

THE BASICS

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

A CLOSER LOOK

An Appeal to God's People

**“To earnestly contend for the faith
which was once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3)**

Information · Inspiration · Issues · Insights

Considerations · Clarifications · Claims · Concerns

Ingo Sorke, PhD

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture taken from the *New King James Version*. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Content

The Core Issue: The Personality of God

3 Models of God
The Top Ten Bible Texts
Top Ten Quotes

Fundamental Principles: Development and Departure

Perspectives on the Fundamental Beliefs
The Voice of Scholars

Top Ten Trinitarian Claims

Claim #1: God is Love
Claim #2: The Sonship of Christ
Claim #3: The Desire of Ages, p. 530
Claim #4: The Shema of Deuteronomy 6:4 - Jehovah & Elohim
Claim #5: Only Begotten
Claim #6: Adventist History
Claim #7: The Heavenly Trio
Claim #8: The Holy Spirit

Concise Overview of Key Bible Texts

The Old Testament: Strict Monotheism
The New Testament: Divinity, not Trinity

Concerns

The Mark of Monotheism
The Catholic Connection
Unity & Mission
Ethics

Frequently Asked Questions

Conclusion & Suggestion

Appendices

Appendix A: The 1980 General Conference Session
Appendix B: My Baptismal Certificate
Appendix C: *The Story of Redemption* - Chapters 1-3
Appendix D: At the Risk of Temporal Loss - My Personal Journey

Annotated Bibliography

The Core Issue: The Personality of God

True or False? “Trinity” means God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

False.

Follow-up question: The terms Trinity, Trio, and Godhead mean the same and are interchangeable?

False again.

Surprised? Then keep reading . . .

The Doctrine of the Trinity does not simply refer to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit but goes a step further by defining God as a composite of 3 God-Persons who are at the same time (the) 1 God. This concept is found neither in Scripture nor in the Spirit of Prophecy - nor in the first 100+ years of the Advent movement. *While culture is redefining gender, the church has redefined God!*

The Doctrinal Conundrum

The Doctrine of the Trinity is an attempt to reconcile the divinity of Christ (and the Spirit) with Scripture’s clear and emphatic monotheism. It seeks to maintain the divinity of all 3 entities without creating the impression that Christianity believes in 3 Gods. But formulations fall short of this as “God the Father”, “God the Son”, and “God the Spirit” obviously list 3 Gods. They also introduce wordings that fall outside the vocabulary of Scripture, with no “Thus sayeth the Lord!”

This study critiques the major claims of the doctrine of the trinity, voices concerns, and considers key texts and quotes on the issue while providing clarifications in clear and simple language. I was guided by genuine sincerity to match the seriousness of the matter, and by the principle I once heard from Protestant systematic theologian Eberhard Jüngel (Tübingen, Germany): “Theology should be as simple as possible but as complex as necessary.”

The research before you also presents an earnest (and loving) attempt to return the Advent movement to biblical fidelity - at the risk of earthly loss but eternal gain. It was truly written with heart and mind - please prayerfully and patiently read and process with both as

“His church must be kept free from all false doctrine” (Ms 46, 190).

The trinity issue is important; it involves God and His Son Jesus Christ, and ultimately our understanding of the Gospel (#John3:16!). It also has implications for the unity of the Church (→ Adventist Fundamental Belief #14).

dChristianity at large has struggled with formulating a systematic understanding of God for the last 2,000 years. While maintaining its claim of monotheism, texts like John 1:1-3, 20:28, and Hebrew 1 likewise identify Jesus as “God”. What to do? Doctrinal statements have settled on trinitarian formulations, at the expense of precision and distinction as Jesus is *God in nature but not in person* - so Ellen White’s understanding of the conundrum: **“The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, but not in personality” (Ms116-1905.19).**

This distinction is as important as it is serious! The doctrine of the Trinity muddies the theological waters by combining Father, Son, and Holy Spirit into 1 God persons. This affects the personality of God! Ellen White warns, “You are not definitely clear on the personality of God, which is everything to us as a people. You have virtually destroyed the Lord God Himself” (Letter 300, 1903).

Considering the complexity of the doctrine it comes as a surprise that a human formulation (and subject to change!) has become the litmus test of ecumenical association and acceptance - not Sabbath, not the Sanctuary (not even the investigative judgment!), not Scripture or the Second Coming - but the Trinity!

3 Models of God

The complexity of the issue can appear overwhelming. At the risk of oversimplification, 3 models of the nature and personhood of God have emerged:

1. Model: Monotheism & Trio

We find the easiest model in the strict monotheism of Judaism: one God. Period. Articulated in Israel’s standard expression of faith - *the Shema* of Deuteronomy 6:4 (repeated twice daily!):

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:

“Hear, O Israel: ‘The LORD our God, the LORD is one!’”

Pioneer Adventism maintained this monotheistic confession, while adding as Christians God’s divine Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit (shared by the Father with His Son). Ellen White, *who never used the term trinity in relation to God*, introduced the phrase *Heavenly Trio* to encompass all 3 entities, but without defining them as a Trinity. Trinitarian phrases such as “God the Son” and “God the Spirit” are absent in both Scripture and Spirit of Prophecy.

Note: Pioneer Adventism did *not* just reject Catholic expressions of trinitarianism; J.N. Andrews spoke directly against the Nicene Creed: “The doctrine of the Trinity which was established in the church by the council of Nice, A. D. 325. ***This doctrine destroys the personality of God, and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*** The infamous, measures by which it was forced upon the church which appear upon the pages of ecclesiastical history might well cause every believer in that doctrine to blush.” (J. N. Andrews, March 6, 1855, *Review & Herald*, vol. 6, no. 24, p. 185).

It must be noted that the entire Advent movement originated, grew, and functioned without the Doctrine of the Trinity for over 100 years! Let that sink in for a moment . . .

Sample Ellen White Statements

- "When Christ first announced to the heavenly host His mission and work in the world, He declared that He was to leave His position of dignity and disguise His holy mission by assuming the likeness of a man,
👉 when in reality He was the Son of the infinite God” (Lt 303, 1903). 👈
- "baptizing them in the name of the Father [a personal God], and of the Son [a personal Prince and Saviour], and of the Holy Ghost [sent from heaven to represent Christ]" (RH 10/26 1897).
- "God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son" (8T 268).
- "There is a personal God, the Father; there is a personal Christ, the Son" (1SM 293).
- "In every case, clear, powerful light has been given that God is the eternal, self-existent one. From my girlhood I have been given plain instruction that God is a person, and that Christ is "the express image of his person." Hebrews 1:3. God always has been. That which concerns us is not the how or the wherefore" (Ms 137, 1903.3).
- "They [Father and Son] are one in purpose, in mind, in character, **but not in person**. It is thus that God and Christ are one" (MH 422). *This is a key statement and should be considered carefully - it clearly and precisely stops short of a trinitarian formulation, even contradicts it!*
- "The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, **but not in personality**" (Ms 116 1905).
- "The Eternal Father, the unchangeable one, gave his only begotten son, tore from his bosom him who was made in the express image of his person, and sent him down to earth to reveal how greatly he loved mankind" (RH July 9, 1895, par. 13)
- "Before the foundations of the world were laid, Christ, the Only Begotten of God, pledged Himself to become the Redeemer of the human race, should Adam sin. ... In His incarnation He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God" (1SM 226).

Model 2: Modalism - 1 God - 3 Manifestations of that 1 God

In this paradigm, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are simply manifestations of that one true God, not separate persons. Unitarianism further distinguishes the substance of the Son (Greek: οὐσία *ousia*) as not divine). Variations of modalism are found in Pentecostal oneness thinking.

Model 3: Trinitarianism - 3 God-Persons = 1 God (God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit)

Corollary: 1 God = 3 God-Persons ("God" is a composite of 3 entities)

Variations exist in trinitarian articulations (i.e., Catholic generation), but the core understanding is that of

$$3=1, 1=3$$

Since no “Thus sayeth the Lord” is found in Scripture for the formulation of the Trinity, it is in essence an artificial conjecture to maintain the divinity of 3 entities while avoiding the appearance of tritheism. But this approach should be avoided:

“I beseech those who are laboring for God not to accept the spurious for the genuine. Let not human reason be placed where divine, sanctifying truth should be. Christ is waiting to kindle faith and love in the hearts of His people. Let not erroneous theories receive countenance from the people who ought to be standing firm on **the platform of eternal truth**. God calls upon us to hold firmly to **the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority**” (8T 298).

Note that the wording above was possible long before the introduction of the trinity in Adventism!

“...speculation regarding God’s personality we will not venture to express, except in the language of the Word which represents His personality. There is to be no discussion over this question lest God would give unmistakable revelation of what He is that would extinguish the one who dares venture on the holy ground in his speculative theories, as some ventured to do in opening the ark to see what was in it as its power and how God was manifested. ... **It is safe to contemplate God, the great and wonderful God, and Jesus Christ, the express image of God.** God gave His only begotten Son to our world, that we might through His righteous character behold the character of God” (Ms 223, 1902).

The Top Ten Bible Texts

In the stillness and solitude of my office I read through my Greek New Testament. I pondered especially the texts below somewhere between 2014 and 2016, along with all the introductions to the New Testament letters. I simply could not and cannot reconcile these texts in particular with a trinitarian view of Scripture.

Curiously, rarely has a scholar, pastor, or administrator commented on these few verses. In fact, I have had lunch with a systematic theologian who wanted to discuss Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli with me but refused to comment on John 17:3. Similarly at a Trinity Symposium I attended a seminary professor would not comment on these verses after being asked about them. Most dismiss them as articulations from the viewpoint of the incarnation.

Prayerfully judge for yourself - are these texts reconcilable with the Doctrine of the Trinity?

While spiritual things are spiritually discerned, how would a Jew or a Muslim, even a secular atheist, read these texts?

How readest thou?

The Top Ten Bible Texts

John 17:3: “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, **the only true God**, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

Romans 15:5-6: “Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 Corinthians 8:4-6: “Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and **that *there is no other God but one***. 5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), 6 **yet for us *there is one God, the Father***, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live*.”

1 Corinthians 11:3: “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and **the head of Christ *is* God**.”

Ephesians 3:14: “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”

Ephesians 4:4-6: “*There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 **one God and Father of all**, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.”

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10: “For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols **to serve the living and true God**, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”

1 Timothy 2:5: “For *there is* **one God** and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus”

2 John 3: “Grace, mercy, *and* peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.”

Revelation 3:12: “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of **My God**, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of **My God** and the name of the city of **My God**, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from **My God**. *And I will write on him* My new name.”

Along with these texts, several choice Ellen White quotes make it difficult, if not impossible, for me to embrace the Doctrine of the Trinity as biblical or in harmony with the Spirit of Prophecy - despite the Trio quotes and the compilation *Evangelism*.

Note especially the use of the term “God” in the quotes below:

Top Ten Quotes

Proclamation: Mission Mandate: “I feel my spirit stirred within me. I feel to the depth of my being that the truth must be borne to other countries and nations and to all classes. Let the missionaries of the cross proclaim that there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, who is Jesus Christ the Son of the Infinite God. This needs to be proclaimed throughout every church in our land” (Ms40-1891.78; 1888 Materials 886.3).

Read this quote one more time. Sadly, many faithful Adventists have been disenfranchised where this quote can no longer put into practice within Adventism.

Perspective: “Christ was hid in God, and God was revealed in the character of His Son. To this revelation Jesus desired the minds of the people to be directed” (MH 32).

Purpose: “The knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ expressed in character is an exaltation above everything else that is esteemed on earth or in heaven. It is the very highest education. It is the key that opens the portals of the heavenly city. This knowledge it is God’s purpose that all who put on Christ shall possess” (MH 457).

Platform: “I beseech those who are laboring for God not to accept the spurious for the genuine. Let not human reason be placed where divine, sanctifying truth should be. Christ is waiting to kindle faith and love in the hearts of His people. Let not erroneous theories receive countenance from the people who ought to be standing firm on **the platform of eternal truth**. God calls upon us to hold firmly to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority” (8T 298).

“Of all the great religious movements since the days of the apostles, none have been more free from human imperfection and the wiles of Satan than was that of the autumn of 1844. Even now, after the lapse of many years, all who shared in that movement and who have stood firm upon **the platform of truth** still feel the holy influence of that blessed work and bear witness that it was of God” (GC 401).

Program: Take “the Bible as it reads, if there were no false teachers to mislead and confuse their minds, a work would be accomplished...

that would bring into the fold of Christ thousands upon thousands” (GC 598)!

“We must give up errors and traditions received from men and turn wholly to God and His Word” (EW 243).

I recently saw an Andrews Seminary student who needed to read 14 books for his DMin program in church growth. *How about preaching and practicing the truth?! Error hinders evangelism no human method can counter!*

Principles: A Focused Ministry . . . “The Galatians were given up to the worship of idols... And in the light of the cross many who had never before known of **the true God**, began to comprehend the greatness of the Father's love. “Thus the Galatians were taught the fundamental truths concerning ‘**God the Father**’ and ‘our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.’ ‘By the hearing of faith’ they received the Spirit of God and became ‘the children of God by faith in Christ.’ Galatians 1:3, 4; 3:2, 26.” (AA 207.2-AA 208.1)

. . . **for a Final Movement:** "God will have a people to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines. The opinions of learned men, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils"-none are "evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain 'Thus saith the Lord in its support'" (adapt. from GC 595).

Fundamental Principles: Development and Departure

“It is not how many years have I believed that makes it the truth. You must bring your creed to the Bible and let the light of the Bible define your creed and show where it comes short and where the difficulty is” (FW 77).

Loughborough’s warning is as prevalent as ever: "The first step of apostasy is to get up a creed, telling us what we shall believe. The second is to make that creed a test of fellowship. The third is to try members by that creed. The fourth to denounce as heretics those who do not believe that creed. And fifth, to commence persecution against such" (in Bates/Smith (1861-10-08). "Doings of the Battle Creek Conference, Oct. 5 & 6, 1861". *Review and Herald*. **18** (19): 148).

There is nothing new under the sun; the annihilation of the non-trinitarian Arian tribes (Heruli, Vandals, Ostrogoths) by AD 538 began the 1,260-year supremacy of the papacy (until 1798). Fidelity to biblical truth prompts persecution - past, present, future (2 Tim 3:12).

Let us now compare our fundamental beliefs across our Adventist existence. It should prove eye-opening . . .

The Preamble to our Fundamental Principles

The original Preamble to our Fundamental Principles upheld the preeminence of Scripture for faith and practice while avoiding creedal compliance to a statement of belief:

1872 Fundamental Principles - Preamble

"In presenting to the public this synopsis of our faith, we wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible. We do not put forth this as having any authority with our people, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them, as a system of faith, but is a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them."

Now notice the *startling* change in wording over the years:

① 1872/1889 Fundamental Principles: No Trinity mentioned

I – That there is one God, a personal, spiritual being . . . everywhere present by his representative, the Holy Spirit.

II – That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father.

② pre-1980: No Trinity mentioned

[including my own 1986 baptismal certificate - 1986!]

1. The true and living God, the first person of the Godhead, is our Heavenly Father, and He, by His Son, Christ Jesus, created all things. (Mt 28:18, 19; 1 Cor 8:5, 6; Eph 3:9; Jer 10:10-12; Heb 1:1-3; Acts 17:22-29; Col 1:16-18.)

2. Jesus Christ, the second person of the Godhead, and the eternal Son of God, is the only Savior from sin; and man's salvation is by grace through faith in Him. (Mt 28:18, 19; Jn 3:16; Mic 5:2; Mt 1:21; 2:5, 6; Acts 4:12; 1 Jn 5:11, 12; Eph 1:9-15; 2:4-8; Rom 3:23-26.)

3. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, is Christ's representative on earth ... (Mt 28:18, 19; Jn 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Rom 8:1-10; Eph 4:30.)

Baptismal Vow: 1. I believe in God the Father, in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit.

Simple; and though it already contains descriptions not found or articulated as such in Scripture, I could still sign it today. Now notice the dramatic change in wording, not voted by a General Conference in session until 1980 (!):

③ Fundamental Beliefs today: Trinitarian wording that exceeds biblical revelation/articulation

2. The Trinity ... There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons. **God is** immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. **He is** infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through **His** self-revelation. (Gen 1:26; Deut 6:4; Isa 6:8; Mt 28:19; Jn 3:16; 2 Cor 1:21, 22; 13:14; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Pet 1:2.)

