

**The 1988 Centennial.** The year was launched with a special edition of the Review which contained seven articles by contemporary





authors and one by Ellen White. But not a word was printed from the “messengers” which “the Lord in His great mercy sent” to this people in 1888.

The February *Ministry* centennial issue with 64 pages was double the normal size, containing thirteen scholarly articles with scores of citations. But again neither Jones nor Waggoner was allowed to contribute an article.

An official editorial policy seemed firmly set to destroy the credibility of the 1888 message and messengers. Readers of the *Review* were warned to beware of Jones and Waggoner as “fires of fanaticism and extremism ... have flourished” with their roots in the 1888 message which they brought to this church (September 8, 1988, p. 8). Almost beyond belief, the church was called to celebrate a centennial by denigrating the principals and their message that gave cause for a centennial! As church membership noticed this and wrote to the *Review* “Letters” column, there came a slight respite. Finally in the last hours of the centennial year the editors relented in their policy enough to permit one brief page each from the 1888 messengers. Incredibly, in the year set aside for “commemoration” of the 1888 message, only two pages of the actual message were allowed to get into print out of 1,400 pages published during the year.

**November 2-5, 1988, the Celebration.** After two years of planning, the celebration of the 100 year old 1888 General Conference took place in Minneapolis itself. Those who came in order to learn of Adventist history and the “most precious message” the Lord sent to His people were keenly disappointed. Out of fourteen sessions listed in the program two were cancelled, four for the general public in the evening had no connection with Adventist history or the actual message; three were panel discussions; two were morning devotionals; leaving three study hours for the 1888 message. But again, the 1888 messengers themselves were silenced. A first-ever in world history had occurred: never before had a nation or a denomination professed to celebrate positively a “centennial,” yet silence and derogate the principals they ostensibly celebrated. (However, their photographs were displayed).



As the audio tapes of the meetings are reviewed, confusion and contradiction become evident. One speaker, had he known the message of 1888, could never have inferred that the “most precious message” of 1888 was a laughing-stock-theology in relation to the nature of Christ.

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Another speaker, a highly placed official, courageously presented the opposite “laughingstock” view that Christ did assume the liabilities of the human family (he even quoted Romans 8:3 to support this).

After 100 years, Minneapolis II has also now joined history. As the centennial year drew to a close it became evident that it was intended to be a grand funeral for the actual 1888 message. Must we now look forward to a bicentennial in the year 2088? Is the nature of the true Christ so elusive that the “seed of Abraham” can not know Him? Can the remnant church go through to the end perpetuating confusion about the Lord Jesus Christ Himself? When the Word says He was “made like unto His brethren,” must we continue to construe it to mean *unlike* His brethren? Back in the theological shadows looms the specter of Augustinian-Calvinist concepts which contradict the “third angel’s message in verity.”

As time goes on into our second century since the “beginning” of the latter rain and the loud cry, this issue will become increasingly important. The enemy of Christ is determined that His people shall not know the true Christ, for to know Him is to know God, and that is life eternal. Increasingly, the published uncertainty and even antagonism against the 1888 message of Christ’s righteousness make clear that it has either not been comprehended, or it is in process of a second major rejection more emphatic and determined than was that of a century ago.

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**1988, History Verified.** In the centennial year a new book came to the church—unique in 100 years and defiantly contradictory of over a thousand previously published official pages intended to contradict “1888 Re-examined.” This new book, *What Every Adventist Should Know About 1888*, reversed what the church had



been told for decades, and largely supported these authors' positions. Written by a former member of the authoritative Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference, this book denied that 1888 was a "victory." It courageously presented an understanding of Adventist history parallel to the thesis of the manuscript. It clearly conforms to *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* and sets before the church a dramatic turn-around that verifies the truth of the 1888 *history*. This was the contribution of the *Review and Herald* to the centennial.

Meanwhile, the Pacific Press tried to publish a book for the centennial year setting forth the actual content of the 1888 *message* itself, *Grace on Trial*. Commissioned by the editors, this book (title chosen by the press editors) highlighted the reality that even though a message of much more abounding grace had been held on trial by church leadership for a century, it was in fact the heart-warming truth of the biblical gospel itself. Under pressure from the Union presidents of the North American Division, the General Conference officers forced the Pacific Press to abandon its publication. The General Conference told the book editor to inform the author that the real reason why they killed the book was that it would not sell. Urged to do so by the principal Pacific Press book editor, the author decided to publish it privately.<sup>9</sup>

Lip service to overwhelming historical evidence shows prudence, but it does not confirm acceptance. The church is now being told we don't need the 1888 message because our modern theologians can do better. "Jones and Waggoner posed a formidable threat to Adventist doctrine and leadership," so that their message must again be rejected (*Adventist Review*, September 8, 1988). The church's highest priority is strangely declared to be a negative one—that of being ignorant of their "most precious message" which the Lord sent us, while somehow we must know Him: "Our greatest

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<sup>9</sup> Some 100,000 copies have thus far (1993) been printed in several editions in English, French, and Russian, including a version reworded for non-Adventist readers entitled *Powerful Good News*. The book is also available on cassette tapes.



need today is not to know exactly what Jones and Waggoner said at the 1888 Minneapolis session” (*ibid.*, January 18, 1990). There remains in many places an embargo on the message, and workers who promote it are frowned upon and even threatened. It is this anti-1888-message syndrome which has prepared the way for our present state of pluralism, schism, and loss of confidence.

But the concern of loyal church members is slowly on the rise, as expressed in occasional letters that get into the church press.

**1989, History Magnified.** Following the centennial these authors prepared a 63-page companion booklet to *1888 Re-examined*, entitled *1988 Re-examined*, which reviews our current history 100 years after Minneapolis I. This detailed the circumstances leading up to the plans for the 1988 Centennial; the publicity given to the celebration; the denial in the church press of the need to know the 1888 message, and the impact of the Minneapolis II centennial.

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Minneapolis II could have brought into focus a message of abounding grace consistent with the unique Adventist truth of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, a work contingent on the full cleansing of the hearts of God’s people on earth. The 1888 truths will impart discernment to our publishing houses, and our schools; and the pure message printed and taught will produce the revival and reformation that we have needed for so long. Children and youth will love it.

The great “final atonement” will become a reality when the everlasting gospel in its end-time setting is understood and accepted in truth. Millenniums of defeat will be reversed. The prophecy of Daniel is certain, the sanctuary “shall” be cleansed. The blind lukewarmness of Laodicea will be cured by repentance, both individual and corporate.

The ultimate experience awaiting the church is a taste of that which Jesus went through in Gethsemane. Only His very own will be willing to accept it, but His faith and confidence are staked on a people who will take up His cross and follow after Him. As Christ forsook heaven with no assurance that He would return so that sin and death could be eradicated from the universe, so His Bride, out



of faith and true love, will stand at His side without concern for receiving reward.

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**1989, History Continues.** As the second century began following the centennial, yet another book appeared about the 1888 General Conference, declaring it to be a milestone in our history and a turning point in our theological development. History and theology are both the subject matter of *Angry Saints*, by George Knight.

After nearly 40 years this is the first book from a denominational press that deals specifically with *1888 Re-examined* and in particular seeks to refute it. Repeatedly *Angry Saints* denies that the objective 1888 message as brought by Jones and Waggoner is what the church needs. What we need instead is a return to a concept labeled “basic Christianity,” meaning the general “pentecostal” “gospel” message of the evangelical, Sunday-keeping churches. This is repeated some sixteen times and comes to be defined as “evangelical Christianity.”

Now a new issue is posed for the world church. Did Ellen White advocate that our ministers borrow theology from Sunday-keeping churches? If “evangelical Christianity” is what Seventh-day Adventists need, how can the call of Revelation 14 and 18 become meaningful? Thus as we continue in our second century, an effort is being made to deflect attention away from the specific, unique message of justification by faith which in 1888 Ellen White so clearly endorsed.

If we are merely a church among churches that has added some distinctive “doctrines” onto “evangelical Christianity,” we will never be able to cry “mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit.” If we are but a segment of “evangelical Christianity” we will never with conviction be able to sound the call, “Come out of her, My people.”

Because “evangelical Christianity” rejects the unique post-1844 ministry of our great High Priest, it considers that “substitution” to cover continued sinning must function until the second coming of Christ. This makes the cleansing of the sanctuary meaningless. It accommodates continual moral lapses, whereas sin was “condemned”



by Christ in the flesh. It does not recognize how the High Priest's ministry must enter a new phase on the antitypical Day of Atonement. He cannot forever minister His blood to cover the perpetual sinning of His people. He must accomplish something on the Day of Atonement that has never been accomplished previously. He must have a people who through His faith overcome "even as" He overcame. "Evangelical Christianity" has no use for these basics of Seventh-day Adventist justification by faith.

Furthermore, "evangelical Christianity" generally views the human nature of Christ in opposition to the "post-Adamic human nature" as Jones and Waggoner understood and proclaimed it. *Angry Saints* suggests (p. 129), that because the historical record of the 1888 session does not include a sermon on Christ's human nature, therefore the subject was not a part of the actual 1888 message and is thus irrelevant. Such a stance ignores the fact that this subject was a vital part of their published message in this era. The increasing controversy over this gospel hallmark grows to a large degree out of the continuing resistance, conscious or unconscious, of the message and the messengers of 1888.

*Angry Saints* is unique in its purpose to contradict the documented history in *1888 Re-examined*. Over 20 times the authors are referred to by name or in footnotes, plus inferences which cannot be mistaken. This published opposition may be good if it stimulates church members to study out the facts. One thing is certain, truth will eventually prevail.

The centennial is now past and *Angry Saints* is glad that it is gone and hopes that 1888 can be laid aside. But the truth of our history will not go away. It must be faced for what it is—a confrontation with Christ that cannot forever be evaded.

**1989, Vortex Developing.** *Angry Saints* is but one wayside marker along a road the church has traveled to reach its present state of disunity, but it helps to explain "how we got where we are." More recently articles in denominational journals have promoted the pre-fall nature of Christ as now the accepted theology of the church.

In the same year that *Angry Saints* was published (1989), there was issued in the month of August an authoritative document



from the General Conference Biblical Research Institute, entitled: “An Appeal for Church Unity.” This 10-page proposal offers solid guidance for the church. It also draws a sharp line between those who hold certain doctrinal positions in contrast to others with differing views. It affirms that church members who “hold certain positions on the human nature of Christ, the nature of sin, and the doctrine of righteousness by faith in an end-time setting” are divisive, dangerous, and thereby approaching apostasy.

“Appeal” makes this charge because: “Adventist people as a whole do not share these views. ... The world church of Seventh-day Adventists has agreed on 27 fundamental beliefs, summarization of basic biblical teachings, and seeks to rally the church membership to the Saviour and this core of Bible truths. The specific topics alluded to above are not a part of these summarizations. The world church has never viewed these subjects as essential to salvation nor to the mission of the remnant church. The Scriptures do not make these subjects central; the data is sparse. ... There can be no strong unity within the world church of God’s remnant people so long as segments who hold these views vocalize and agitate them both in North America and in overseas divisions. These topics need to be laid aside and not urged upon our people as necessary issues. We should not let Satan take advantage of God’s people at this point and allow such matters to divide us.”

This very serious official document clearly states its intent by repeating the same points in a later paragraph: “[T]he world church of the remnant people have selected and summarized ‘the great truths of the word of God’ in the 27 Fundamental Beliefs. But although thousands of hours have been spent by our people on the subjects of the human nature of Christ, the nature of sin, certain aspects of character development in the end-time situation, ... there is no general agreement.”

This Appeal portends a sinister end to the saga of the 1888 message, going far beyond the opposition of Smith and Butler of a century ago. It draws the comparison between the early church and their problems with persons causing “divisions and confusion” today, in that in past ages “the leadership was forced to separate them



from the body.” Likewise today: “In a true communion of the church, motivated by love, such action would be taken reluctantly, and only as a last resort—for the sake of the unity and success of the mission of the church.”