3 Persons = 1 God?! 3 Persons = "is" and "He" and "His"?!

No Bible text defines God as 3 Gods = 1 God! None of the texts referenced lead to the definition above.

THIS IS THE CORE ISSUE! Scripture does NOT lead to a trinitarian definition of God.

3. God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. ... The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also those of the Father. (Gen 1:1; Deut 4:35; Ps 110:1, 4; Jn 3:16; 14:9; 1 Cor 15:28; 1 Tim 1:17; 1 Jn 4:8; Rev 4:11.)

Note: Since #3 is a statement about the Father this should be worded the other way around, even from a trinitarian point of view: "The qualities and powers exhibited in the Father are also . . ."

4. God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. ... Forever truly God, He became also truly human, Jesus the Christ. (Isa 53:4-6; Dan 9:25-27; Lk 1:35; Jn 1:1-3, 14; 5:22; 10:30; 14:1-3, 9, 13; Rom 6:23; 1 Cor 15:3, 4; 2 Cor 3:18; 5:17-19; Phil 2:5-11; Col 1:15-19; Heb 2:9-18; 8:1, 2.)

*Note: While Christ is undeniably divine, the formulation "God the Son" never occurs in Scripture or Spirit of Prophecy. Instead, Ellen White states succinctly and accurately: "The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, **but not in personality**" (Ms116-1905.19). Divinity, not Trinity!*

Adam and Eve - an Illustration

While we should shy from illustrations of God through creation, the relationship of Adam to Eve in Genesis 5:1-2 is helpful in understanding the relation of the Father to the Son:

"This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man [Adam], He made him [Adam] in the likeness of God. 2 He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind [Adam] in the day they were created."

So, there was Adam = mankind (nature), and there was Adam = the person named Adam (personality). Eve was Adam as a human, in her nature, but she was not Adam the person. Thus the nature and identity of Christ: God in nature but not in person.

5. God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He is as much a person as are the Father and the Son. (Gen 1:1, 2; 2 Sam 23:2; Ps 51:11; Isa 61:1; Lk 1:35; 4:18; Jn 14:16-18, 26; 15:26; 16:7-13; Acts 1:8; 5:3; 10:38; Rom 5:5; 1 Cor 12:7-11; 2 Cor 3:18; 2 Pet 1:21.)

Note: While the Spirit is not just a mere "force", the phrase "God the Spirit" never occurs in Scripture or Spirit of Prophecy. The first occurrence of "Spirit" simply describes the Spirit as the Spirit of God (Gen 1:2). One would not naturally conclude that this Spirit as mentioned in Gen 1:2 is a separate being from God.

14. The church is one body with many members ... **This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God** (Ps 133:1; Mt 28:19, 20; Jn 17:20-23; Acts 17:26, 27; Rom 12:4, 5; 1 Cor 12:12-14; 2 Cor 5:16, 17; Gal 3:27-29; Eph 2:13-16; 4:3-6, 11-16; Col 3:10-15.)

Note: According to John 17 Christian unity is actually based on the unity between the Father and the Son. The Doctrine of the Trinity leaves the impression that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are actually one God-person. Again, this violates the following clear and precise articulation:

"The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, **but not in person. It is thus that God and Christ are one**" (MH 422).

Significantly, this unity identifies a specific marker of the end time: “till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God” (Eph 4:13).

Perspectives on the Fundamental Beliefs

Issues - over Issues

In 1977, the North American Division published the following remarkable statement in *Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Ministries*, p. 50:

“If Adventism is to meet the needs of all people around the world, the landmarks must remain simple and straightforward. The Bible will be our only creed. **Complex theological definitions, the Trinity, for example, may serve the church well in general but cannot be imposed as a test for all Adventists everywhere.** Adventism can expect fresh insights into truth, 'present truth' that will enhance the appreciation of old landmarks. Such an expectation has always been a part of historic Adventism and is reaffirmed in the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs voted in 1980. **When 'present truth' is of a complex nature, however, it may be more helpful for some in the church than for others. In such a case it cannot be imposed on the church as a whole. Remembering our non-Trinitarian past as well as the simplicity of our landmarks should encourage a certain humility in the church and lead us to resist any attempt by one segment of the church to impose its views on the rest.**”

The 1980 General Conference Dialogue - Behind the Seen

The 1980 discussion at the General Conference behind the scenes is also insightful; see Appendix A for the actual reproduction of the conversation, in which several brethren voiced serious concern.

Neal Wilson's Academic Assurance

When Elder Neal C. Wilson introduced the 27 Fundamental Beliefs to the delegates in Dallas, he gave this assurance (<https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH19800423-V157-20.pdf>):

“There are others who think they know why this is being done. They believe it is being prepared as a club to batter someone over the head, to try to get people into a narrow concept of theology, not leaving any opportunity for individual interpretation of prophecy, or any individual views with respect to theology or certain areas of doctrine. This also is unfortunate, because this never has been and is not the intention of any study that has been given to the Statement on Fundamental Beliefs. Some academicians, theologians, and others have expressed the fear that this statement was being developed so that the church could confront them with a checklist to determine **whether they should be disqualified from teaching in one of our institutions of higher education.** It is very, very tragic when these kinds of rumors begin to develop.”

Rumors are now reality.

The Voice of Scholars

The voice of scholars within and without Adventist ranks should give cause of concern in articulating a doctrine that finds no "Thus sayeth the Lord" within the pages of Holy Writ or the Spirit of Prophecy. The following statements are quite startling:

- "That most of the leading SDA pioneers were non-Trinitarian" is "accepted Adventist history...either the pioneers were wrong and the present church is right, or the pioneers were right and the present Seventh-day Adventist Church has apostatized from biblical truth" (J. Moon, *The Trinity*, 190).

• **"Most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today if they had to subscribe to the denomination's Fundamental Beliefs...most would not be able to agree to belief number 2" (the Trinity) (G. Knight, *Ministry*, 10/93, 10).**

- "Adventist beliefs have changed over the years under the impact of 'present truth'. Most startling is the teaching regarding Jesus Christ...**The Trinitarian understanding of God, now part of our fundamental beliefs, was not generally held by the early Adventists.** Even today a few do not subscribe to it" (W. Johnson, *AR* Jan. 6, 1994, p. 10).

- The trinity **"cannot** be clearly detected within the confines of the canon" (*Oxford Companion to the Bible* 1993, p. 782).

- "In the New Testament there is **no** explicit statement of the doctrine" of the trinity (Bromily, *BEDT* 1112).

- "The concept of Trinity . . . that the three are one, is **not** explicitly stated but only assumed" (F. Canale, *SDABC* 12:138).

- **"No text of Scripture** specifically says that God is three Persons" (K. Donkor, *Theology*, p. 20).

- **"No single Scripture passage** states the doctrine of the Trinity, it is assumed as a fact...only by faith can we accept the existence of the Trinity" (*AR* 158:31 4).

Consideration of Trinitarian Claims

The following claims are most commonly found in our current literature and recent presentations in favor of the Doctrine of the Trinity. Often a simple reading of a Bible text or quote in context sheds light on the subject; some items require more detailed investigation. None of the claims hold up under scrutiny.

Claim #1: "God is Love"

. . . which necessitates a plurality of beings that are God since a singular being is incapable of love and would as such be motivated by mere power (“a bloodthirsty monster”!).

Response: This notion is erroneously based on philosophical conjecture and human reasoning. It misses the immediate context of 1 John 4:8, which clearly refers to God the Father, not a trinitarian composite of Father + Son + Holy Spirit: “In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that **God has sent His only begotten Son** into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that **He loved us and sent His Son** to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:9-11).

👉 Faith relationships are based on the example of God the Father, not on a trinitarian construct.

On a personal note: Sadly, amidst much trinitarian ink spilled on the topic of love, said love is often not extended to non-trinitarians. "God is love" in trinitarian faith and practice is not extended to and felt outside the walls of Jerusalem. Constructive dialogue is virtually non-existent, and even then do we get dropped like a hot potato. The church's formal effort to reach out to disenfranchised Adventists is minimal, pitiful, and is neither mature nor exemplary.

Claim #2: The Sonship of Christ

. . . is merely a covenant (and anthropological) term and title which only applies to the humanity of Jesus, who is NOT the Son of God in a real sense.

Response: This raises serious questions: Who was Jesus prior to the incarnation - *not* God's Son? Another God (one among 3?) Scripture & Spirit of Prophecy understand the Son to be a/the *real* Son, including in Heaven *prior* to creation and incarnation.

👉 **God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God (8T 268)** 👉

Biblical Evidence: Proverbs 8 and the Sonship of Christ - Birth Language

8:22: "possessed me": קָנָה *qana* - in the Septuagint κτίζω *ktizo* = “created”, as in Gen 1:1! [Jesus was *begotten* in eternity, not *created*: “A complete offering has been made; for “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,”—not a son by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father's person, and in all the brightness of his majesty and glory, one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (ST May 30, 1895 par. 3).

8:24-25: "brought forth": = חִיל *chil*, as in Psalm 51:5: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity" - *the language of a real birth*, suggesting that Christ was brought forth by/from the Father. Ellen White: “The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed *from* eternity” (RH April 5, 1906). “His divine life could not be reckoned by human computation. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured in figures” (ST May 3, 1899) - because it is so far back. The phrase “How long He [our Creator=Christ] has had existence” (7BC 919; Ms 13 1888.16) permits a beginning. "In order that man might be placed

on vantage ground with God, **Christ, the only begotten Son of God, made in His express image**, came to this world and in the likeness of humanity lived a perfect life" (John 3:16 cited; Ms127-1905.14).

Micah 5:2 "Whose goings forth": מוֹצֵא מוֹשֶׁה = descent; origin · "from of old": Neh 12:46; Ps 74:12; 77:11; Isa 45:12; 46:10; John 5:26; 6:57; 7:29; 8:42; 16:27; 17:8; Gal 4:4). "from the days of eternity": Mic 7:14 - a point in past time (Deut 32:7; Amos 9:11; Isa 63:9; Mal 3:4).

👉 **God gave a Son because He had a Son to give!** 👈

Ellen White on Proverbs 8

"The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate—a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God [= divine]. The same was in the beginning with God." Jn 1:1, 2. Christ, the Word, **the only begotten of God**, was one with the eternal Father—[precise definition:] one in nature, in character, in purpose—the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Is 9:6. His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Mic 5:2. And **the Son of God** declares concerning Himself: "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting.... When He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." Prov 8:22-30. The Father wrought by **His Son** in the creation of all heavenly beings. "By Him were all things created, ... whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him." Col 1:16. Angels are God's ministers, radiant with the light ever flowing from His presence and speeding on rapid wing to execute His will. But **the Son**, the anointed of God, **the "express image of His person,"** "the brightness of His glory," "upholding all things by the word of His power," holds supremacy over them all. Heb 1:3" (PP 34).

The Sonship of Christ

The Real Sonship of Christ - The Sonship of Christ is Real

Do you conclude from the quotes below that the Sonship of Christ is a theological metaphor or that He is the real Son of God the Father?

"To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to **His Son**. Jesus said to the Jews: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.... **The Son** can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth **the Son**, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth." John 5:17-20. Here again is brought to view the personality of the Father and **the Son**, showing the unity that exists between them. This unity is expressed also in the seventeenth chapter of John, in the prayer of Christ for His disciples: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them

also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.” John 17:20-23. Wonderful statement! The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. *[We don't become divine members of a Trinity!]*

👉 **They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person.**

It is thus that God and Christ are one (8T 268-269) 👉

Divinity, not Trinity: “The Lord Jesus Christ, **the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, but not in personality**” (Ms116-1905.19).

“When Christ first announced to the heavenly host His mission and work in the world, He declared that He was to leave His position of dignity and disguise His holy mission by assuming the likeness of a man,

👉 **when in reality He was the Son of the infinite God” (Lt 303, 1903)** 👉

303 of 1903 is incompatible with the Trinity!

“It is by the Word made flesh that we are saved. Our redemption was wrought out, **not by the Son of God's remaining in heaven, but by the Son of God's becoming incarnate**—taking humanity upon Him and coming to this world. Thus eternal life was brought to us. That which authority, commands, and promises could not do, God did by coming to this world in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Letter 253-1903.29). = *through His divine Son!*

- “The Father and the Son covenanted together” (Ms 145, 1897).
- “The Eternal Father, the unchangeable one, gave **his only begotten Son**, tore from his bosom **Him who was made in the express image of his person**, and sent him down to earth...” (RH Juli 9, 1895, Abs. 12).
- “Christ is declared in the Scriptures to be **the Son of God. From all eternity He has sustained this relation to Jehovah**” (Ms 22, 1905, March 7).
- Letter 77, Aug. 3, 1894, to Bruder Scazighini: “O what a gift God has made to our world! The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. **God sent His own Son** in the likeness of sinful flesh, liable to physical infirmities, tempted in all points like as we are. **He was the Son of the living God. His personality did not begin with His incarnation in the flesh.**”

This statement stand in direct contradiction to recent and popular publication on the Sonship of Christ.

- “Christ was the Lord of heaven and earth, yet for our sake He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. **He was made in the likeness of God**, yet He humbled Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant, that He might save us” (20LtMs, Lt 133, 1905, par. 6).

Crisis Center

"Lucifer in heaven, before his rebellion, was a high and exalted angel, **next in honor to God's dear Son**. His countenance, like those of the other angels, was mild and expressive of happiness. His forehead was high and broad, showing a powerful intellect. His form was perfect; his bearing noble and majestic. A special light beamed in his countenance and shone around him brighter and more beautiful than around the other angels; **yet Christ, God's dear Son, had the pre-eminence over all the angelic host. He was one with the Father before the angels were created. Lucifer was envious of Christ, and gradually assumed command which devolved on Christ alone.**"

- **"The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that He might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon His Son.** The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them.
- **The Father then made known that it was ordained by Himself that Christ, His Son, should be equal with Himself; so that wherever was the presence of His Son, it was as His own presence.**
- **The word of the Son was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son He had invested with authority to command the heavenly host.**

Especially was **His Son** to work in union with Himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon the earth. **His Son** would carry out His will and His purposes but would do nothing of Himself alone. The Father's will would be fulfilled in Him" (SR 13.2; ST January 9, 1879, Art. B, par. 2)).

"There was contention among the angels. Lucifer and his sympathizers were striving to reform the government of God. They were discontented and unhappy because they could not look into His unsearchable wisdom **and ascertain His purposes in exalting His Son, and endowing Him with such unlimited power and command. They rebelled against the authority of the Son.**

Angels that were loyal and true sought to reconcile this mighty, rebellious angel to the will of his Creator. They justified the act of God in conferring honor upon Christ, and with forcible reasoning sought to convince Lucifer that no less honor was his now than before the Father had proclaimed the honor which He had conferred upon **His Son**.

👉 **They clearly set forth that Christ was the Son of God, existing with Him before the angels were created; and that He had ever stood at the right hand of God" (SR 15.2)** 👈

And so, "The Father consulted **His Son** in regard to at once carrying out their purpose to make man to inhabit the earth. The Father and **the Son** engaged in the mighty, wondrous work they had contemplated—of creating the world. And now **God** said to **His Son**, "Let us make man in our image" (SR 19-20).

Note: Contrary to persistent claims, Genesis 1:26 is not a trinitarian text!

The Core of the Conflict

👉 “I feel my spirit stirred within me. I feel to the depth of my being that the truth must be borne to other countries and nations and to all classes. 👉 **Let the missionaries of the cross proclaim that there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, who is Jesus Christ the Son of the Infinite God. This needs to be proclaimed throughout every church in our land**” 👉 (Ms40-1891.78; Ellen White 1888 Materials 886.3)

"Christ was the only begotten Son of God, and Lucifer, that glorious angel, got up a warfare over the matter, until he had to be thrust down to the earth" (Ms 86, Aug. 21, 1910).

"Satan was well acquainted **with the position of honor Christ had held in Heaven**

👉 **as the Son of God,** 👉

the beloved of the Father. And that he [the Son] should leave Heaven and come to this world as a man filled him with apprehension for his own safety" (RH March 3, 1874).

"Satan in his rebellion took a third part of the angels. They turned from the Father **and from His Son,** and united with the instigator of rebellion" (3T 614).

⚠️ **The Doctrine of the Trinity strikes the core of the Great Controversy!** ⚠️

Formulations that deny the real Sonship of Christ are at odds with Scripture and Spirit of Prophecy.