Thus the opposition to the 1888 message now takes a turn unknown a century ago. Any situation that calls for disfellowshipping Seventh-day Adventists from the church must be considered serious in the extreme. As this proclamation is studied carefully, what does it say?

This “Appeal for Church Unity” tells the world church:

1. “The doctrine of righteousness by faith in an end-time setting” is not part of the Adventist “27 fundamental beliefs,” and suggests even that its proclamation is satanic. Not only would this horrify Ellen White and our brethren of a century ago; this would astonish the General Conference leadership of 1950.

2. The “nature of sin” is not a part of our fundamental beliefs.

3. Nor is the incarnation, “the human nature of Christ,” a part of the 27 fundamental beliefs which make this people distinct in sacred history, unique in all Christianity.

4. God’s people should lay aside these topics which will invite Satan to take advantage. Furthermore, such beliefs “the world church does not recognize as essential to salvation.”

These proclamations raise questions when compared with the 1988 publication of *Seventh-day Adventists Believe ... A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines*, a book that explains our beliefs, a comprehensive, expanded and readable form of the doctrinal convictions as stated in the 27 Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists published in the *Church Manual*.

The “Appeal for Unity” is perplexing. To suggest that the church should “lay aside” the topics of “righteousness by faith in an end-time setting,” and the incarnation of Christ, is to cancel the agenda of the great controversy. Unless God’s people understand the “present truth” of “righteousness by faith” without compromise, what hope is there for the church to deal with the “nature of sin,” which is the very essence of the battle waged by God’s enemy who is dedicated to war against righteousness? And how can there be victory in this end-





time battle unless sinners know how close Christ has come to us? He “was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death” that He “should taste death for every man.” And “as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same” because “he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed [*spermatos*] of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren” (Hebrews 2:9-18).

But more than this—God’s regard for His people has caused Him to send specific counsel on this very point. It is instruction that cannot be misunderstood:

“The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us. It is the golden linked chain which binds our souls to Christ and through Christ to God. This is to be our study. Christ was a real man, and He gave proof of His humility in becoming a man. And He was God in the flesh. ... We must come to the study of this subject with the humility of a learner, with a contrite heart. And the study of the incarnation of Christ is a fruitful field, and will repay the searcher who digs deep for hidden truth” (MS 67, 1898 [7BC 904, 905]).

His humanity “is everything to us ... This is to be our study ... This study will repay the searcher”—and yet we are told to lay aside this topic as it is not “essential” for our people.

How did we get ourselves into such confusion? Does this grow out of our frantic attempt to support *Questions on Doctrine* and *Movement of Destiny* as these books tried to bring us into the fold of the evangelical world?

The Evangelicals know that we are confused and have told the world so in their publications (see *Christian Research Journal*, summer 1988; *Christianity Today*, Feb. 5, 1990). They know and they state plainly that it was *Questions on Doctrine* that “repudiated” the “traditional Adventist doctrines ... that Christ had inherited a human nature affected by the Fall, and that the last-day believers would achieve sinless perfection.”

How can they see what we can’t see?

**Winter 1990, “Model or Substitute? Does It Matter How We See Jesus?”** The “Appeal” from the Biblical Research Institute has either been misunderstood or ignored, judging from articles in



our denominational press. The “topics” expressly forbidden as “not essential” for our people have nevertheless been emphasized there. These articles support *Questions on Doctrine* which has created confusion in our ranks from the day it came off the press. Is this the road to “unity”?

Beginning in January 1990, the *Review* ran a six-part series on the nature of Christ—over 15 pages, in direct violation of the “Appeal for Unity.” The thrust of the articles was discerned by some church members as they wrote to the editor. The “Letters” column expressed great concern. At least some of our members sense a constraint to speak about these topics. The letters indicate that the six-part series was “confusion.” Some comments: “Shades of the new theology! If Jesus’ nature was unlike ours, may heaven have mercy on us, for we are all lost.” The author “made an excellent attempt to harmonize the errors of Roman Catholicism and Calvinism with Biblical truth, but it was just not good enough. ... The ‘original sin’ dogma and the denial of the real humanity of Christ paraded as the gospel.”

“I breathe a sigh of relief that the juries of the land do not share [the author’s] theory of inherited guilt!” “No one would use this text [Philippians 2:7] to prove that Christ was unlike men, yet such poor logic has been applied in these articles. ... The author creates confusion.” The author “paints a totally unscriptural picture of the nature of man that, in turn, forces him to come up with a Jesus who was not truly human, one who did not truly ‘come in the flesh’ as the Bible so clearly teaches. According to 1 John 4:1-3, this is a serious matter indeed.” “Try as he might do otherwise, [the author] painted himself into the same corner as Saint Augustine. ... [This] position does violence to Scripture and, more important, to the character of God. ... Away with the error of Calvinism, Arminianism, as well as universalism.”

But the *Review* must still promote this non-Adventist view. Because of the strong opposition to the series, the author was given a full column of rebuttal in the April 26 issue. The roots of his ideas go back nearly seven years when the same author had a four-page presentation in the *Review* of June 30, 1983, “Behold the Man.” The reaction from our church members then as expressed in their



letters to the editor indicate that many rejected the theology of this article by a ratio of four to one. Yet the *Review* editors evidence a determination to steam-roll the new theology on its way. Who can measure the confusion that *Questions on Doctrine* has sown in the remnant church?



## Chapter Six

# THE ISSUE OF ISSUES

**Spring 1990, “Like Adam or Like Us?”** While letters of concern and total disagreement were coming to the *Review* regarding the six-part series which ended on February 22, another series of similar articles was already in the pipe line and announced in the April 5 issue.

This three-part series from March 29 to April 26 was authored by one of the *Review* editors. It presented the same theology that church members had complained about. These articles were a reprint of a series that had gone to the Canadian church membership as printed in the *Canadian Adventist Messenger* in April and May 1988, and with the same title, “Like Adam or Like Us?” Thus the church is again urged to accept a view opposing the 1888 view while the “Appeal for Unity” urges the church to lay aside this subject of Christ’s human nature.

**Fall 1990, “Time to Press Together.”** This editorial in the November 1 *Review* focuses on a serious need of the church: “It’s time to press together in the North American Division. It’s time for us to put aside our carping and criticism, our pettiness and crankiness, and join hands in a common message and a common mission.” Amen!

The problem according to the editorial is theology. The church is being fractured because “some Adventists seem to want to change the rules. Some want to ignore or delete part of the 27 fundamentals; some want to add to them. ... As an example, take the human nature of Jesus. Our fundamental beliefs make clear that Jesus, God’s eternal Son, became fully human, was tempted in all points but remained sinless. But they do not attempt to spell out His nature beyond this.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Implicit in this view is the denial that Christ could experience the temptation to break all of God’s commandments—specifically the seventh.



For some reason the Evangelical view of the nature of Christ continually gets “spelled out in print, while the “most precious” view that “the Lord in His great mercy sent” to us in 1888 is labeled as an offending doctrine which inhibits unity, is not “essential,” and even attracts the adjective “satanic.”

**Fall 1991, “Tithe” and the Nature of Christ.** The November 7 issue of the *Review* included an unusual supplement as a tract in the center spread. This 16 page document is perhaps unique in Adventist history; it brings into focus a growing problem in the church. Only about fifty percent of the church membership return to the Lord that which is called tithe, but in many cases is not a faithful tenth. Therefore this is a subject of great importance. It is the sacred duty of every Christian to return the tithes and offerings to the Lord.

But this tract on tithe becomes a promotion piece on the subject which the “Appeal for Unity” has urged us to lay aside—the human nature of Christ. How could this be?

The question arises as to whether a church member should return tithe to the church if such a one believes the church “is in apostasy.” This leads to the question, “What is apostasy?”

The dictionary defines apostasy as the “renunciation of a religious faith,” or the “abandonment of a previous loyalty.” No Seventh-day Adventist can renounce and forsake the teachings of this church and remain a member in good standing. It would seem the question is wrong.

The question should be, “What is heresy?” The dictionary defines heresy as “an opinion, doctrine, or practice contrary to truth or to generally accepted beliefs and standards.”

By this definition we have “heresy” in our ranks, for we are not willing to acknowledge the “generally accepted beliefs” regarding righteousness by faith as the Lord “sent” them to us. Increasingly the message is under dispute and rejected. Why? Because, it is said, the 1980 set of 27 beliefs did not articulate this in a clear statement.

The tithe tract diverges from its announced topic to strike a blow in this forbidden area of the nature of Christ. It tells the world church that we have three views: (1) “at the incarnation Christ took the nature of Adam *before* Adam’s fall”; (2) “He took the nature of



Adam *after* the fall”; (3) He took a nature that was a combination of these two understandings. The tract states that “a large number of Adventist ministers, Bible teachers and church members, of equal learning and commitment, today take the third rather than the second of these positions. Why? Because of (1) certain acknowledged ambiguities in both Scripture and Mrs. White’s writings on the human nature of Jesus, and (2) some very clear warnings in the Spirit of Prophecy against any attempt at totally humanizing Christ.”<sup>11</sup>

Never before has the denominational press stated that we Adventists have “three views of the nature of Christ.” Truth demands that the alleged “ambiguities” in Ellen White’s writings be recognized if they are there. This involves not charges of “apostasy” or “heresy” but knowing the Son of God who became the Son of man to accomplish the plan of salvation. There is no “eternal life” nor is there a second advent until a people “know” Jesus Christ. Confusion about Christ Himself prepares us to receive a false christ, Baal—to be deceived by Satan himself who appears as an angel of light.

**1992 and Onward.** The theological issues facing the church will not go away. Meanwhile, the latter rain blessing is a vain hope until there is a true heart unity. Error is never harmless. It never sanctifies but always brings confusion and dissension. This peril is vividly portrayed in a *Review* article of January 7, 1993.

It is observed that “history has shown that the church’s fragmentation has always resulted from some important or exaggerated theological dispute. The question for us now, therefore, is whether there exists among us any theological controversy of sufficient magnitude to generate a schism in the church.”

That the remnant church in the end-time should face such a quandary is foreign to its mandate. However, the *Review* article,

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<sup>11</sup> The warning alluded to here is against “making Christ altogether human, such an one as ourselves” (5BC 1129, emphasis supplied). Ellen White did not deny that Christ became truly human while retaining in totality His divinity, though laying aside its prerogatives. We “ourselves” are sinners and will never be divine.



page 21, senses there is grave danger. Again this serves as a pretext to agitate the forbidden topic: "One theological issue, however, has that potential. It centers on the nature of Christ, righteousness, and the absolute sinless perfection of the final remnant." The author goes on to say, "I seriously doubt the likelihood of an outright schism in the church on their account." May the powers of heaven prove him right that no schism engulf this church. But the potential remains.

**ISSUES:**  
***The Seventh-day Adventist Church  
and Private Ministries***

**Fall 1992.** This book of 467 pages is the first of its kind in Seventh-day Adventist history. Not many will read the entire book for its thesis is contained in the first 84 pages of text. The balance of 383 pages is made up of an array of letters, legal briefs, committee actions, board minutes, article reprints, all contained in 46 appendices. A companion tract of 16 pages with almost the same title, a summary of the book, went to the world church as an insert in the *Adventist Review* of November 7, 1992.

Copyrighted with no date listed, *Issues* is produced by the North American Division Officers and Union Presidents. This is one Division of the world field; it is not the General Conference in world business session. *Issues* therefore cannot be accepted as authorized by the world church, even though it is certain to create repercussions throughout the denomination as it implies the full approval of the General Conference.

But why such a book? Will it bring unity to the church? Will it help prepare a people for the final issues and the coming of the Lord? Its promoters hope so.

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The stated purpose of *Issues* is to demonstrate how certain church members "are out of harmony with God's plan for His established church" and "to determine if they are loyal to the church ... or if they are divisive." And what will determine this? Both *Issues* and the tract which went to the world field agree specifically: "These



differences are grounded in theology.”

This is the crucial issue. Theology is “the study of religious faith, practice, and experience; the study of God and his relation to the world.” That a problem of this nature and magnitude should engulf the remnant church portends beyond question that we have already entered into the “shaking.”