"The Lord Jesus needs in His work men who will stand with their faces to the foe, men who will fight manfully in their aggressive warfare, 👉 **men who understand that Christ is the Son of God,** 👉 the Author and Finisher of their faith" (Lt75-1898.30).

"We must have more than an intellectual belief in the truth. **Many of the Jews were convinced that Jesus was the Son of God, but they were too proud and ambitious to surrender.** They decided to resist the truth, and they maintained their opposition. They did not receive into the heart the truth as it is in Jesus" (Ev 291).

Ultimately, "Christ will restore the moral image of God in man. But this can only be done by the consent of the human agent, and by his cooperation with Christ. **The transformation seen in the lives of the members of the church testifies that Christ is the Son of God**" (Letter 108, 1900; 20MR 362.2).

"It was the fulfillment of the covenant made **between the Father and the Son before the foundation of the earth** was laid. With clasped hands they entered into the solemn pledge that Christ would become the substitute and surety for the human race if they were overcome by Satan's sophistry" (Ms 111, 1897).

- “Jesus was made one with God. His exaltation created envy and jealousy in Satan’s heart. Satan insisted that God had not dealt with him justly. He criticized God’s plan of government. He declared the divine law to be arbitrary, detrimental to the interests of the heavenly universe, and in need of change” (17LtMs, Ms 1, 1902, par. 2).
- “Lucifer was the most beautiful angel in the heavenly courts next to Jesus Christ, but Christ was one with God, assimilated to the image of God to do the will of God. Satan, knowing that **Christ had the first place next to God**, began to insinuate to the angels that he should be next to God...” (Ms90-1910.4).
- “By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His divinity, He lays hold upon the throne of God. As the Son of man, He gave us an example of obedience; as the Son of God, He gives us power to obey” (DA 24).

Claim #3: *The Desire of Ages*, p. 530 - life original, unborrowed, underived

... the most misquoted and misunderstood Ellen White reference in the Trinity debate!

Here is the original (!) quote from Ellen White's classic (which I had the privilege to teach on college level for nearly 20 years, to thousands of students), within its larger context:

“Still seeking to give a true direction to her faith, Jesus declared, “I am the resurrection, and the life.”

In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.

“He that hath the Son hath life.” 1 John 5:12. **The divinity of Christ is the believer’s assurance of eternal life.** “He that believeth in Me,” said Jesus, “though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?” Christ here looks forward to the time of His second coming. Then the righteous dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living righteous shall be translated to heaven without seeing death. The miracle which Christ was about to perform, in raising Lazarus from the dead, would represent the resurrection of all the righteous dead. By His word and His works He declared Himself the Author of the resurrection. He who Himself was soon to die upon the cross stood with the keys of death, a conqueror of the grave, **and asserted His right and power to give eternal life.**”

Response and Observations:

- We unequivocally affirm the divinity of Christ. Period.
- In context it is the Father’s life that is “original, unborrowed, underived” - *this* is the life which Christ had/has.
- This life can be passed on to humans as eternal life → 1 John 5:11-12 “And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”
- Though Ellen White penned these words herself (as confirmed by M.L. Andreasen), they are not original (!) to her (which M.L. Andreasen was apparently not aware of):

1) John Cumming, D.D., F.R.S.E. (London), *Sabbath Evening Readings on the New Testament - St. John* (John P. Jewett Co. of Cleveland, OH, 1856), p. 5: "In him was life,'—that is, original, unborrowed, underived. In us there is a streamlet from the Fountain of Life; in him was the Fountain of Life. Our life is something we receive, something that the Giver takes back again to himself,—over which we have no control, and for which we must give God the account and the praise. **But in Jesus was life underived, unborrowed.**" (Similarly Letter 309, *Medical Ministry*, p. 7).

But Cumming himself also derived (!) the quote from another; don't miss this original context and source:

2) William E. Channing, "Unitarian Christianity" (1819): "We earnestly maintain...that our Father in heaven is originally, essentially, and eternally placable, and is posed to forgive; and that **his unborrowed, underived, and unchangeable love is the only fountain of what flows to us through his Son**" (in *The Works of William E. Channing*, 1882, p. 371).

Incidentally, Ellen White employed the verbage *prior to 1898 (which counters claims that Ellen White developed into a trinitarian)*: "In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ. He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as His personal Saviour. 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent' (John 17:3). This is the open fountain of life for the world" (Ms2-1896; ST April 8, 1897). Jesus "is invested with power to give life to all creatures" (RH April 5, 1906).

👉 "The Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns" (DA 21) 👈

The Pioneers: Begotten not Forgotten

"Those who seek to remove the old landmarks are not holding fast; they are not remembering how they have received and heard. **Those who try to bring in theories that would remove the pillars of our faith concerning the sanctuary or concerning THE PERSONALITY OF GOD OR OF CHRIST are working as blind men.** They are seeking to bring in uncertainties and to set the people of God adrift without an anchor" (Ms 62 1905.14 - "A Warning Against False Theories"!).

"The personality of God or of Christ" was a pioneer pillar of truth - the Doctrine of the Trinity has drastically redefined this pillar to the point of destruction.

The pioneer understanding of Christ as "begotten of the Father" continued after 1898 - *note the years!*

- **James Edson White**: "Christ is the only being begotten of the Father" (*Past, Present and Future*, p. 52, 1909).
- **C.F. McVagh**: "Christ was begotten of the Father sometime before the period known as time, (Rev 3:14) and he was begot-ten again at his resurrection (Acts 13:33,34)" (*Western Canadian Tidings*, Dec 18, 1918).

- **M.C. Wilcox:** “this ‘only-begotten Son of God,’ who ‘proceeded forth and came from’ the Father, was given, and given for sinners, given in the beginning, the Lamb of ‘slain before the foundation of the world’” (*Questions and Answers*, p. 25, 1919).
- **G.W. Stone:** “The thought that ‘in Him were all things created’ indicates that when the Son was begotten of the Father, in the days of eternity, all the power of creation was in Him; and when the time came, in the divine purpose for its accomplishment, He simply spoke all things into being” (*RH* May 23, 1929).
- **J. Adams Stevens:** “Immortality is a fact, but it is an inherent characteristic of God alone, which He has shared with His Son, Jesus Christ” (ST Jan 15, 1929). 1929!
- **W.G. Turner:** “But inasmuch as the Father possesses these divine attributes from Himself alone, whereas the Son possesses them as derived from the Father, in this real sense and in this sense only, the Father is greater than the Son” (ST June 3, 1929).

Ellen White did not shy from recommending the pioneers be (re-)published:

“... let the aged men who were pioneers in our work speak plainly, and let those who are dead speak also, by the reprinting of their articles in our periodicals” (Ms 62, May 24, 1905; MR 1, p. 55).

Simply put, the personality of God and of Christ was understood in simple terms, not convoluted theological jargon:

“There is a personal God, the Father; There is a personal Christ, the Son” (SDABC 6:1068; RH Nov 8, 1898).

The Past 50 Years

In fact, Ellen White repeatedly emphasizes the veracity of “the past fifty years” (*Testimonies Containing Letters to Physicians and Ministers* p. 58). To this effect, **“Nothing is to be allowed to come in that will disturb the foundation of the faith upon which we have been building ever since the message came in 1842, 1843, and 1844...Do you think that I could give up the light that God has given me?”** (GCB April 6, 1903, p. 35). Therefore “We cannot now step off the foundation that God has established. We cannot now enter into any new organization; for this would mean apostasy from the truth” (Ms 129, 1905; 2SM 390).

“...if such application moves one pillar of the foundation that God has sustained these fifty years, is a great mistake” (*Loma Linda Messages*, Dec 11, 1905 p. 150).

“We are to stand firmly for the principles of the faith” (*The Australasian Union Conference Record*, Dec 30, 1907).

Warning: “Wherein are those who are designated as departing from the faith and giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, **departing from the faith which they have held sacred for the past fifty years?**” (Ms 21, 1906 in *Special Testimonies B*, vol. 7, p. 61).

Note: Her language, not mine. The Doctrine of the Trinity (3=1,1=3) is neither found in Scripture, the Spirit of Prophecy, nor the Advent movement.

Claim #4: The Shema of Deuteronomy 6:4 - Jehovah & Elohim

“Hear, O Israel: “Jehovah our God, Jehovah is one!” שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:

- In all three New Testament employments of “the Lord our God”, the phrase refers to God the Father (Mk 12:29; Acts 2:39; Rev 19:1).
- The context of Deuteronomy 6:4 is countering polytheism (v14; 4:35) - one would be hard pressed to turn around and argue for a plurality in the number *one!*
- Jehovah is a conferred name for Jesus as the representative of the Father: “Jehovah is the name given to Christ” (ST May 3, 1899). “Man was so dear to the Creator of the world that he spoke to him through Jesus Christ” (ST Oct. 15, 1896; cf. Aug. 5, 1889). Jesus took “the office of God” (Ms 118, 1905). But not all references to Jehovah in the Old Testament are by default references to Jesus: “The LORD [Jehovah] God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Ex 3:15) → “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, [= Jehovah] glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *Him* go” (Acts 3:13). *See further discussion below.*

Hebrew Lexicon TWOT on Deut 6:4: “In the famous Shema of Deut 6:4, “Hear, O Israel ... the LORD is one,” the question of diversity within unity has theological implications. Some scholars have felt that, though “one” is singular, the usage of the word allows for the doctrine of the Trinity. **While it is true that this doctrine is foreshadowed in the OT, the verse concentrates on the fact that there is one God and that Israel owes its exclusive loyalty to him (5:9; 6:5). The NT also is strictly monotheistic while at the same time teaching diversity within the unity (Jas 2:19; 1 Cor 8:5–6).** [The lexical and syntactical difficulties of Deut 6:4 can be seen in the many translations offered for it in the NIV. The option “the LORD is our God, the LORD alone” has in its favor both the broad context of the book and the immediate context. Deuteronomy 6:4 serves as an introduction to motivate Israel to keep the command “to love (the LORD)” (v. 5). **The notion that the LORD is Israel’s only God suits this command admirably (cf. Song 6:8f).** Moreover, these two notions, the LORD’S unique relation to Israel and Israel’s obligation to love him, are central to the concern of Moses’ addresses in the book (cf. Deut 5:9f.; 7:9; 10:14ff., 20f., 13:6; 30:20; 32:12). Finally Zechariah employs the text with this meaning and applies it universally with reference to the eschaton: **“The LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be (the only) one, and His name (the only) one” (Zec 14:9 NASB).** In Job 31:15 and Mal 2:10 the word is used to denote that one and the same God created all men” [Accordance Electronic Edition].

אֶחָד *echad*

Echad is the masculine number 1 in Hebrew numbering (i.e., Doukhan, *Hebrew for Theologians*, 91). Most of the 976 occurrences of *echad* simply and clearly refer to a singular numerical quantity, not a unity of plurality.

Examples: Gen 2:21 one rib, not a unity of ribs; Gen 4:19 one woman, not two; Gen 11:1 one language (singularity being the very point!); Gen 27:38 one blessing (and precisely only one!); Gen 42:11 one man; Gen 42:16 one brother.

Genesis 2:24 “one flesh”

The frequently cited Gen 2:24 “and they shall become one [*echad*] flesh” does not work as a comparison, let alone explanation, even defense, of the Trinity. Adam and Eve remained two separate persons; they didn’t become *one* human. A possible child is not in view here: in Matthew 19:6 “one flesh” is a reference to the marriage relation itself. In 1 Corinthians 6:16 “one flesh” refers to an illicit relationship, with no reproduction in view. In contrast, the doctrine of the Trinity leaves the impression that 3 God-beings make up one God: Fundamental Belief #2 states that “**There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**, a unity of three coeternal Persons. **God is** immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. **He is** infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation.” In correlation, this would mean that Adam and Eve became one human being - a notion not expressed by Gen 2:24.

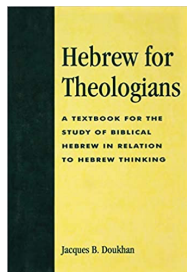
יָחִיד *yachid*

The only 12 Bible texts that feature *yachid* show that the word means “alone, only, unique”, not “one” in a mathematical sense (so Gen 22:2,12,16; Jer 6:26; Amos 8:10; Zech 12:10; Prov 4:3). In Psalm 22:21, 35:17, and 68:18 it means “lonely, solitary”, which does not appear to capture the thrust of Deut 6:4 (so also Judges 11:34). *Echad* and *yachid* are nonetheless related; it can refer to a unity as in Gen 22:6: Abraham and Isaac both went *together* = יָחַדְּוַיַּחְדָּו (so Doukhan, HfT, 99, 103; cf. 46,12).

Caution: *Lexical studies are not neutral; they often exhibit theological bias.*

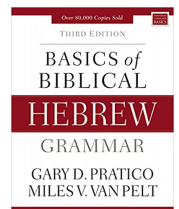
Elohim

Mal 2:10 “Have we not all one [*echad*] Father? Has not one [*echad*] God created us?”



Jacques Doukhan (Andrews University, Hebrew and Old Testament scholar) in his Grammar *Hebrew for Theologians*, p. 77 explains אֱלֹהִים *elohim*: “**Despite its plural form it is used with a singular verb. This is a plural of intensity or of majesty.** In Hebrew, the plural is not only used to indicate multiplicity, but also to express the idea of strength and intensity implied in life. Thus words like ‘heaven, water, face, blood’ are always used in the plural in order to express the idea of fullness contained in these notions. **Likewise the plural form of God expresses the idea of power, of fullness of life, which is attached to His nature** (cf. also the plural usage in Gen 1:26).”

“The common designation אֱלֹהִים (God) is a plural form with singular meaning that implies the fullness, majesty and transcendence of deity” (Pratico and Van Pelt, *BBH* 3rd ed. p. 273).



Respected scholars of Hebrew language and thought make no mention of the Trinity in conjunction with the plural term elohim.

Jehovah

“Jehovah” is not always a reference to Jesus in the Old Testament: “Yes, He [Jesus] shall build the temple of the LORD [Jehovah]. He [Jesus] shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His [Jehovah’s] throne; So He [Jesus] shall be a priest on His [Jehovah’s] throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both” (Zech 6:13).

“The LORD [Jehovah] God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Ex 3:15) → “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers [= Jehovah], glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *Him* go. 14 But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.” (Acts 3:13-15).

Ellen White identifies Jehovah as God the Father: "As **Jehovah, the supreme Ruler, God** could not personally communicate with sinful men, but He so loved the world that He sent **Jesus** to our world as a revelation of Himself" (Ms124-1903.2).

“The incense, ascending with the prayers of Israel, represents the merits and intercession of Christ, His perfect righteousness, which through faith is imputed to His people, and which can alone make the worship of sinful beings acceptable to God. Before the veil of the most holy place was an altar of perpetual intercession, before the holy, an altar of continual atonement. By blood and by incense God was to be approached—symbols pointing to the great Mediator, **through whom sinners may approach Jehovah**, and through whom alone mercy and salvation can be granted to the repentant, believing soul” (PP 353.2).

“Christ was not only the leader of the Hebrews in the wilderness—the **Angel in whom was the name of Jehovah**, and who, veiled in the cloudy pillar, went before the host—but it was He who gave the law to Israel” (PP 366.2).

“The loose, lax way in which many regard **the law of Jehovah and the gift of his Son**, is an insult to God” (GW 131.3; 437.2).

“And as **God** spoke the day and **the hour of Jesus’ coming** and delivered the everlasting covenant to His people, He spoke one sentence, and then paused, while the words were rolling through the earth. The Israel of **God** stood with their eyes fixed upward, listening to the words as they came from the mouth of **Jehovah** and rolled through the earth like peals of loudest thunder. It was awfully solemn. At the end of every sentence the saints shouted, “Glory! Hallelujah!” Their countenances were lighted up with the glory of **God**, and they shone with glory as did the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai” (EW 286; LDE 272.3).

“The world’s Redeemer passed over the ground where Adam fell because of his disobeying the expressed law of **Jehovah; and the only begotten Son of God** came to our world as a man, to reveal to the world that men could keep the law of God” (3SM 136.1).

“The prayer of Christ was answered. He was glorified with the glory which He had with His Father before the world was. But amid this glory, Christ does not lose sight of His toiling, struggling ones upon earth. He has a request to make of His Father. He waves back the heavenly host **until He is in the direct presence of Jehovah**, and then He presents His petition in behalf of His chosen ones” (5BC 1146.3).