*Issues* says it does not propose “to provide a theological rebuttal to the views held by members” of these certain “dissident” groups. It claims that the “issues of the conflict over the nature of Christ and righteousness by faith are not nearly as straightforward as [some] would have them appear.” It goes on to say: “Both Scripture and Ellen White contain statements that seem to support varying viewpoints, and these must be held in tension with each other.” This repeats what the “Tithe” tract of November 7, 1991, described as “certain acknowledged ambiguities.” If these “tensions” and “acknowledged ambiguities” do exist, it should be a simple matter to list even a few of them. This would enable every conscientious Seventh-day Adventist to compare and see wherein the Bible is not clear and wherein Ellen White speaks in uncertain terms.

Instead, *Issues* tells the church to study the series of six articles that ran in the *Review*, January and February 1990. This is the series entitled, “Model or Substitute? Does It Matter How We See Jesus?” which is based on the theology of *Questions on Doctrine*, the root of our present confusion. This is the series that caused consternation in the hearts of many Adventists at the time it was published. Yet now it is set forth as the touchstone of orthodoxy.

If as *Issues* claims, there is no official church action regarding the nature of Christ, it is equally true there is no church action to alter one word of the truth we have held from our beginnings.

The integrity of the church cannot be established nor maintained by force of hierarchical authority contrary to the faith of the world church. Confidence in the ministry and leadership of the church can and will be sustained by strict adherence to truth. In this environment only flawless theology will stand. Unity at the cost of compromise sustained by false theology is delusive. The peril surrounding the church now in this final hour is that the mystery of





godliness and the mystery of iniquity mature simultaneously.  
The process is hastening on apace.

*History at Issue Must Become  
History Understood,  
Which Will Become History Climaxed*

In the decades since 1950 the church has drifted deeper into Baal worship. We have required about the same time that ancient Israel needed to reach their depths in the days of Elijah, yet they did not know their true condition. The seventh church is now in the same situation.

Each refusal to repent has only deepened our guilt and prevented the Holy Spirit from working. No perversion of the gospel could be more perilous than the false elation of supposed progress while we actually know not the Word that “became flesh and dwelt among us.” The explosion of baptisms in Russia and the ever increasing numbers in the Third World constitute a membership that must soon wrestle with the same theological issues now fracturing the leadership church in the home base. Truth must be settled in the home base before schism affects the world church.

Statistics will do nothing to bring the latter rain and loud cry to the corporate body of the church. Glowing reports may feed our ego, but such will never prepare a people for the final crisis. What the Lord wanted to do for His people 100 years ago, He still wants to do, but even omnipotence cannot prevail over individual or corporate rejection of the “gold,” the “white raiment,” and the “eyesalve” which the True Witness has waited to give us.

For years we have talked much about the latter rain but we have failed to understand that the Lord sent it 100 years ago when we “insulted” the Holy Spirit. Our Lord has feelings too, like the children He created, and He is waiting for us to see and know what we did to Him and how our opposition allowed Satan to succeed in shutting away from us the “special power of the Holy Spirit.” Notwithstanding the millions we may spend to fulfill our plans for a global strategy, “the light that is to lighten the whole earth with its



glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a large degree kept away from the world.”

When did this happen? It happened when the Lord sent to His people a “most precious message.” As we enter our second century since heaven tried to finish the work, how much longer will it take for us to “know” what needs to be known, and then repent? After 6000 years of waiting, the Saviour makes His earnest plea to the seventh church.

But we are not the first people to have misunderstood a message that God sent. The ancient Jews brought grief to the Messiah because they were certain they understood. The heartbreak the Saviour suffered then cannot compare to the grief pressed upon Him by the lukewarm, unknowing response He has received from the last of the “seven churches.” The High Priest is waiting to rise up and proclaim, “it is done.”

How much longer will He have to wait?

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Some readers of this documentary may feel depressed at the almost constant evidence of conflict in this extended correspondence, decade after decade, now even beginning to approximate century after century. “How long, O Lord?” is the cry for ages, of anxious hearts. The authors have experienced in their lifetime (so far) 43 years of constant misunderstanding, resistance, opposition, and often condemnation. There may be some readers of this documentary who have also had to endure similar trials within the church and who are tempted to abandon the church and seek fellowship in an offshoot. To such the counsel must be: re-read the Book of Jeremiah. He too endured more than 40 years of constant rejection, yet remained loyal to the “church” of his day. And these authors have not given up hope that the Lord still has resources by which He can bring all of us in the Seventh-day Adventist Church to a knowledgeable repentance and reconciliation with Christ.

Again, the message of Job brings encouragement. Job thought it was the Lord who was opposing him when in reality it was Satan. The essential question to be settled is whether it is the Lord who opposes the 1888 message of Christ’s righteousness, or is it someone



else. We join Job on his dung-heap. Although we ask “Why?” yet still we trust.

For the first time in Seventh-day Adventist history, in the 1888 episode almost the entire leadership of the church ranged themselves solidly against the Holy Spirit. Ellen White has truthfully said that since then the Lord has a controversy with His people. The terrible fires that consumed our greatest institutions at the old Battle Creek headquarters were the outcome of more than a decade of constant resistance of the 1888 message. Mercifully, there was no loss of life. The Lord’s servant has left on record an awesome warning for the future:

Brethren, God is in earnest with us. I want to tell you that if after the warnings given in these burnings the leaders of our people go right on, just as they have done in the past, exalting themselves, God will take the bodies next. Just as surely as He lives, He will speak to them in language that they cannot fail to understand (*The Publishing Ministry*, p. 171; 1903).

The honor and vindication of Christ require the repentance of the Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership and membership. If it seems an impossible achievement, please remember that the sacrifice of the Son of God on His cross requires it. The Scriptures project a prophecy yet future in support of this, for the Lord declares:

“I will pour on the house of David [church administration] and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem [church membership] the Spirit of grace and supplication: then they will look on Me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem. ... In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. It shall be in that day/ says the Lord of hosts, ‘that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land. ...

“And someone will say to him, ‘What are these wounds in your hands?’ Then he will answer, ‘Those with which I was wounded



in the house of my friends,' ... And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem." (Zechariah 12:10, 11-13:1, 2; 14:8, NKJV).

The authors of *1888 Re-examined* believe that He did not receive those "wounds" in His hands for naught. In due course His "friends" will know what they have done to Him and how they insulted His Holy Spirit; then they will indeed "grieve for Him" with a repentance supreme in all history. His love will be seen and be appreciated to accomplish what judgments by sword and fire have not accomplished.

We do not need to wait for another generation to requite His sacrificial love. We do not need new and strange reinterpreting of the time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation to set dates for His return. God's people can in this generation, now, fulfill all that heaven is waiting on—"Be zealous therefore and repent." The grateful receipt of that magnificent blessing will be the sign before the whole universe that at last the "Bride" is willing to accept the hand of the Divine Lover.

While the Bridegroom is forced to tarry there are signs that His Bride-to-be is making herself ready. Stirrings in the church give positive hope.

Three outstanding articles have appeared in recent issues of *Ministry* magazine. There is a refreshing candor evident. In the April 1992 issue the editor stirred the Adventist conscience:

Is it possible that underneath all the optimism, all the euphoria, all the movement, all might not be as well as we would like? Is it possible that we are making progress without much light? Is it possible that church growth in the statistical column is not matched by growth in the character department?

... One campaign ... resulted in 1,000 baptisms. One year later [there were] only 57 people out of the more than 1,000 who had been baptized. The other 943 were still listed on the church books—and will probably remain there for years to come. ...



One field president ... talked to a local chief and promised him seven bales of clothing if he could deliver 1,000 people for baptism. By the end of the year his tally of 953 people was close enough to get the clothing.

The gospel commission is much more than baptizing; it is making disciples of people who are reflecting the character of Jesus.

In the same year another serious challenge was given by the editor's "Open Letter" to the General Conference president in the October issue. There were some noteworthy observations:

Ellen White first applied the Laodicean message to our church in the 1850s and during the course of her ministry never encouraged the church to consider that it had escaped this Laodicean condition. She said that we would never do the work that God really wants us to do until we wholeheartedly admit that we are in a Laodicean condition. ... But there comes a time when we as leaders must stand up and be counted. We need to clarify the mission of the church. Why did God bring this church into existence? What are we preaching? ... Why is it that after almost 150 years of existence our people do not understand the most basic of all doctrines [the assurance of salvation]? ... Has Christ somehow become eclipsed by all our good works and distinctive doctrines? ... [W]e are at a critical juncture in the history of our church. ... Let us preach the right gospel, that God might be glorified.

Early in 1993 the February issue brought another frank appeal from the editor to our denominational workers. He sets forth the call that has been shunned for years, but which is the plea of the "True Witness" to receive His gift of "corporate repentance." The editor comes to grips with a pending decisive issue:

Ever since the 1850s we as individual Adventists have acknowledged our Laodicean condition, but is there



a difference between individual recognition of this fact and corporate recognition? Some have tried to educate us in this area, but we have ignored their pleas. ... We as church leaders need to spend much more time studying and applying this passage. ...

If we seek the true remedies, then as church leaders we will make the burden of our committees, our councils, our gatherings, a study of and a seeking for the righteousness of Christ rather than a push for church growth. ... Let us convene a world gathering of leaders and pastors whose only agenda is to study the message to Laodicea. ... The message to Laodicea is not primarily a message to individuals, but to a church, to a corporate body. ... The greatest proof that we have not repented as a church is the fact that ... after almost 150 years we are still here.

Truly, to our shame, “we are still here.” And yes, this is “the foremost proof that we have not repented as a church.” But the very impotence and disunity of the church at this time are a great cause for encouragement, for this situation is a fulfillment of God’s warning to His people that means He is still leading!

Books of a new order *have* been published which sabotage the faith we have been given and defy our history; intellectual philosophy does attempt to usurp a “thus saith the Lord”; the Sabbath is lightly regarded; virtue is considered better than vice while we are told falsely that vice will prevail among the elect until the second advent; nothing seems “to stand in the way of a new movement” But the Lord’s word will not return unto Him void; the sanctuary “shall be cleansed.” We are convinced that God believes that the basic heart of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is honest. The Church simply needs to know the full truth.

If God believes that His people will respond, shouldn’t we believe it too? And if we do believe as He does, shouldn’t we courageously tell the truth? That distilled pure message of truth which was sent to us 100 years ago and verified by the Lord’s messenger



will yet do its work The heart of Israel will be touched when the truth of our history is appreciated. Our Heavenly Father has staked the honor of His throne on the sure result of His people coming to know and accept His “precious message.” *These authors have staked their all on the same conviction.* The Lord’s truth contains a compelling power to bring repentance.

While the Lord is waiting, He assures us: “For a mere moment I have forsaken you, but with great mercies I will gather you. With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you/ says the Lord, your Redeemer.” “I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy. I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord” (Isaiah 54:7, 8; Hosea 2:19, 20, NKJV).

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For over a century the Lord has allowed us our wayward journey. For over forty years the reason for this long delay has been under serious discussion. Is this time enough to learn where the problem lies?

Or will these two authors join their colleagues of forty years ago in the grave, while some future generation comes to face our history for what it is? *There is no escape from facing the truth of how “we” have treated our Lord.*

Whether the authors live or die, whether they are judged by this documentation as misguided fools or worse, God’s word must still be fulfilled. The record of the past four decades must be determined in judgment one way or another.

Meanwhile, the delay has only deepened the Lord’s unrequited love for His bride-to-be. He is determined to betroth her forever in “righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy,” as He says.

The Lord’s message to His people remains the pure gospel—the Good News—but infinitely more, it is the power of God unto salvation from sin.

We still believe it.



Crest Hotel, San Francisco, Cal.  
July 11, 1950

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE  
COMMITTEE:

Dear Brethren:

On this day of fasting and prayer, we as a people are to seek not to the god of Ekron, but to the God of truth, the Author and Finisher of our faith, the God who has led the remnant church these 106 years, as He led Israel of old. The President's stirring address last night, calling upon us to guard the faith once delivered to the saints, and to speak forthrightly in defence of it, presents a challenge. With this in mind, it is imperative that we know exactly That it is that should be guarded, for certainly there is great confusion in our ranks to-day.