“Father,” He says, “I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am.” And then the Father declares, “Let all the angels of God worship him.” The heavenly host prostrate themselves before Him, and raise their song of triumph and joy. Glory encircles the King of heaven, and was beheld by all the heavenly intelligences. **No words can describe the scene which took place as the Son of**

God was publicly reinstated in the place of honor and glory which He voluntarily left when He became a man” (5BC 1146.4).

“It was a great breach of the trust reposed in him to pursue the course he did. In what marked contrast with this is the life of Christ, our Pattern! **He was the Son of Jehovah**, and the Author of our salvation” (3T 18.3).

Claim #5: Only Begotten

. . . supposedly μονογενής *monogenēs* is mistranslated as begotten, but really means only, unique, thus denying Jesus of His true Sonship.

Response: *monogenēs* occurs 9x in the NT, *always* involving parents/birth: Lk 7:12; 8:42; 9:38; Jn 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; Heb 11:17; 1 Jn 4:9. Jesus was not the only “son of God” (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7), but the only begotten of the Father, “the first-born of heaven” (DA 51).

Henry Liddell lived from 1811 to 1898. His colleague, Robert Scott, lived from 1811 to 1887. The 1883 edition of their Greek-Lexicon about “monogenes” states: “μονογενής, ἕς, (S, Ep. and Ion. (μουνουγ-: ONLY-BEGOTTEN, single, παῖς Hes. Op. 374, Th. 426, Hdt. 7. 221, etc.; μ. αἷμα **one and the same blood**, Eur. Hel. 1685. Adv. - γῶς, growing alone, Arr. Peripl. M Rubri p.n” [Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, Greek-English Lexicon, Seventh Edition (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1883) pg. 976]

Curiously, modern versions of their lexicon have been revised to drop off the fact that originally Liddell and Scott understood this word to mean “only-begotten” as quoted above. *Lexicography is not a neutral science!*

According to Liddell and Scott, the *genes* stem occurs 168 times in a variety of Greek words. *111 times it carries the sense of a birth or derivation.* That's why the stem “genes” when added to a Greek word typically means “born” or “birth.” **“The word *genos* was widely and variously used in Greek of all periods to denote ‘species’, ‘genus’, ‘sort’, ‘category’, ‘birth’, ‘kin’, ‘race’, ‘lineage’, ‘family’, ‘generation’, ‘posterity’, etc.”** (<https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095848393;jsessionid=4CCA1624B725B0495F6794A3C70B0262>)

“Angels were expelled from heaven because they would not work in harmony with God. They fell from their high estate because they wanted to be exalted. They had come to exalt themselves, and they forgot that their beauty of person and of character came from the Lord Jesus. **THIS FACT THE [FALLEN] ANGELS WOULD OBSCURE, THAT CHRIST WAS THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD**, and they came to consider that they were not to consult Christ” (Lt 42, 1910, par. 3).

It is claimed that the Greek *monogenes* is rendered *unicus* but never as *unigenitus* - “only begotten” - until the 4th century. “Only begotten” was therefore a loan from the Latin, but not based on the original Greek. However, this does not hold up to scrutiny. Irenaeus [175-185 AD] *Against Heresies* Book 4 chapter 20 section 6 features a Latin translation of John 1:18: “Deum nemo vidit unquam; nisi **unigenitus** Filius, qui est in sinu Patris ipse enarravit.”

Tertullian (155-220 AD), who is famous for being the first Latin author to ever use the word “trinity” (*trinitas*) - though not in our modern sense - writes in *Against Praxeas* 7: “Cum pararet caelum aderam

illi; exinde eum patrem sibi faciens de quo procedendo filius factus est *primogenitus*, ut ante omnia *genitus*, et **unigenitus**, ut solus ex deo *genitus*.” Tertullian employed the terms “first-begotten” [primogenitus] and “begotten” [genitus] and “only-begotten” [unigenitus] in a part where he explains that the Son, designated as the Word and Wisdom, is a personal Being.

Furthermore, Plato writes in his *Critias* [113δ]: γῆς ἀνδρῶν γεγονότων Εὐήνωρ μὲν ὄνομα, γυναικὶ δὲ συνοικῶν Λευκίππη: Κλειτῶ δὲ **μονογενῆ** θυγατέρα ἐγεννησάσθην . . .
(http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Plat.%20Criti.%20113&fromdoc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0179&fbclid=IwAR1-d-FIQGWUrbUG6Mx4Ik5nqu1hoEJsFZgKH-VG_CJndoPt5Zlma_tv56A)

Translation: “Thereon dwelt one of the natives originally sprung from the earth, 2 Evenor by name, [113d] with his wife Leucippe; and **they had for offspring an only-begotten daughter**, Cleito . . .”
(http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Plat.%20Criti.%20113&fromdoc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0180&fbclid=IwAR1KzbRZHJHoDrsHGJkJEBSqvmMOwdisn-xR5BcUULgftCCKpjWNAL_BEPw8)

The key phrase Κλειτῶ δὲ **μονογενῆ** θυγατέρα ἐγεννησάσθην depicts *monogene* as only begotten. This appears inescapable because of “ἐγεννησάσθην”, which means “they begot.” So Cleito, their daughter, a *monogene*, was *begotten* by them = their genetic offspring. The etymology of *monogenes* [*monos* + *genes*] has a clear historical usage as an “only begotten” or “only born”, tracing back centuries before the 4th century AD. The *genes*-stem meant “begotten” or “born”. Metaphorical applications don't change the definition but rather rely upon it. Example as a case in point: *theogenes* - born of God. In short, *monogenes* existed in the sense of only begotten long before the Catholic church arose!

In recent times some scholars have popularized a new etymological understanding of *monogenes*. They argue that it should be understood as a composite of *monos* + *genos* rather than *monos* + *gennao*. This view is especially prevalent in current Adventism with its popularized doctrine of unbegottenism. Accordingly *genos* means a “class, sort, or kind” and therefore this word must mean “only kind” [as in one of a kind, unique] and not “only begotten” - thus altering the trajectory of Sonship fundamentally.

This argument is actually self-defeating when we look at the full range of semantic meaning for *genos*. Even if we knew for a fact that the etymology of *monogenes* was correct, it still would not eliminate the semantic signature of “only begotten” because *genos* actually carries the meaning of “offspring” as well. For example, Rev 22:16 states that “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and **the offspring** [γένος *genos*] of David, and the bright and morning star.” Jesus was *begotten* of David's lineage; He is related to David as a *descendant* - He has Davidic DNA.

Luke 1:36 further underscores this: καὶ ἰδοὺ, Ἐλισάβετ ἡ **συγγενῆς** - (σύν, γίνομαι) syngenes, whose 11 New Testament occurrences Mounce identifies as “kindred, akin; as a subst. a kinsman or kinswoman, relative; Mk. 6:4; Lk. 1:58; 2:44; 14:12; 21:16; Jn. 18:26; Acts 10:24; one nationally akin, a fellow countryman, Rom. 9:3; 16:7, 11, 21* ~ relative” (*Mounce Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*, Accordance Electronic Edition).

Claim #6: Adventist History

. . . exhibits a trajectory towards Trinitarianism, including Ellen White's change in christological focus.

Response: This is simply not the case. The Advent Movement originated and operated without modern trinitarian definitions for >100 years! A vote by a General Conference in session did not occur until 1980. *1980! In any case, it would be incongruous to label our past understanding of God as heresy!* After all, "We are to repeat the words of the pioneers...Let that which these men have written...be reproduced" (1MR 63; 2MR 440; Lt 229, 1903; RH May 25, 1905). "The past fifty years have not dimmed one jot or principle of our faith as we received the great and wonderful evidences that were made certain to us in 1844...Not a word is changed or denied. **That which the Holy Spirit testified to as truth after the passing of the time ... is the solid foundation of truth. [The] pillars of truth were revealed, and we accepted the foundation principles that have made us what we are - Seventh-day Adventists,** keeping the commandments of God and having the faith of Jesus" (*Lt 326-1905.3; Ms111-1905.4: "the essential points of truth"*).

"It required much study and anxious care to search it out, link after link. By care, anxiety, and incessant labor has the work moved on until **the great truths of our message, a clear, connected, perfect whole,** have been given to the world" (1T 79), a "standing with the old landmarks" (11MR 319.1), "the principles of truth that God has revealed to us" as "our only true foundation" (CW 52). "Those who try to bring in theories that would remove the pillars of our faith concerning the sanctuary, or **concerning the personality of God or of Christ,** are working as blind men" (Ms62-1905.14; though the context was the Kellogg/Ballenger controversy, the warning remains relevant). "Let none seek to tear away the foundations of our faith, - the foundations that were laid at the beginning of our work ..." (GW 307) - **"truth that for the past fifty years God has been giving to His people" (1 SM 162).** We "stand on the same platform of truth that we have maintained for more than half a century" (Ms142-1905.6).

Caution! Pioneers who do use the term "trinity" did not define it as we do today - they simply thought of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but not 3=1.

The language of the Advent movement remained non-trinitarian as it's default theological assumption: "All who have a knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, may have just as pure a faith as had Abel" (Ms200-1899.12).

James White warns: The Trinity "does away with the personality of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ" (ARSH 85.15 Dec 11, 1855).

J.N. Andrews echoes: "[It] destroys the personality of God, and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. The infamous measures by which it was forced upon the pages of ecclesiastical history might well cause every believer in that doctrine to blush" (TAR 54.3 1855).

The Kellogg Controversy

Kellogg "had come to believe in the trinity...God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost." He was "not definitely clear on **the personality of God which is everything to us as a people. You have virtually destroyed the Lord God Himself**" (Lt300-1903; RH Mar 8 1906 par. 19). **"A denial of**

the personality of God...take[s] away the vital principles which have made us a separate people” (Ms8, 1914).

AG Daniells wrote to W.C. White on Oct 29, 1903:

“He then stated that his former views regarding the trinity had stood in his way of making a clear and absolutely correct statement; **but that within a short time he had come to believe in the trinity** and could now see pretty clearly where all the difficulty was, and believed that he could clear the matter up satisfactorily. **He told me that he now believed in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost;** and his view was that it was God the Holy Ghost, and not God the Father, that filled all space, and every living thing. He said if he had believed this before writing the book, he could have expressed his views without giving the wrong impression the book now gives.”

Daniells: “I placed before him [Kellogg] the objections I found in the teaching, **and tried to show him that the teaching was so utterly contrary to the gospel that I did not see how it could be revised by changing a few expressions.** We argued the matter at some length in a friendly way; but I felt sure that when we parted, the doctor did not understand himself, nor the character of his teaching. And I could not see how it would be possible for him to flop over, and in the course of a few days fix the books up so that it would be all right.”

Letter 253 - 1903 (Ellen White to John Harvey Kellogg)

“I entreat you to turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart, before it is forever too late. Separate yourself from the influences which have separated you from your brethren who are engaged in the gospel ministry and from the people whom God is leading. **Patchwork theories** cannot be accepted by those who are loyal to the faith and to the principles that have withstood all the opposition of satanic influences” (Lt 253 1903.28).

“The book *Living Temple* is not to be patched up, a few changes made in it, and then advertised and praised as a valuable production” (par 1).

Ellen White calls Kellogg’s work specifically and precisely patchwork theories. Instead of such a cobbled theology she suggests:

“I present to you the things that the Lord has presented to me. There is a great work to be done. We are to take hold of the work understandingly, praying, believing, and receiving the Holy Spirit. Thus only can we do the work given us. **I am required by God to bear testimony against *Living Temple*.** Whatever your associates may say concerning this book, I take the position now and forever that it is a snare. No union will be formed by our people as a whole upon the theories that you have begun to present in that book. You may regard this as forever decided. As a people we shall stand firm on the platform that has withstood test and trial. We shall hold to the sure pillars of our faith. **The principles of truth that God has revealed to us are our only foundation.** They have made us what we are. These new, fanciful theories are fascinating and misleading. They endanger the eternal interests of the soul. The Scriptures do not sustain them. Clothed with the Christian armor, shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, we shall stand firm against these misleading theories. You may turn and wrest the Word of God to your own destruction, but I entreat you not to do this” (Letter 253, 1903.24).

“Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word. As we fasted and prayed, great power came upon us. But I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren. My mind was locked, as it were, and I could not comprehend what we were studying. Then the Spirit of God would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me with instruction as to the position we were to take regarding truth and duty. Again and again this happened. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God was plainly marked out before me, and I gave my brethren and sisters the instruction that the Lord had given me. They knew that when not in vision, I could not understand these matters, and they accepted as light direct from heaven the revelations given me. **Thus the leading points of our faith as we hold them today were firmly established. Point after point was clearly defined, and all the brethren came into harmony.** (par. 4)

The whole company of believers were united in the truth. **There were those who came in with strange doctrines, but we were never afraid to meet them.** Our experience was wonderfully established by the revelations of the Holy Spirit” (Letter 253, 1903.5).

Ellen White wrote the above in a non-trinitarian environment!

Claim #7: The Heavenly Trio

. . . is supposedly the same as “The Trinity”

Response: But “Heavenly Trio” is a non-trinitarian Phrase!

In utilizing the phrase “Heavenly Trio”, Ellen White specifically articulated a non-trinitarian phrase, intentionally employed against the phraseology of trinitarian William Boardman:

Trinitarian William Boardman, *The Higher Christian Life*, p. 104, 105 writes: “These likenings are all imperfect. They rather hide than illustrate the tri-personality of the ONE God, for they are not persons but things, poor and earthly at best, to represent the living personalities of the living God. So much they may do, however, as to illustrate the official relations of each to the other and of each and all to us. And more. They may also illustrate the truth that all the fullness of Him who filleth all in all, dwells **in each person of Triune God.**”

Boardman continues: “The Father is all the fulness of the Godhead invisible. The Son is all the fulness of the Godhead manifested. The Spirit is all the fulness of the Godhead making manifest. The persons are not mere offices, or modes of revelation, **but living persons of the living God.**”

In contrast, Ellen White:

“The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fulness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ” (Ms 21, 1906, par. 11 | SpTB07 63.2).

Note: Ellen White does not carry over Boardman’s trinitarian wording. Trio is not Trinity. Trio is 3, not 1.

The Holy Spirit

Claim #8: The Holy Spirit

Non-trinitarians supposedly think the Holy Spirit is just an impersonal force.

Response: The much cited “silence is golden” quote stems from a specific context: the nature of the Holy Spirit:

“The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. Men having fanciful views may bring together passages of Scripture and put a human construction on them, but the acceptance of these views will not strengthen the church. **Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden”** (AA 52.1).

Ellen White immediately proceeds to describe the office of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit as a “regenerating agency”, and various aspects of the Holy Spirit’s function and work - hardly practicing silence on the Spirit in general, as evidenced by the 21,601 hits (assuming many duplicates, of course) for “Holy Spirit” at www.legacy.egwwritings.org!

“We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ” (Letter 66, April 10, 1894)

Interestingly, this citation was publicly challenged by a Seminary President, suggesting that the quote should be altered to read a Genitive at the end: “which is Jesus Christ’s”.

Possibly the most important - and clear - quotes to understand the non-trinitarian position on the Holy Spirit:

“The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ” (DA 805).

“Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally; therefore it was altogether for their advantage that He should leave them, go to His Father, and send the Holy Spirit to be His successor on earth. **The Holy Spirit is [Christ] Himself, divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof**” (Lt 119, 1895).

“Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life” (DA 827; MH 159).

The quote appeared later in *The Desire of Ages*, p. 669:

“Before this the Spirit had been in the world; from the very beginning of the work of redemption He had been moving upon men’s hearts. But while Christ was on earth, the disciples had desired no other helper. Not until they were deprived of His presence would they feel their need of the Spirit, and then He would come. The Holy Spirit is Christ’s representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.”

“And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit” (1 Cor 15:45).

“Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty” (2 Cor 3:17).

This equation is not unique to Ellen White; Jesus Himself introduces this identification: **John 14:16** “another comforter” [ἄλλος]: “**I** will come to you” (v18) = **Jesus**.

“And if anyone sins, we have an **Advocate** with the Father, **Jesus Christ** the righteous” (1 John 2:1).

The notion of “another” referring to the same person already exists in the Old Testament: “Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man” (1 Sam 10:6 ἄλλος).