This confusion was evident in the "Christ-centered preaching" urged upon us repeatedly in the Ministerial Association meeting of the past four days. These meetings were supposed to set the stage for a mighty revival among God's people at this General Conference session. This "Christ-centered preaching" is expected by its proponents, to bring in a great reformation among Seventh-day Adventists workers the world around.

No one for a moment could disparage the preaching of the *true* Christ as the center and substance of the three angels' messages. However, in the confusion, it has been discerned that much of this so-called "Christ-centered preaching" is in reality merely *anti-Christ centered preaching*. It vitally affects the outcome of this General Conference session. To make such a statement to the General Conference Committee sounds fantastic. But startling things are not unexpected by the church in the last days.

No Seventh-day Adventist can deny for a moment that Satan will take the religious world captive, appearing as an angel of light, to deceive if possible the *very elect*. Through a three-fold union of apostate Protestantism, Romanism, and Spiritualism, he will present the most bitter opposition to the three angels' messages ever encountered. Men





such as E. Stanley Jones, Leslie Weatherhead, Norman Vincent Peale, and Billy Graham, are allying themselves with Spiritualistic forces, robed in garments of light. They indeed preach a winsome, lovable, always smiling “Christ”. But, with the aid of the Bible, this “Christ” can be proven to be identifiable with the father of all lies, the author of Spiritualism and Romanism. Need it be said that we have nothing to do as Seventh-day Adventists with such a false Christ”? Ought we not to realize that our cruel and bitter enemy knows by now far too well the fallacy of trying to allure us with apparent evil, gross and crude Spiritualism? In these last days, he will assume the form of good, and seek to allure us and charm us with specious reasonings, apparently holy, causing men, as we heard last night, “to give utterance to opinions that will betray sacred, holy trusts.” It could be proven, as simply and as clearly as that the Seventh-day Sabbath is the true one, that the “Christ” of these modern men is identifiable with the god of modern Spiritualism!

In the sermons and exhortations of the past four days, no clear distinction whatever has been made between the Christ of Seventh-day Adventism, and this false Christ. While lip service has been paid to the preaching of our distinctive doctrines, they have been openly and repeatedly disparaged as *secondary*, this “Christ” being considered *primary*. We are thus left with a vague mysticism permeating Seventh-day Adventism. If followed to its logical ends, it can only bring in a false, spurious type of “Christian” experience, calculated instead to deceive the very elect, but which will not hasten the finishing of the work committed to us. It is a modern counterpart of an ancient call to Israel in the wilderness to return to Egypt. Should not this matter, dear brethren and elders, be *thoroughly* investigated by men capable of discerning between the wiles of the devil and the solemn work of the true Holy Spirit?

Is it not true that our fasting, praying, and seeking for the outpouring of the Spirit will be tragically hindered until this matter is clarified? The most earnest intercessory, pleading prayers offered unwittingly to Baal will not avail Israel one drop of heaven-sent rain, in this time of spiritual drought. Is it not true that the “Christ” of these modern Spiritualistic actors is in reality Israel’s ancient enemy, Baal, under a new and more highly refined guise?



The following facts are worthy of consideration:

1. Our history proves, in the incident of Dr. Kellogg's apostasy into what the servant of the Lord repeatedly termed "deadly heresies" and "doctrines of devils" and specious "spiritualistic sentiments", that trusted men amongst us can think themselves in harmony with our faith, have regard to the law and the Sabbath, be men of apparent rectitude, and yet be deceived by a refined species of Spiritualism. Therefore, to say that we are not in any danger of being confused by the false Christ and his spiritualism so long as we hold to the Sabbath and the law, etc., is not entirely true. Seventh-day Adventists can be deceived. Only a tyro in denominational history will deny that.

2. Plain, unequivocal statements that cannot possibly be gainsaid, in *Special Testimonies*, Series B. indicate that the spiritualistic sophistries which deceived Dr. Kellogg and a great proportion of our trusted leaders fifty years ago, will again deceive our people; further, that Dr. Kellogg's apostasy, revealed in "Living Temple", was but the comparatively crude, immature beginning of deadly deceptions and doctrines of devils; and that the most serious development in the history of Adventism, as we near the end, would be an almost overmastering attempt on the part of Satan to lead us in Spiritualism, a revival of the deceptions of fifty years ago. Just a few key statements follow, which should indicate that this is not a fantastic idea:

"'Living Temple' contains the *alpha* of these theories. I knew that the *omega* would follow in a little while, and I trembled for our people." No. 2, p. 53.

"Many are in danger of receiving theories and sophistries that undermine the foundation pillars of our faith. Satan, with his seductive influence, has stolen away from one and then another the faith once delivered to the saints. ... Nothing but a determined effort will break the spell that is on them." "Be not deceived: many will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. We have now before us the *alpha*



of this danger. The omega will be of a most startling nature.” Pp. 15, 16.

“Living Temple’ ... contains specious sentiments. There are in it sentiments that are entirely true, but these are mingled with error ... in the book living Temple” there is presented the alpha of deadly heresies. The omega will follow, and will be received by those who are not willing to heed the warning God has given.” Pp. 49, 50.

“The time is near when the deceptive powers of satanic agencies will be fully developed. On one side, is Christ who has been given all power in heaven and in earth. On the other side, is Satan, continually exercising his power to allure [appearing as anti-Christ, in the place of Christ], to deceive with strong, spiritualistic sophistries, to remove God [the true Christ] out of the places that He should occupy in the minds of men.” No. 7, pp. 16, 17.

“Fanciful representations and interpretations of truth have been stealing in step by step, unperceived by men who ought through a clear understanding of the Scriptures, to be prepared to see the danger and sound a note of warning. ... Blindness hath happened unto Israel.” P. 17.

“Spiritualistic sentiments have been given to our people, and have been received by some who have had long experience as teachers in the word of God. The results of this insidious devising will break out again and again.” P. 36.

“That those who we have thought sound in the faith should have failed to discern the specious, deadly influence of this science of evil, should alarm us as nothing else has alarmed us. “It is something that cannot be treated as a small matter.” P. 37.

“The strange part of the matter is that these ideas have been accepted by so many as beautiful truth.” P. 49.



3. This deception of refined Spiritualism constitutes a species of virtual Baal worship. The old enemy of ancient Israel has deceived many in modern Israel.

- a. Baal is simply a false “Christ”, and is Satan disguising as the god who led Israel out of Egypt. He is an utter imposter, assuming the appearance of Israel’s true Lord. The word *Baal* simply meant “Lord”, or “husband”, etymologically. Thus when the prophets of Baal prayed at Carmel, they simply prayed, “O Lord, Lord, etc.,” while Elijah had a clear distinction in his mind about the true God.
- b. Ancient Israel did not realize that they had apostatized into Baal worship. It was gradual, unconscious apostasy. This is evident from statements in *Prophets and Kings*, and Jeremiah 2:23, 35; 16:10. Modern Israel’s Baal worship has also been gradual and unconscious. Men are sincerely deceived.
- c. An unequivocally plain prophecy occurs in *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 467, 468, that as a consequence of not discerning the light of righteousness by faith revealed in 1888, “many” amongst us would be deceived into virtual Baal worship.
- d. This modern Baal worship and highly refined Spiritualism constitutes a spurious and counterfeit species of righteousness by faith. This revival of “Christ centered preaching”, being practically identical with the “gospel” of modern Babylon, is not a true revival such as Jones and Waggoner and Sister White brought to us 62 years ago.
- e. This spurious faith in “Christ” can never prepare the remnant church to stand in the day of God, nor is it a distinctive message which will lighten the earth with the glory of God. Followed to its logical end, it will rob us of the distinctive message God has given us for the world. It is a call back to Egypt.
- f. The alarming and heartbreaking examples of treachery, immorality, cupidity, fraud, and embezzlement, arising within our



ministerial ranks, and sadly familiar to us here and there, indicate that the fruit of this apostasy is increasingly bitter. Faith in the *true* Christ, dear brethren, bears not fruit such as we see today amongst us.

4. Modern Spiritualism is not clearly discerned by our people. It constitutes not merely crude peeping and muttering of the dead, but also a counterfeit Holy Spirit. Thus Baal worship includes a false god, a false “Christ”, and a false “Holy Spirit”. Other religious bodies are earnestly seeking a “latter rain” as are we, but their Holy Spirit will prove to be an Unholy Spiritism. The church appeals to the ministry to make this distinction clear to our workers and people. *Already spurious manifestations of miracle working power have been evident amongst us, and have been received by many.* Clear unequivocal statements from the Spirit of Prophecy indicate that near the end false miracles will appear amongst Seventh-day Adventists to deceive them, and that such miracles will be accompanied by a spurious righteousness by faith such as the world will receive. Our people are tragically confused, as sheep without a shepherd, and await a clarification of this matter.

5. It is certain that there are keen minds in the world who will someday be able to prove conclusively from history and theology, that the “Christ” of modern Babylon, of Billy Graham, E. Stanley Jones, etc., is the ancient Adonis, or Tammuz, of old pagan religions, and the false Messiah of Mithraism, and the anti-Christ of Romanism.

- a. It can be proven logically and clearly, as much as so as we prove the Sabbath or Sanctuary truths, that the “Christ” of popular “Christian” experience is identifiable with the old pagan Christs.
- b. It can be proven conclusively that the type of Christian experience preached amongst us to-day is practically the same as that advocated by E. Stanley Jones and others; and that this species of experience is a manifest departure from the truths taught in the Bible and *Steps to Christ*.



c. It can be proven that this modern “Christ-centered preaching” is a subtle reappearance of the “other gospel” which Paul so sharply warned the Galatians against receiving. Gal. 1:8, 9. If we make any mistakes in this field of Christian experience, it is damnable confusion. You will recall that that “other gospel” “bewitched” the Galatians. (The word “proven”, brethren, does not mean making of bald, unsupported statements. There are authorities as J. Garnier, who wrote *The True Christ and the False Christ*, London. 1900, a monumental work which may be found in the R&H library, and authorities cited by Waigal in *The Paganism in Our Christianity*, and Frazer’s *Golden Bough*.)

6. Lest this appeal be thought fantastic, and the conditions referred to impossible amongst Seventh-day Adventists, the following incidents are with embarrassment and hesitation referred to:

a. In 1899 a certain imposter, “Captain” Norman, deceived practically the entire group of Seventh-day Adventist leaders. Older workers will recall that this smooth imposter was described by Sister White as an agent or emissary of the devil, and that the whole embarrassing incident was a parable, to show our people how much they were falling down. Immediately afterwards occurred the sad episode of Dr. Kellogg’s spiritualistic apostasy, when brethren who had believed an agent of the devil, also received what Sister White plainly termed “doctrines of devils”. The warning was not received. Thus there developed the “alpha”.

b. In 1949 a certain imposter, “Doctor” Legg, deceived some Seventh-day Adventist leaders tragically. This wicked man was uncouth, poorly disguised deceiver. He appeared to be a very strange sort of a new “convert.” He couldn’t look one in the eye, and scarcely did he even act the part of a refined, converted, Christian gentleman. The sad story is well known. Can any one successfully maintain that sincere brethren, who will be so deceived by a very agent of the devil, will not also be as readily deceived by “doctrines of devils”? The analogy of the 1899 incident with Dr. Kellogg’s Spiritualism, makes a disturbing consideration.



Our dear people, could they voice their unconscious desires, would thus appeal to this highest Committee of authority, gathered at this world session in 1950, to clarify this highly important matter of the difference between the true God and the false, the true Christ and the anti-Christ, the true Holy Spirit and Spiritualism, and true Christian experience and false supposition. No matter before this gathering can possibly be as weighty with serious import as this.

Very sincerely yours.

(Signed)

R. J. Wieland

(Signed)

D. K. Short

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