The disciples didn’t get “that they could have **the presence of Christ** with them, and yet He be unseen by the world” (SW Aug. 13, 1898). “The divine Spirit... the world’s Redeemer promised to send is the presence and power of God” (ST Nov. 23, 1891). “Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end” (AA 49). “Christ is represented by the Holy Spirit” (ST Dec. 1, 1898). “The Lord Jesus acts through the Holy Spirit; for it is his representative” (RH Aug. 25, 1896). “With his Spirit Christ sends a reconciling influence and a power that takes away sin” (RH May 19, 1904). “Jesus comes to you as the Spirit of truth” (2MR 337). “Christ breathed His Spirit upon them” (DA 805; Jn 20:22). “Jesus will be with you; He will go before you by His Holy Spirit” (LS 439; → Eph 3:16-17!).

“one God · one Savior · one Spirit - the Spirit of Christ” (9T 189)

"The Father gave His Spirit without measure to His Son" (RH Nov 5, 1908).

“By the Spirit the Father and the Son will come and make their abode with you” (BEcho Jan. 15, 1893 par.8). God “is an unseen presence in the person of the Holy Spirit” (Lt 124, 1897).

Grieving the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30) is like grieving a person’s spirit, not a 3rd being: “I Daniel was grieved in my spirit” (Dan 7:15; 2:3).

John 20:22 “Receive the Holy Ghost” “The Father gave His Spirit without measure to His Son, and we also may partake of its fullness” (GC 477). “By His Spirit He [God] is everywhere present” (Ed 132).

Satan also breathes “on them an unholy influence” (EW 56) = his spirit, not a separate being from Satan.

A much misquoted text:

Acts 5:3-4 lying to the Holy Spirit = lying to God → Holy Spirit = God? Parallels:

- Mt 25:40: “As you have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it to me.” But Brethren ≠ Jesus!
- Luke 10:16: “He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.”
- Acts 9:4: “Why do you persecute me?” But Christ ≠ Christians.
- 1 Cor 8:12: “When you sin against the brethren...you sin against Christ.” But Brethren ≠ Christ.

Hebrews 9:14 “eternal Spirit”– everything of God is eternal.

1 John 5:7-8 The *Comma Johanneum* is disputed by most scholars, including the *SDA Bible Commentary*. Even if genuine the text is not trinitarian, as it simply speaks of 3, not 1 (→ MH 422!).

Revelation 5:6 Interestingly, the seven Spirits are a part of Jesus.

Evangelism 613-617 adds trinitarian subtitles, cites out of context, alters punctuation. Original: “The Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds, unseen by human eyes; that the Lord God is our Keeper and Helper. He hears every word we utter and knows every thought of the mind” (Ms66 1899). “Christ walks unseen through our streets” (MH 107).

I appeal to the Ellen White Estate to simply not alter the text of a deceased author. Let us leave pronouns (gender!) and punctuations as originally written. This applies to Uriah Smith, Daniel and the Revelation - it should be republished in its original form.

Concise Overview of Key Bible Texts

The Old Testament: Strict Monotheism

Genesis 1:1 The plural Elohim is not trinitarian: “created” is singular, as is theos [God] in the Septuagint. Ex 7:1: Moses=elohim=1 person. Mal 2:10: “Have we not all **one** father? has not **one** God created us?”

Genesis 1:2 “the Spirit of God”, not “God the Spirit”. We don’t say “Nebuchadnezzar the spirit” (Dan 2:1). The OT “does not explicitly imply that the Spirit was understood as one of three divine persons” (D. Bediako, *God in 3 Persons*, p. 16).

Genesis 1:26 “Let us make man”: God the Father speaking to His Son (1SP 24, 25; ST Jan. 9, 1879). No evidence of a trinity!

Genesis 2:24 “one flesh” = the marriage bond (Mt 19:6). Adam and Eve remained 2 distinct human beings - they didn’t become 1 human being (Gen 29:14; Jdg 9:2; 2 Sam 5:1; 19:12-13; see also 1 Cor 6:16). Paul compares this “one flesh” to Christ and the church!

Genesis 5:1-2 “God created man [adam]...Male + female created he them...and called their name Adam”: Adam in person+nature. Eve=Adam in nature BUT NOT IN PERSON! So Jesus=God in nature but not in person: “The Lord Jesus Christ...is truly God in infinity [=nature: divinity], but not in personality” (Ms116-1905.19). Thus “Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense” (RH April 5, 1906; 1SM 247) - as Eve was human in the highest sense. “In speaking of His pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was

not in close fellowship with the eternal God” (ST Aug. 29, 1900) - as Eve in relation to Adam: younger and from her point of origin always with Adam.

Exodus 3:14 “Jesus is the I AM” (DA 24): because God’s name is in Him (Ex 23:21→ John 17:3; AA 262!). “Jehovah is the name given to Christ” (ST May 3, 1899). Ye'hoshua = Yahweh saves. “Man was so dear to the Creator of the world that he spoke to him through Jesus Christ” (ST Oct. 15, 1896; cf. Aug. 5, 1889). Jesus took “the office of God” (Ms 118, 1905).

Deuteronomy 6:4 “The LORD our God is one LORD” = God the Father (Deut 6:3→Acts 3:13; 5:30; 22:14; PP ch4). Context: strict monotheism. Achad usually means “one” (Gen 2:21; 42:11,13). “Jehovah, the eternal, self-existent, uncreated One...is alone entitled to supreme reverence and worship” (PP 305); via Jesus: “The Father and the Son alone are to be exalted” (YI July 7, 1898; Zech 6:13). Jesus quotes Deut 6:4, then a scribe quotes 4:35: “the Lord Himself is God; there is none other besides Him.” Jesus affirms: “You are not far from the kingdom of God!” (Mk 12:29-34; Ex 20:3; Deut 4:39; 2 Sam 7:22; 1 Chron 17:20; Ps 86:10; Isa 43:10; Rom 3:30). “The God of the Bible is one and not many...one divine reality and NOT A PLURALITY OF DIVINE BEINGS” (F. Canale, SDABC 12:121).

Psalm 45:6-7 the Son is called God “by inheritance” (Heb 1:4).

Proverbs 8:22 “The Lord possessed [קָנָה] me in the beginning of his way”...Septuagint: κτίζω=create. 8:24-25: “I was brought forth” [חִיל]=birth (Ps 51:5!). “The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity” (RH Apr 5, 1906; Mic 5:2!): “His divine life could not be reckoned by human computation. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured in figures” (ST May 3, 1899). “How long He [our Creator=Christ] has had existence” permits a beginning (7BC 919; Ms 13 1888 16). ‘Forever’ is a relative term and can include a beginning (Jude 7). Jesus was “as one brought up with Him” (PP 34). MUST READ: *Story of Redemption*, pp. 13-19!

Isaiah 6:3 “Holy Holy Holy”: in Revelation 4:8 directed to the Father. Interestingly, the song “Holy, Holy, Holy” was originally trinitarian, was then rendered non-trinitarian by the Adventist church, only to be reverted to its trinitarian origin!

Isaiah 9:6 “mighty God, everlasting Father” = messianic (Heb 2:13). “Jesus is...our ‘everlasting Father’” (DA 483) but not God the Father: “the man Christ Jesus was not the Lord God Almighty” (5BC 1129).

Micah 5:2 “Whose goings forth”: מוֹצֵאֵהּ descent; origin · are from of old”: Neh 12:46; Ps 74:12; 77:11; Isa 45:12; 46:10; John 5:26; 6:57; 7:29; 8:42; 16:27; 17:8; Gal 4:4) .

“from the days of eternity”: Mic 7:14 - a point in past time (Deut 32:7; Amos 9:11; Isa 63:9; Mal 3:4).

The New Testament: Divinity, not Trinity

“And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent” (John 17:3).

“Yet for us there is one God, the Father...and one Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 8:6).

"There is a personal God, the Father; there is a personal Christ, the Son" (1SM 293).

The Gospel focuses on Father & Son: Mk 1:1; Acts 8:37; 9:20; Rom 15:6; Eph 4:13!

The Baptism: 3≠1: "The Father himself will minister to his Son. Direct from the throne proceeded the light of the glory of God...beams of light and glory proceeded...and assumed the form of a dove... The dove-like form was emblematical of the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (YI3/1 1874); "baptizing them in the name of the Father [a personal God], and of the Son [a personal Prince and Saviour], and of the Holy Ghost [sent from heaven to represent Christ]" (RH 10/26 1897).

DA 530: "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived". "This life is not inherent in man. **He can possess it** only through Christ...**it is given him as a free gift**" (ST Apr 8 1897). Original: J.Cumming, *Sabbath Ev. Read. on the NT*. St. John. 1856. EGW omits his trinitarian comments; Cumming skips Jn 5:26: "As the Father has life in himself; so has he given to the Son to have life in himself"-to pass it on to us! "Jesus 'asserted His right and power to give eternal life'" (DA 530): He "is invested with power to give life to all creatures" (RH April 5, 1906). "The Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns" (DA 21). See more detailed explication above.

John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God [the Father], and the Word was God [had a divine nature]." "The Eternal Father...gave his only begotten Son, tore from his bosom **Him who was made** in the express image of his person, and sent him down to earth" (RH July 9, 1895). "Christ the Word, the Only Begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father,-one in nature, in character, and in purpose,-the only being in all the universe that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God" (GC 493; PP 34). "Lucifer in heaven...was a high and exalted angel, next in honor to God's dear Son" (SR 13) = **before the incarnation**: "This fact the [fallen] angels would obscure, that **Christ was the only begotten Son of God**" (Lt 42, 1910). The other angels "clearly set forth that Christ was the Son of God, existing with Him before the angels were created" (SR 15). "In His incarnation He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God" (1SM 226). "The Scriptures clearly indicate the relation between **God and Christ**,...The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. **They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person. It is thus that God and Christ are one**" (MH 422; 8T 269; Jn 10:30; 17:22!); "in nature, will, and purpose" (RH March 5, 1901; GC 493); "two in individuality, yet one in spirit, heart, and character" (YI Oct. 16, 1897). The Father ordained "that Christ should be equal with himself; so that wherever was the presence of his Son, it was as his own presence...His word was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. **His Son he had invested with authority** to command the heavenly host...**endowing him** with such unlimited power and command" (ST Jan. 9, 1879). "He was the Son of the living God" (Lt77 Aug 3, 1894). "Though He was the Son of God, yet He had taken human nature upon Him" (DA 533).

Matthew 28:19 singular "name" = representative sharing, but no hint of 3=1. "Three powers of the Godhead" (AUCR Oct. 7, 1907) or "three living persons [original: personalities] of the heavenly trio" (Ms 21, 1906) = 3, not 1.

Jn 3:16 "only begotten": *monogenes* occurs 9x in the NT, *always* involving parents/birth: Lk 7:12; 8:42; 9:38; Jn 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; Heb 11:17; 1 Jn 4:9. Jesus was not the only "son of God" (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7) ; but the only begotten of the Father, "the first-born of heaven" (DA 51).

Jn 20:28 "My Lord and my God!" Messianic affirmation, not trinitarian articulation! → Isa 40:3; Mt 3:3; Mk 1:3; Lk 3:4.

The Apostles clearly and consistently differentiate between God and Jesus: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God (2 Cor 1:1). **1 Cor 11:3 “the head of Christ is God”** (Rev 1:1-2, 4-5; 7:10, 17; 14:4; 21:22-23; 22:1, 3). “For **there is one God**, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5). “Christ, our Mediator, and the Holy Spirit are constantly interceding in man’s behalf, but the Spirit pleads not for us as does Christ” (1SM 344) = one Mediator.

2 Corinthians 13:14 Only one - the Father - is identified as God!

1 Tim 1:17 “the only wise God”: the Father (Jude 1:25 → Rom 16:27).

Hebrews 1:8 “To the Son he says, Thy throne, O God”=Christ’s divinity is by “appointment” (v2) and “inheritance” (v4).

Hebrews 7:3 Melchizedek was a man (v4)! - “neither beginning of days nor end of life”: no record; “like” = comparison, not definition.

1 John 5:20 “This is the true God” = the Father, based on antecedents (v19; see 2 Chron 15:3; Jer 10:10; Jn 17:3; 1 Thess 1:9 → J. Waggoner, *The Atonement*, p. 168).

Revelation 1:8 “I am the Alpha...” = Jesus | “saith the Lord...” = the Father

Revelation 3:12 Jesus calls the Father “my God” 4x! See also John 20:17!

Revelation 14:7 3x global call to God the Father “who made”: Acts 14:15; Matt 16:16; 26:63; Joh 6:69; Lk 10:21; Acts 4:24; 17:24. *The final message to the world is non-trinitarian!*

The Mark of Monotheism

Follow the chain of texts to its logical conclusion. *With a deep breath. It is just a few steps, but no step should be missed.*

Deut 4:35 “To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself *is* God; *there is* none other besides Him.”

Deut 6:4-9 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one!”

Notice that out of this highest confession come the two highest commandments, as confirmed by Jesus himself (see below):

5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

These mandates are to be passed from generation to generation:

7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

Now comes the part that must not be missed; read carefully:

8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

The sequence is intriguing, and will prove vital in understanding the climax of prophecy:

- 1) Shema (the monotheism mandate)
- 2) 2 highest commandments: love God, love neighbor
- 3) to be fastened to hand and eyes

Confirmation by Jesus himself - Mark 12:28-34:

28 Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?”

29 Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. 30 And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. 31 And the second, like it, is this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

32 So the scribe said to Him, “Well said, Teacher. **You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He.** 33 And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” 34 Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.”

We need one more step; hold on tight - the 3rd Angel’s Message is non-trinitarian!

Rev 14:9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his **forehead** or on his **hand**, 10 he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of **God**, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the **Lamb**. 11 And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.” 12 Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of **God** and the faith of **Jesus**. 13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ” “Yes,” says the **Spirit**, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”

The guiding verse of the entire Advent Movement is formulated non-trinitarian:

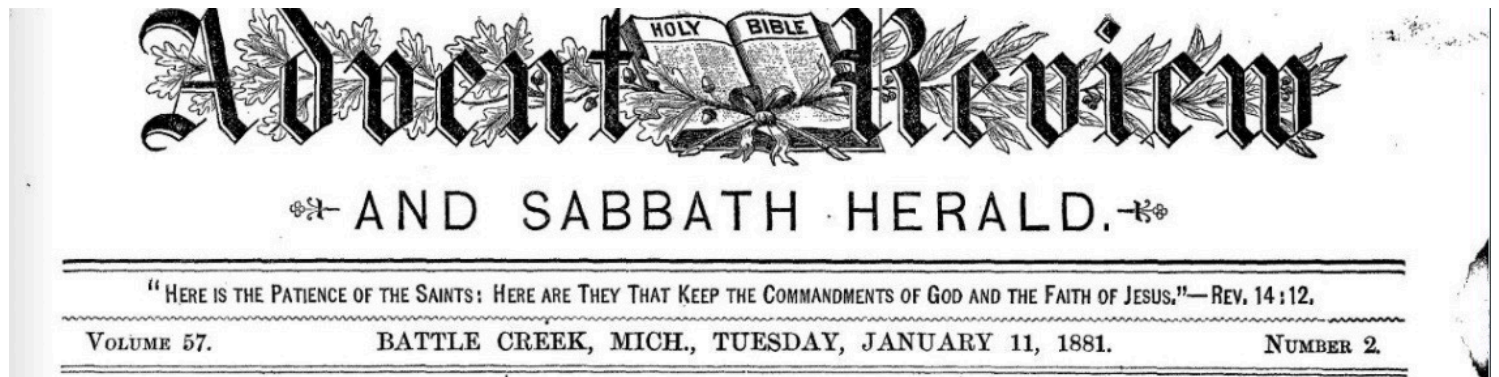


Image credit: <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/51687616/the-review-and-herald-adventist-archives>

The Catholic Connection

Theophilus: first use of the term *Trinity* (Ref. *Autolyucus*), 168AD.

Tertullian (197AD) used *trinitas* for the Godhead, not as 3=1.

Creeds & Councils: Nicea (325AD) introduced “of one being” and Christ's “co-eternity”. Constantinople (381AD): “The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is God, one and equal with the Father and the Son, of the same substance and also of the same nature...With the Father and the Son, he is worshipped and glorified.” Athanasian (400AD): “We worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity. We distinguish among the persons, but we do not divide the substance...**Nevertheless, there are not three eternal beings, but one eternal being.**”

The Catholic Connection: “The mystery of the trinity is the central doctrine of the Catholic faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the church” (*Hbk for Today's Catholic*, p. 11). *Catechism* (2003):

p.233f.:“There is only one God, the almighty Father, his only Son, and the Holy Spirit: the Most Holy Trinity.” “The faith of all Christians rests on the Trinity” p.251:“To articulate the dogma of the Trinity, **the Church had to develop its own terminology with the help of certain notions of philosophical origin.**” p.253: “We do not confess three Gods, but one God in three persons...but each of them is God whole and entire.” p.262f.: “in the Father and with the Father, the Son is one and the same God...the Spirit is one and the same God.” p. 82: The Church “does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.” p.266: “**Now this is the Catholic faith: We worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity.**” In contrast, “**Seventh-day Adventists do not, and never have accepted the dark, mysterious, Catholic doctrine of the Trinity**” (B.Wilkinson 1936).

The Ecumenical Connection

“The theological foundations of ecumenism derives from faith in the persons of the Trinity” (C.Hill, “The Ec.Mvmnt,” *ZHHC* 2006: 435)!

“We have far more in common than what divides us” since “we believe in the Trinity” (R. Warren, CNS11/14).

Protestantism has “accepted...the Trinity, for which there is no such precise authority in the Gospels” (Assm. of Mary, *Life*, 10/30 1950: 51).

“No doctrine is more fundamental or more emphasized in Freemasonry than...the Trinity” (masonicworld.com).

“It is a backsliding church that lessens the distance between itself and the Papacy” (ST Feb.19,1894).

Sunday “is a day dedicated by the apostles to the honor of the most Holy trinity” (ARSH April 4, 1854).

It is this necessity of ecumenical acceptance that has led the Adventist church to embrace the Doctrine of the Trinity. But the movement had been warned.

Ellen White NEVER used ‘trinity’ as 3=1, and warned of “great changes” (Ms1 Feb.24, 1915): “Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced” (1SM 204). **“We have been warned that heresy of every kind will be brought in among the people of God in these last days”** (Ms75, 1905). She warns: “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**” - **EGW then quotes John 17!** (Lt 263-1904.15|1SM 197).

Unity and Mission

“I could not go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more” (Num 22:18).

Compromise for the sake of unity leads to loss of the very thing compromised for. Remember Pilate?!

“Truth is God’s basis for the unity of his people” (GW92 391). “We cannot purchase peace and unity at the cost of truth. The conflict may be long and painful, but at any cost we must hold fast to the Word of God” (HS 197).

“God has a church. It is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations; it is the people who love God and keep His commandments. “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” [Matthew 18:20.] Where

Christ is even among the humble few, this is Christ's church, for the presence of the high and holy One who inhabiteth eternity can alone constitute a church" (Letter 108, 1886).

"Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15:5-7).

Ethical Concerns

The church will have to come to grips with the startling (and disturbing) fact that one can function and retain employment within the corporate organization and

- deny the heavenly sanctuary, 1844, and the investigative judgment
- drink alcohol at liberty, esp. within the confines of one's own home
- not attend church (let alone tithe)
- abandon the prophetic road map of *The Great Controversy*
- publicly promote the LGBT lifestyle and movement
- contradict the reality of a 7-day creation in Genesis 1
- practice and promote Yoga (University campuses)
- play or consume Jazz and Rock'n Roll (University campuses)
- publicly oppose and work against three voted decisions by a General Conference in session

. . . but when one touches the Doctrine of the Trinity and suggests a return to a previous understanding of the church (mind you, not introduce new light!), valid for over 100 years, the axe falleth quickly, at times without due process, peer review, departmental notification, investigative vetting, etc.

Not only a people's livelihoods and careers and reputations affected, but some non-trinitarians receive restraining orders, unable to even visit any church-owned property within a conference's jurisdiction. Adventists banning and canceling Adventists!

False Allegations

The notions of anti-trinitarianism leading to pantheism, even free-lovism (!) as articulated in recent publications are simply a preposterous; an absurd affront they must be rejected outright. I will simply refrain from responding on that level. It was a trinitarian who introduced pantheism (in)to the Advent movement, and trinitarianism has certainly not prevented "free-lovism" to enter the church!

Frequently Asked Questions

Wouldn't silence on this topic be better?

Yes, I wished. But a grievous error has crept into the church, which has prompted this conversation.

"No human mind can comprehend God. None are to indulge in speculation regarding His nature. Here silence is eloquence. The Omniscient One is above discussion" (MH 429,438; AA 52). But we may "become better acquainted with God our Father, and Christ our Elder Brother" (1T 111). "We must know Him as He reveals Himself...all depend upon a right knowledge of God" which "is essential preparation both for this life and for the life to come" and "the foundation of all true education and of all true service" (MH 409; 457!).

- **Is this new light?** No; but the doctrine of the trinity is, not voted until the 1980 GC (3x3x3=27!). From: "I was compelled to search out...books written by men **outside of our faith**" (*Movement*, p. 322).

- **Is this Arianism?** No. Jesus was begotten, not created (→ Prov. 8). Some claim "the Son is not the natural, literal Son of the Father...‘Son’ is used metaphorically...with the Godhead" (A. Rodriguez, *AW* Nov. 2015, p. 42). But "God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. **He has been made equal with the Father**" (8T 268) - *pre-incarnation!*

- **Is Christ divine?** 100%. Sharing His Father's nature and inheritance, He "is the perfect revelation of God" (LS 94); "in him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col 2:9). *Divinity, not Trinity.*

- **Is the Holy Spirit just an ‘impersonal force’?** No; few think so.

- **Does it really matter?** "This fact the angels would obscure, that Christ was the only begotten Son of God" (Lt 42-1910.3). "Christ was the only begotten Son of God"...Lucifer "**got up a warfare over the matter**, until he had to be thrust down to the earth" (Ms 86, Aug. 21, 1910). "Satan was well acquainted with the position of honor Christ had held in Heaven **as the Son of God**, the beloved of the Father" (RH March 3, 1874). **This is the origin of the Great Controversy!**

- **“Three great personal Dignitaries of heaven”** (Ms 92, 1901), "the Heavenly Trio": 3, not tritheism. The Spirit ("being God"=divinity; Lt11b, 1892) is God's Spirit; like "the spirit of man" (1Cor 2:11) not a separate being. "Jesus is present in the person of His representative" (12MR145), "the third person of the Godhead" (DA 671).

- **How can so many scholars be wrong?!** Jesus passed by "the renowned seats of learning" (DA 68). "People should be educated to search the Scriptures for themselves, to dare to think for themselves, taking the Bible as their guidebook, their standard of faith" (CTr 332). The Bible "was not written for the scholar alone...it was designed for the common people...We should not take the testimony of any man, but should study the words of God for ourselves" (SC 89f.; 5T 388; Prov 8:8-9; 18:13; 30:5-6; Lk 24:45). *Scholars get so many biblical truths wrong!*

- **Let's focus on mission & unity!** Error hinders evangelism. *Rev 14 is non-trinitarian* (Acts 14:15; Mt 16:16; Jn 6:69)! Take "the Bible as it reads, if there were no false teachers to mislead and confuse their

minds, a work would be accomplished...**that would bring into the fold of Christ thousands upon thousands**" (GC 598)! "We must give up errors and traditions received from men and turn wholly to God and His Word" (EW 243). "Truth is God's basis for the unity of his people" (GW92 391). "We cannot purchase peace and unity at the cost of truth. The conflict may be long and painful, but at any cost we must hold fast to the Word of God" (HS 197). "I could not go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more" (Num 22:18). **Read Ephesians 4:13!**

• **Now what?! What if I have come to the realization, too, that the Trinity is not a biblical doctrine? Sweet but not silent:** "God calls for men...who will bear His message with faithfulness, regardless of the consequences; men who will speak the truth bravely, though it call for the sacrifice of all they have" (PK 142); "men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall" (Ed 57). → Esth 4:14; Mt 10:32; 16:25; Mk 7:7; Jn 12:42-43; EW 242; GC 372.

• **Recognize that rejection is painful.** Allow no "root of bitterness" grow in your heart (Heb 12:15). "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 1:3).

Conclusion & Suggestion

The Advent movement at large must come together in constructive dialogue and consider that nontrinitarians

- have a genuine but ignored biblical case and are concerned that a non-biblical formulation of belief has entered our articulation of faith and practice
- incorporate contexts and quotes from history and inspiration that pose a true challenge to trinitarianism
- do not introduce new light but seek to restore old light - light that shone in the Advent movement for over 100 years!
- believe in the full divinity of Jesus Christ
- do believe in the Holy Spirit and reject the notion that the Spirit is only a force
- carry a sincere concern for ecumenical motivations in theological articulation. What would be the personal and corporate consequences of rejecting the Doctrine of the Trinity?! Are we willing to pay the price personally and as a denomination?
- have made a formal appeal to the General Conference without constructive response or a path forward.

But **"God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and**

discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain “Thus saith the Lord” in its support” (GC 595).

"The remnant that purify their souls by obeying the truth gather strength from the trying process, exhibiting the beauty of holiness amid the surrounding apostasy" (4LtMs, Lt 55, 1886, par. 19).

“My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends,
for you have not spoken of Me what is right”
(Job 42:7).

Grace, mercy, *and* peace will be with you from God the Father
and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love" (2 John 3).

Appendix A: The 1980 General Conference Session

Seventh business meeting

Fifty-third General Conference session
April 21, 1980, 3:15 P.M.

Session proceedings

MIKE STEVENSON: [Directed the opening song.]

W. DUNCAN EVA: E. C. Lemke, of the South Queensland Conference, Australia, will lead us in prayer.

E. C. LEMKE: [Offered prayer.]

W. J. HACKETT: There are a number of very important items to look at this afternoon. First, R. F. Williams has a report for us.

R. F. WILLIAMS: [Read the names of additional delegates in box on this page, and moved they be seated. The motion was seconded and voted.]

W. J. HACKETT: Several *Church Manual* items are not yet finished. Brother Bothe, can you tell us the page and number of those to be considered now?

J. W. BOTHE: [Read the action "Youth Council—*Church Manual* Supplement," on pp. 14, 15.]

Mr. Chairman, I move the adoption of this *Church Manual* supplement. [Motion was seconded.]

W. J. HACKETT: You will notice that this is for the North American supplement, so will not apply to the overseas divisions. Is there any discussion?

J. L. EVERETT: I believe this document should state that the youth leader should be a member of the church board.

CHARLES MARTIN: I think it would be very satisfactory to incorporate that provision.

W. J. HACKETT: Can we add that by common consent? [Pause.] [The amended supplement was voted.]

J. W. BOTHE: [Read the action "The Church Board/Church Board Meetings—*Church Manual* Revision," on p. 15. It was moved and seconded to adopt the revision.]

DARRELL J. HUENER-GARDT: I would like to address my comments to the section entitled "Officers." That paragraph states that the pastor is chairman of the church board unless he decides otherwise. This past week we have heard that the concept that the pastor is a ruler of the church should be abandoned. I feel that this paragraph is contrary to that principle. I move that the motion be

amended to provide for a study of the paragraph beginning on page 39, line 17.

W. J. HACKETT: Would you be happy if the *Manual* said the pastor or the elder could chair the board, leaving the decision to the church?

DARRELL HUENER-GARDT: That would be fine.

W. J. HACKETT: How many of you feel that the motion should be amended? May I see your hands? [Hands were raised.] How many do not agree with the amendment? [Hands raised again.] Well, you are outvoted, Brother. The motion to accept the revision is now before us.

R. R. BIETZ: This whole document emphasizes that the board is responsible for evangelism. That is as it should be. I would like to suggest, however, that evangelism includes more than public evangelism, and I am glad to see this emphasized considerably. I would like to move that we add on page 39, line 38, after "planning evangelism," and on page 38, line 16, after "planning for evangelism," the words "in all of its phases."

[The motion was seconded and voted.]

E. J. HUMPHREY: I am in complete harmony with the document, especially as it relates to the pastor as chairman of the church board.

J. H. ZACHARY: I am concerned about areas where there is one pastor for 20 or 30 churches. Perhaps a flooded river prevents his visit to a church for six months. In such cases, I hope the head elder can still serve as the leader of the church and the board in the absence of the pastor.

GEORGE W. SCHLINSOG: Most of the segments of the church are represented on the church board. However, should not the school board chairman, or principal of the school, also be a member of the church board?

W. J. HACKETT: Who will answer this question?

M. T. BATTLE: The section dealing with members of the church board specifies that additional members of the board may be elected by the church if desired. The committee is of the opinion that this statement covers such situations, since in many churches there is no school board, while there may be a Home and School leader.

W. J. HACKETT: Will that be satisfactory, Brother?

GEORGE W. SCHLINSOG: With all due respect, sir, I feel that this does deserve to be specifically included in the membership of the church board.

W. J. HACKETT: Could we add the phrase "chairman of the church school board where there is a church school"? How would that be?

GEORGE W. SCHLINSOG: I would move that, sir.

[The motion was seconded and voted.]

LOUIS VENDEN: In the section "Definition and Function [of the church board]," it is stated that the "chief concern is the work of planning and fostering evangelism." In the light of recent discussion of apostasies, I believe that the church board should join the pastor in planning for the crucial work of pastoral care. I move that the words "and pastoral care" be added. [The motion was seconded and voted.]

ELIJAH E. NJAGI: I refer to the section concerning membership of the church board. I have wondered for a long time why the one who is in charge of music, or the choir leader, is not included as a member of the church board.

W. J. HACKETT: Page 39, line 13, provides that "additional members of the board may be elected," if desired.

Can we vote on the motion as a whole? [It was voted.]

W. J. HACKETT: We are very happy from time to time to have brethren in Christ from other communions fellowship with us. I would like to ask B. B. Beach to present our guest at this time.

B. B. BEACH: Brother Chairman and delegates, we have the privilege of introducing Dr. Paul Opsahl, of Houston, Texas, the official observer for the Lutheran World Federation. We are happy to welcome Dr. Opsahl.

PAUL OPSAHL: Mr. Chairman, Dr. Beach, delegates, and friends in Christ, I am pleased to bring you warm greetings from the 17 million brothers and sisters in Christ that form the Lutheran family of churches who circle the globe and form a worldwide church family that in many respects is much like yours.

We also confess our faith in the risen Lord Jesus as the hope of the world, and, like you, God has blessed us with the ministry of caring that circles the globe. God bless all of you in His name.

W. J. HACKETT: We thank Dr. Opsahl for his greetings and for being here with us today.

J. W. BOTHE: [Read the action "The Church Board/Lay Activities Council/Church Board Meetings—*Church Manual* Revision," on p. 15.]

Mr. Chairman, I move the adoption of this supplement to the North American Division *Church Manual* Revision.

[Motion was seconded and voted.]

W. J. HACKETT: Brother Wilson, you have an item for us at this time.

NEAL C. WILSON: For some time we have been considering a refinement of our Statement on Fundamental Beliefs. I think you have that document in your hands. No doubt you have done both some studying and some praying.

We have heard a variety of interesting rumors. Some, it is said, understand that the church leaders want to destroy completely the foundations of the church and set the church on a course that would be un-Biblical, contrary to the tradition of the past and to historical Adventism. My fellow delegates, there is nothing that is further from the truth.

We have also heard that any time we touch the Statement on Fundamental Beliefs we would be introducing the Omega, the final confusion of theological and doctrinal positions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I suggest to you that this is also a very unfortunate statement.

I can understand how individuals far removed from where some of these things are being studied, and who may not themselves have been asked to participate in a restudy or refinement of wording, might feel that there is something very sinister, mysterious, and secret going on that will suddenly confront us, and that it may contribute to the ultimate detriment and demise of the Seventh-day Adventist

ADVENTIST REVIEW, APRIL 23, 1980

Additional Delegates

The following delegates were added as authorized by policy:

Regular delegates:**Northern Europe-West Africa Division**

West African Union
Edward Dorsey

Euro-Africa Division

Romanian Union
Alexandru Timis



Charles B. Hirsch (left), associate director of the General Conference Department of Education, presented a plaque recognizing 46 years of denominational service, all in the field of education, to Walton J. Brown, retiring director of the Department of Education.

Church. My fellow delegates, I assure you that no one who has been struggling with some of these matters has any such intention.

There are others who think they know why this is being done. They believe it is being prepared as a club to batter someone over the head, to try to get people into a narrow concept of theology, not leaving any opportunity for individual interpretation of prophecy, or any individual views with respect to theology or certain areas of doctrine. This also is unfortunate, because this never has been and is not the intention of any study that has been given to the Statement on Fundamental Beliefs.

Some academicians, theologians, and others have expressed the fear that this statement was being developed so that the church could confront them with a checklist to determine whether they should be disqualified from teaching in one of our institutions of higher education. It is very, very tragic when these kinds of rumors begin to develop.

I fully recognize, and am very willing to admit, that we do need to use extreme care, including a wholesome variety of minds with training and background, to provide input on this kind of statement. However, I do not think anyone should become frightened when the wording of such a document is studied. Perhaps I should go one step further and say that the Seventh-day Ad-

ADVENTIST REVIEW, APRIL 23, 1980

ventist Church does not have a creed as such. Nothing is set in concrete in terms of human words. The time never comes when any human document cannot be improved upon. We feel that every 20, 30, or 50 years it is a very good thing for us to be sure we are using the right terminology and approach. Schools of theological thought are constantly changing. Certain terms mean today what they did not mean 50 years ago. There are certain presuppositions that people develop, and certain terminology is used to describe these presuppositions. It is extremely important that we should understand what we believe and that we should express it simply, clearly, and in the most concise way possible. We should not only state our beliefs but be certain that those who read them do not misunderstand and that they are unable to read three or four meanings into the same sentences or words.

It is just as important today to say what one does not mean as it is to say positively what one does mean in order to make sure that people do not just use words with different presuppositions to arrive at an entirely different conclusion.

We see only good coming from a careful rearrangement, rewording, and perhaps some restructuring.

The most cohesive thing in this church is our message. Some people say that what holds us

together as a great world family is our organization and our policies. Thank God for organization! But what keeps this church together as one in all the world, in spite of all the fragmenting philosophies and the cultural-sociological-racial differences and linguistic problems, is not organization or policy—it is our message.

So it is important that we look at this statement carefully and that when we have finished looking, we know that we have not done violence, that we have not allowed anything to become eroded or weakened, but rather that we have strengthened and helped, and perhaps become more lucid and clear.

We are not suggesting changing any belief or doctrine that this church has held. We have no interest in tearing up any of the foundations of historical Adventism. This document is not designed to do that, nor to open the way so that it can be done. It should be clear that we are not adding anything nor are we deleting anything in terms of historical Adventist theology. We are trying to express our beliefs in a way that will be understood today.

There are a great many individuals, for instance, who write to the General Conference Ministerial Association requesting a simple statement of our fundamental beliefs. We would like to feel that when such a statement is sent to those who are theologically educated or who are proficient in stating Biblical truth simply, they will understand not what they see but rather what we see and what we believe. It is one thing for me to apply a certain set of values and theological-doctrinal principles to a statement and find that it all fits together. Someone else reading the same statement might not perceive the same truth.

Some say to me, "Well, you know, it [the Statement] is not ready yet. It needs a lot more study." I would like to say that it will never be perfect, no matter how many people work on it and for how long. I do not think we should ever be afraid to look at our beliefs carefully and ask ourselves, Can it be said better?

We really should not take the time of this whole group to deal with minute editorial matters. We will provide for a competent editorial committee of scholars and theologians to consider such details. If someone has a really clear point to make that seems to be extremely sensitive or important in terms of content and substance and theology, then I think

this whole group would like to hear it.

Now, you say, are you hoping to get this document voted at this meeting? I would say, Yes. But I also am a realist. If we find ourselves in too much trouble on some rewording, a delay will not create a great problem in this church. We have a statement of beliefs now. Nobody needs to think that we are all up in the air, that we don't know what we believe, that we have nothing to tie to, that the anchors are all pulled up and we are adrift. No one is adrift. We have a clear statement of fundamental beliefs, and we will hold to it until together we decide to refine, reword, and restate it in today's language.

I want to make it very clear that the introduction of this Statement does not suggest that we are not really sure what we believe and that there is a great deal of indecisiveness. This is not the case. There are a few little pockets of concern here and there, and there always will be.

We can expect a lot more of those in the future. We have seen only the beginnings of questions, attacks, and endeavors to wipe out certain beliefs. There are those who would like to see some things changed or diluted, watered down, or even wiped out.

I want W. Duncan Eva to make a further statement of the way this matter has developed. After that, we will look at this document, section by section.

W. D. EVA: Mr. Chairman and brethren and sisters, the need for restating—not changing, but restating, as Elder Wilson has so clearly indicated—has been felt for several years. About two years ago a committee spent many days studying the beliefs as they are now stated. A number of theologians looked at the Statement prepared by this committee and made suggestions that resulted in a rewording of the Statement. This was brought to the Annual Council in 1979 and was accepted in principle, with the understanding that it would receive wide exposure to the world field and that written suggestions would be welcome. It was sent to members of the division committees immediately after the Annual Council and also to our unions and overseas colleges. The Statement appeared in the ADVENTIST REVIEW and after still further study was sent to all delegates to this General Conference session. Last week the Home and Overseas Officers considered the Statement again, and the suggestions, as far as possible, were included. It was reedited in its present form here.

(513) 9

NEAL C. WILSON: I think we are ready to begin with Section 1, "The Holy Scriptures."

J. W. BOTHE: [Read Item 1, "The Holy Scriptures."]

R. H. BROWN: I could wish that, as a church, we were able to simply say that we base our belief and practice on the Bible, the Bible alone, and the entire Bible. But unfortunately the enemy has confused the situation so that it becomes essential for us to declare to the world and to ourselves what we mean by such a statement. We have to specify where in the spectrum of theological viewpoints we stand and what we understand to be the nature and authority of the Bible. Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible on a broader basis than only that of faith and practice. We accept it as historically valid. To meet the needs of the church, we need to strengthen this section on the Holy Scriptures to make it express fully the attitude of the Seventh-day Adventist Church toward Holy Scripture. To accomplish this, I would like to suggest a rewording of the second sentence to read like this: "These Scriptures are the living, all-sufficient, trustworthy, and authoritative revelation of God's gracious purpose, His will, and His activities in human history." I feel that this addition is absolutely essential in order to state to the world and to ourselves where we really stand with respect to the testimony of Holy Scripture. The same suggestion should be included where Ellen White's attitude toward Scripture is referred to.

JAMES LONDIS: I think, Brother Chairman, that there is no doubt that the Statement would be strengthened by the word *historical* or the words *historical activities*. As it stands, it can be misinterpreted, I fear, by people who are unfamiliar with the difference between the existential approach to the Bible and the historical approach.

I would also like to comment on another point.

NEAL C. WILSON: Surely.

JAMES LONDIS: I wish to sound a word of caution about using the word *infallible* in any statement with respect to the Scripture. We have bypassed using it in reference to Scripture as a revelation of God's gracious purpose and will. Rather, we have said it is authoritative and trustworthy. To be consistent we ought not to use that word with respect to faith and practice.

NEAL C. WILSON: Would somebody like to comment on this matter of the use of the word *infallible*?

10 (514)

W. R. MAY: I would strenuously object to deleting the word *infallible*. I think it is imperative that it remain.

NEAL C. WILSON: In that exact place?

W. R. MAY: Either there or somewhere else.

NEAL C. WILSON: Jim, do you see it fitting in some other place in the document?

JAMES LONDIS: My concern is that Seventh-day Adventists avoid being designated as verbal inspirationists. I also appreciate the concern of those who do not want to diminish the authority of the Bible.

ROBERT OLSON: I can appreciate what Jim Londis is speaking about, but I don't think that this expression as it stands gives the wrong impression. Ellen White speaks about the Bible as the infallible revelation of God's will to us. She does not call the Bible inerrant. I do not think we should use the word *inerrant*, but expressing that the Bible is the infallible revelation of God's will, I think, is very correct. It certainly is in harmony with the Spirit of Prophecy.

J. J. BATTISTONE: I would like to speak to the two points Dr. Londis mentioned. First, with respect to the Holy Scriptures and the reference to the historical witness of the Scriptures to God's presence. Doctrine number two brings this out; so if the first statement were amended, it would be consistent with the reference to God, who acts in and through nature and history.

The second point has to do with the word *infallible*. Are we sacrificing anything substantial when we omit the word *infallible*, substituting for it the word *authoritative*?

LEWIS O. ANDERSON: I feel that we should retain the word *infallible* where it is. I think that this is a proper statement of our view concerning the Bible. If we remove that now, it will be seriously misunderstood by many people.

RUSSELL STANDISH: I want to support Dr. Brown's statement that we recognize the Bible as authoritative when it comes to the area of history. I think we are all aware that we are not talking in a vacuum today. There are many among our believers who project the concept that the Scriptures are perfect for their purpose. Now, that sounds like a benign statement until it is understood that what is meant is that Scripture is authoritative as a guide to salvation, but it contains many errors of history and science. I believe that the Holy

Word of God is just as authoritative in matters of history and science as it is in matters of salvation. I would even go further than Dr. Brown and insert science into this statement as well as history. I believe, as have most of the other speakers, that the word *infallible* is very proper and that we would lose very much if we drop it.

JAMES LONDIS: In keeping with your statement at the beginning that we must be careful to say not only what we mean but what we do not mean. If we use the word *infallible*, I would suggest that we then state what we do not mean by infallible, that it is defined as absolutely perfect and unerring in a verbal inspiration sense.

NEAL C. WILSON: That is something that might be worthwhile for this church to state.

J. J. AITKEN: The great genius of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is that we believe in the infallibility of the Holy Word of God. There are many teachings today that would discredit certain parts of the Bible.

W. DUNCAN EVA: I would like to make a suggestion that will satisfy as many as possible. I would suggest that instead of the word "authoritative" on line 18, we use the word *infallible*. And that instead of the word "infallible" on line 20, we use the word *authoritative*. In other words, transpose those two words. I would suggest further that we refer the question of a definition for the term *infallible*, as Dr. Londis has suggested, to an editing committee, with the suggestion that a footnote be added defining what we mean by "infallible." I think it would be difficult to write it into the text.

MARIO VELOSO: I would like to support the presence of this word *infallible*. A definition, if desired, would be better placed in the text because footnotes are easily lost. I think the word *infallible* does not give any wrong impression. We will not lose anything by retaining it, and changing it could be misunderstood by many Adventists.

NEAL C. WILSON: Very well stated. Thank you, Dr. Veloso. Let me get a reaction from you. Let us tentatively agree that we will use the word *infallible* in connection with revelation. This is really in harmony with how Ellen White used it. Then let us use the word *authoritative* for the standard of faith and practice, and ask a small committee to submit a statement with respect to our understanding of the definition of the word *infallible*. We can decide later whether the def-

inition should be part of the body or a footnote.

[A straw vote was taken, and the suggestion was overwhelmingly supported.]

NEAL C. WILSON: Now, I would like to settle the desirability of including something in terms of history. Could I have an expression from you about that? [A straw vote was taken, and the suggestion was supported.]

NEAL C. WILSON: Now, I would like an idea from you about this very sensitive area of science; that is a word which can be broadly interpreted and can be a stumbling block. We should be cautious not to suggest that we do not feel that Scripture has anything to say about science.

R. H. BROWN: Thank you, Elder Wilson. I greatly appreciate the suggestion of Brother Standish with respect to including the term *science* here. But I think that for our purposes, the term "God's activities in human history" includes what many of us consider to be science. A statement like this is strengthened if it can be made as succinct as possible, with as few divergent terms as possible. I do not think the addition of the word *science* is necessary.

LAWRENCE GERATY: I am very pleased with the statement the way it is with the modifications that you have suggested. I think all of us feel that the word *infallible* would be in relation to the revelation of God's gracious purpose and will. I, however, would have a very difficult time as a teacher of history to state here that the Bible is all sufficient in matters of history and science. There are many areas in which I have questions, and I wish the Bible said more. Unfortunately, it is not all sufficient. In areas where it speaks, it speaks the truth and it is certainly trustworthy.

NEAL C. WILSON: The group here did rather overwhelmingly feel that they would like to see something included with respect to God's activities in human history. Is your objection to that phrase, which was overwhelmingly accepted here, or to the inclusion also of science?

LAWRENCE GERATY: I have no problem with God's activities in human history. What I am afraid of is the way that Dr. Brown suggested that it be added here. In that way the Bible would be presented as all sufficient and infallible in matters of history. That would not be good, and adding science would make it just that much worse. In other words, the Bible is not a textbook in these areas.

ADVENTIST REVIEW, APRIL 23, 1980

NEAL C. WILSON: I believe we understand your point about God's activity in human history. We feel that Scripture is a revelation of that. I think, in that case, let the editing group try to reword this for us and bring it back, so we can see it on paper.

Now, could I get an expression from you on the matter of the word *science*? How many of you feel that something ought to be included about the word *science*? Those of you who feel we ought to include *science*, will you raise your hands? [Few hands raised.]

All right, apparently we will not include that word or refer that to our small editing committee.

Well, I think that pretty nicely does Section No. 1. I would like to suggest that we go on to No. 2 at this point.

J. W. BOTHE: [Read Section 2 of the Statement.]

NEAL C. WILSON: Here are several lines packed with a lot of meaning. Who has some help for us on this or some question with regard to the Godhead or Trinity?

A. V. WALLENKAMPF: I will read the whole of the third sentence: "He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation." I am somewhat apprehensive of the statement, "His self-revelation." To me it opens the door too wide. It could open the door to almost anything, and

certainly pseudocharismatics will crawl in through it. Instead of saying "His self-revelation," I would like to say "the Holy Scriptures."

There is one more observation on the next line, "He acts in and through nature and history." This is the very reverse of the other one. This does not describe my God. This limits God to acting *only* through nature and history. My God acts through nature and history, and any other way He pleases. He is not limited to nature and history. I would like to add a few words at the end of that sentence: "He acts in and through nature and history *and beyond both*," or something similar. He has other means that supersede both nature and history.

MARIO VELOSO: The sentence that begins, "God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and ever-present" is followed by phrases that concern me. "above all, through all and in all" which is almost a quotation taken from another context. In the context of the church, this is true, but in the context of everything which is referred to here, it takes on the connotation of pantheism. I would like to suggest that this sentence "above all, through all and in all" be deleted. It would be just fine to put the period after "ever-present." I would also like to support Elder Wallenkampf on the sentence, "He acts

in and through nature and history."

LEIF HANSEN: In this discussion of the Trinity, which is always a difficult matter to discuss, I wonder if a certain misunderstanding could be eliminated by saying "a unity in purpose" so that the matter of physical unity may be eliminated.

NEAL C. WILSON: I see your point there. Maybe we ought to make it a unity in purpose rather than a physical unity.

J. G. BENNETT: The statement about the Godhead and the Trinity goes on to use the pronoun *He*. Later as the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost are discussed, we use the same pronoun *He*. I do recognize and accept the Trinity as a collective unity, but I would have a little difficulty in applying the pronoun *He* to the Trinity or the Godhead. For me this has deep theological implications.

VICTOR H. HALL: I refer to the phrase "Yet known through His self-revelation." Surely the only self-revelation that God has made is in His Son.

NEAL C. WILSON: We had a suggestion that rather than "self-revelation" we ought to use "Holy Scriptures." Now, of course, Christ is the Word and your point is that His revelation is in the Son.

VICTOR H. HALL: No one has seen God at any time.

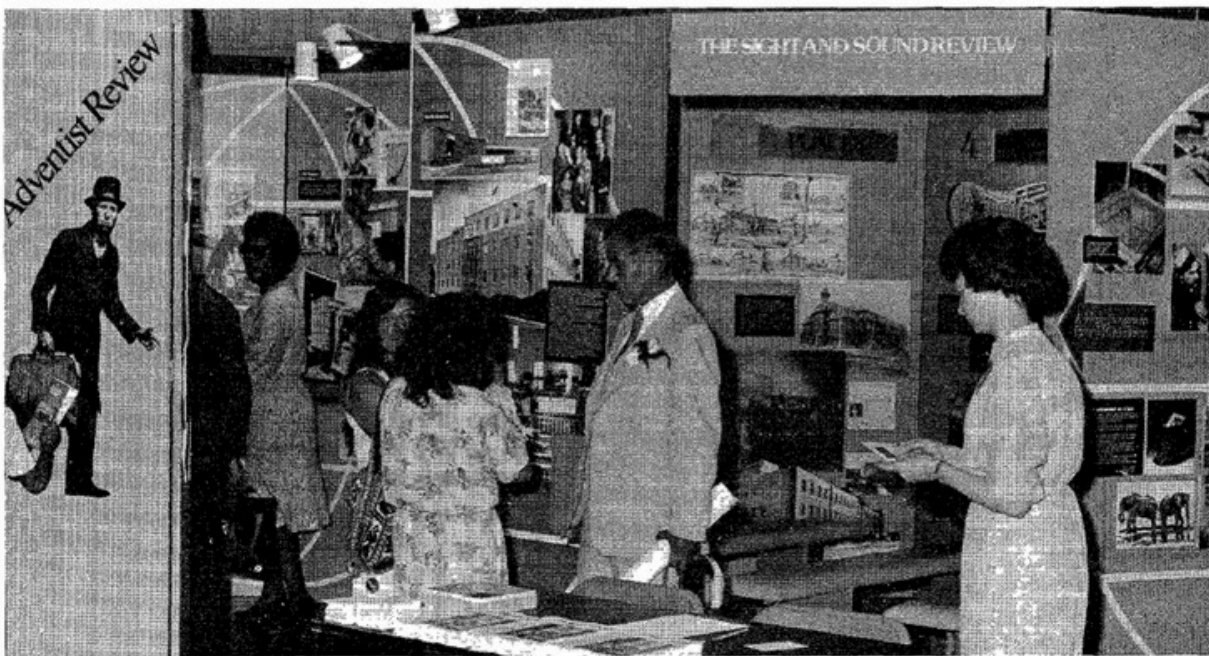
NEAL C. WILSON: You have a point there. The problem is, how do we see God today if it has to be through the Son? We have to see the Son through the Scriptures. I think the intent of those who drafted the statement was that there is no way for us to see God or the Son today except through Scripture.

H. J. HARRIS: It seems to me we have a conflict or a contradiction in this statement, "There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of Three co-eternal Persons." Would not it be more clear if we were to say "There is one God consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"? We begin with "one God." Then, without any explanation, we use "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Later, we go to "a unity of Three."

RICHARD HAMMILL: There are several comments I would like to make. Regarding this last suggestion, I think it is rather difficult to use the verb *consist* with God. I think we ought to be very careful in using terms that the Bible does not use of Him. When we framed this statement we tried to use Biblical phrases as much as we could.

The next concept has to do with that of self-revelation. I think it would be a mistake to limit this, because God reveals Himself in many ways. He reveals Himself certainly through

Continued on page 14



Slide presentations that run continuously inside the *Adventist Review* exhibit tell the story of the paper's pioneers, its nine editors, how the *GC Bulletins* are printed, and a unique conversion experience. The fifth program is an excerpt from the program "Immanuel—God With Us."

ADVENTIST REVIEW, APRIL 23, 1980

(515) 11

Continued from page 11

the Scriptures, as we have stated. He has revealed Himself in nature. Ellen White explicitly says there are two books—the book of the Written Word and the book of nature—and God sometimes reveals Himself in ways the Bible says we don't expect and don't always understand. So we tried to be no more or less explicit than the Bible is here. If we define this word, we rule out others that I think we have to understand when this is read.

The next matter is the concept about God in and through all. This is an exact Biblical statement. It could be in quotes except stylistically we have not been putting Biblical phrases in quotes. But Ephesians 4:5 uses these phrases with the verb *is*—God “*is*.” Just because there have been some pantheistic views in our past history, I don't think that we ought to try to rewrite the Bible, not wanting to use this verse of Scripture. The Bible does say that God is in all, and through all, and above all, in ways that we do not understand. Since this is a Biblical clause, I think we should try to maintain it.

My last comment has to do with the thought that God acts in and through nature and history. This does not say that these are the only ways that God acts. God acts in many, many ways, but the Bible explicitly says that He does act in nature and in history. When we say that, we are not denying others, but we are making an affirmation of that which the Bible clearly states.

MIGUEL CASTILLO: It has been interesting to me to find a statement of Ellen White that says that God acts in each natural phenomenon. This is in perfect agreement with the Biblical statement “My Father worketh . . . and I work.” The statement, therefore, that He acts in all, above all, and through all, is in perfect agreement with both the Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy as far as I am concerned.

W. G. C. MURDOCH: I would suggest that we use the expression “The Godhead or Trinity” rather than “Trinity.”

J. J. BATTISTONE: There was a reference to the pronoun *He*. We are talking about the Godhead, so the antecedent of the pronoun is God, not the three persons. In the reference to His self-revelation in Scripture, I prefer that reading.

PAUL C. CHIMA: I would suggest that when this goes back to the committee, Sister White's writings be studied to see what

term she used to describe God the Father and the Holy Spirit. Let us use a lot of her terminology to define this. Whatever decisions are made and expressions found, let us be content with them.

W. R. LESHER: I am concerned about words and phrases that would seem to limit God or to change the view of God that is given to us in Scripture. One of these is the suggestion that was made that we not use the word *He*. I presume that the speaker was referring to the use of “They” in paragraph 2. And, of course, the statement of Scripture is that “The Lord our God is One Lord.” And to speak of “They” or some other pronoun than “He” would make us tri-theist, instead of believing in one God. The expression “consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” might read more nicely. It seems to me it does introduce a limiting factor. It is much more in harmony with the mystery of God to simply say there is one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. My same observation would apply to the expression “a unity of purpose.” We assume that there is a unity of purpose in the Godhead. Still, God is a mystery. And we do not know in what ways that unity might exist other than in purpose. There are some ways in which we can seem to say that God is not a unity. But even then we are not sure what we are talking about. The idea of three Beings that are One is a mystery, and it seems to me that we should not try to remove all of that mystery from the statement.

N. C. WILSON: I would like now to appoint a committee to do some editing for us with these suggestions in mind. I would like to suggest that Dr. Richard Hammill serve as chairman and that the following serve as members:

Thomas H. Blincoe, dean of Andrews Theological Seminary
W. Duncan Eva, of the General Conference

Larry Geraty, of Andrews University

W. R. Leshner, from the Biblical Research Institute

James Londis, pastor and Biblical scholar

Robert Olson, from the White Estate

Jan Paulsen, from Newbold College

Mario Veloso, from South America

G. R. Thompson, chairman of the *Church Manual* Committee

M. T. Battle, secretary of the *Church Manual* Committee

This makes a committee of 11. It might be well to add R. H.

Brown also, since we are dealing with some areas of science.

W. J. HACKETT: We have a report from the Nominating Committee, which we will release at this time.

H. H. SCHMIDT: We will ask J. G. Smoot, our secretary, to bring the report.

J. G. SMOOT: We have a rather lengthy slate to present this evening. [The report was presented and accepted. It appeared on p. 32 of Bulletin 4.]

L. M. HAWKES: [Benediction.]

NEAL C. WILSON,
Chairman

W. J. HACKETT,
Chairman

D. H. BAASCH,
Proceedings Secretary

J. W. BOTHE,
Actions Secretary

Session actions

Youth Council—Church Manual Supplement Addition

Voted, To insert a new section, Youth Council, in the North American Supplement of the *Church Manual*, to read as follows:

The Adventist Youth Society organization as listed in the *Church Manual* is the official world plan of organization for youth ministry in the local church. However, in the North American Division an alternate organizational plan known as the Youth Council has been adopted and is followed in some churches. This plan differs from the Adventist Youth Society plan of organization mainly in its concept that all activities involving senior youth in the local church are planned and executed by one organization under the leadership of one person, known as the church youth leader. This organization includes the youth Sabbath school, youth temperance activities, Adventist Youth Society meetings, youth witnessing, and youth recreational activities.

The youth leader, an adult who has demonstrated mature abilities to relate to youth, is elected by the church and is chairman of the Youth Council. In larger churches he will be assisted by one or more church-elected associate youth leaders, one of whom would serve as secretary/treasurer of the Youth Council. One associate youth leader would serve as youth Sabbath school leader. In small churches, the church youth leader may not only be the youth leader for the church but may

serve as leader of the youth Sabbath school or class.

The Youth Council is to be made up of these church-elected officers and young people selected by these officers and the youth themselves to serve on the council. The size of the Youth Council is adaptable according to the size of the church.

The responsibility for the youth Sabbath school in this organizational plan is with the Youth Council. The youth Sabbath school will, however, use the resource materials and foster the objectives and program of the General Conference Sabbath School Department. It also will receive guidance from the local Sabbath School Council.

The detailed organizational plan of the Youth Council which was adopted by the 1974 Annual Council is printed in a special leaflet available from the local conference youth director. Further information and helps are available in *Youth Ministry Account*, a quarterly journal published by the General Conference Youth Council which is sent free to each conference for distribution to the churches in North America.

Adventist Junior Youth Society

In the North American Division the Pathfinder Club has replaced the Adventist Junior Youth Society (formerly JMV Society) in the local church. However, an Adventist Junior Youth Society is a part of the devotional and witnessing activities of each church school. Each classroom is considered a society with the teacher as the leader and the students serving as society officers.

Pupils in grades one to four are designated as Adventurers, while students in grades five to eight are listed as regular members of the Adventist Junior Youth Society. In larger schools where each grade is in a separate room, students in grades five and six would be members of the Adventist Junior Youth Society while those in grades seven and eight would be listed as members of an Adventist Earliteen Youth Society. This harmonizes with the divisions of the Sabbath school.

Society meetings are usually held the first period on Wednesday or Friday mornings and include not only programs which the students develop but also the study of the Adventist Junior Youth Classes (formerly JMV Classes) and Adventist Youth Honors (formerly MV Honors). An Investiture service is

ADVENTIST REVIEW, APRIL 23, 1980

Appendix B: My Baptismal Certificate (1986)

Summary of Doctrinal Beliefs

The following is a brief summary of the doctrinal beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists, together with some of the scriptural references upon which they are based:

- The true and living God, the first person of the Godhead, is our heavenly Father, and He, by His Son, Christ Jesus, created all things. (Matt. 28:18, 19; 1 Cor. 8:5, 6; Eph. 3:9; Jer. 10:10-12; Heb. 1:1-3; Acts 17:22-29; Col. 1:16-18.)
 - Jesus Christ, the second person of the Godhead, and the eternal Son of God, is the only Saviour from sin; and man's salvation is by grace through faith in Him. (Matt. 28:18, 19; John 3:16; Micah 5:2; Matt. 1:21; 2:5, 6; Acts 4:12; 1 John 5:11, 12; Eph. 1:9-15; 2:4-8; Rom. 3:23-26.)
 - The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, is Christ's representative on earth, and leads sinners to repentance and to obedience of all God's requirements. (Matt. 28:18, 19; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Rom. 8:1-10; Eph. 4:30.)
 - Through Christ, believers receive forgiveness of sins that are forsaken and confessed, and for which, as far as lies in their power, restitution is made. (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14, 15; 1 John 1:7-9; Isa. 55:6, 7; Eze. 33:15; Matt. 5:23, 24; 6:14, 15.)
 - The Bible is God's inspired word, and is the full, the sufficient, and the only basic rule of faith and practice. (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Ps. 119:9, 11, 105, 130; 1 Thess. 2:13; Isa. 8:20; Jer. 15:16; Heb. 4:12.)
 - All who enter the kingdom of heaven must have experienced conversion, or the new birth, through which man receives a new heart and becomes a new creature. Thus, regardless of ethnic or social background, he becomes a member of "the whole family in heaven and earth." (Matt. 18:3; John 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eze. 36:26, 27; Heb. 8:10-12; 1 Peter 1:23; 2:2; Acts 17:26; Eph. 3:15.)
 - Christ dwells in the regenerate heart, writing upon it the principles of God's law, leading the believer to delight to obey its precepts, and imparting power for such obedience. (2 Cor. 6:16; Ps. 40:8; Heb. 8:10-12; John 14:15; Col. 1:27; 3:16; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:14-21.)
 - Upon His ascension Christ began His ministry as high priest in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, which sanctuary is the antitype of the earthly tabernacle of the former dispensation. As in the type, a work of investigative judgment began as Christ entered the second phase of His ministry, in the Most Holy Place, foreshadowed in the earthly service by the Day of Atonement. This work of the investigative judgment in the heavenly sanctuary began in 1844, at the close of the 2300 years, and will end with the close of probation. (Heb. 4:14; 8:1, 2; Lev. 16:2, 29; Heb. 9:23, 24; Dan. 8:14; 9:24-27; Rev. 14:6, 7; 22:11.)
 - The second coming of Christ is the hope of the church, the climax of the gospel, and the goal of the plan of redemption, when Jesus will come literally, personally, and visibly, with all His holy angels. Many signs of the times testify that His coming is at hand. And the almost complete fulfillment of all the various lines of prophecy indicates that He "is near, even at the doors." (John 14:1-3; Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 9:28; Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 1:7; Matt. 25:31; Luke 9:26; 21:25-33; Matt. 24:14, 36-39, 33, margin.)
 - The righteous dead will be raised to life at Christ's second advent. Together with the righteous living, they will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and will go with Him to heaven, there to spend the one thousand years known as the millennium. (Rev. 1:7; John 5:25, 28, 29; Hosea 13:14; 1 Cor. 15:51-55; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; John 11:24, 25; 14:1-3; Rev. 20:6, 4, 5; Isa. 25:8, 9.)
 - The wicked who are living at the time of Christ's second advent will be slain by the brightness of His coming. These, with the wicked dead of all ages, will await the second resurrection, at the close of the one thousand years. (2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2:8; Jude 14, 15; Rev. 20:5, 12, 15; John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15; Isa. 24:21, 22.)
 - At the end of the thousand years, the following events will take place: (a) Christ and the righteous will descend from heaven, with the Holy City, the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2, 10); (b) the wicked dead will be resurrected for final judgment (Rev. 20:11, 12); (c) the wicked will receive the final wages of sin when fire comes down from God out of heaven to consume them (Rev. 20:7-10, 14, 15); and (d) this fire, which destroys the works of sin, will purify the earth (2 Peter 3:10-14; Mal. 4:1, 3; Rev. 20:8, 4).
 - The earth, cleansed by fire and renewed by the power of God, will become the eternal home of the redeemed. (2 Peter 3:9-13; Isa. 65:17-25; 35:1-10; 45:18; Matt. 5:5; Mal. 4:1-3; Prov. 11:31.)
 - The seventh day of the week is the eternal sign of Christ's power as Creator and Redeemer, and is therefore the Lord's day, or the Christian Sabbath, constituting the seal of the living God. It should be observed from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday. (Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 16:23-31; 20:8-11; John 1:1-3, 14; Eze. 20:12, 20; Mark 1:21-32; 2:27, 28; Isa. 58:13; Luke 4:16; 23:54-56; 24:1; Acts 17:2; Heb. 4:9-11; Isa. 66:22, 23; Lev. 23:32.)
 - Marriage is one of the God-given institutions dating from the Garden of Eden, before sin entered the world. Jesus honored the institution of marriage and upheld its sanctity and permanence. The New Testament repeatedly affirms the sacredness of the marriage relationship, and instructs that it is to be entered into with a lifelong commitment to fidelity and moral purity. Sexual intimacies between male and female outside of marriage or between members of the same sex are contrary to the divine plan and are condemned in the Bible as sin.
- Those who are followers of Jesus will by His grace maintain moral purity within these Biblical guidelines concerning sexual relationships. "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from immorality" (1 Thess. 4:3, R.S.V.).
- The Christian husband and wife are to love and respect each other as God loves and respects them. They are commanded to love and respect their children, to treat them gently, and to teach them to love and serve God. To this end they are to utilize family worship, attendance at Sabbath school and the other church services, and as much as possible, the schools operated by the church. Likewise children are to fulfill their responsibilities to respect and obey their parents. (Gen. 2:21-24; Deut. 4:6, 7; Matt. 19:3-9; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 5:24, 25, 28; Col. 3:18-21; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; Heb. 11:23-25; 13:4; 1 Peter 3:7.)
- The tithe is holy unto the Lord, and is God's provision for the support of His ministry. Freewill offerings are also part of God's plan for the support of His work throughout the world. (Lev. 27:30-32; Mal. 3:8-12; Num. 18:20-28; Matt. 23:23; Prov. 3:9, 10; 1 Cor. 9:13, 14; 2 Cor. 9:6, 7; Ps. 96:8.)
- Immortality comes only through the gospel, and is bestowed as a gift from God at Christ's second coming. (1 Cor. 15:21, 22, 51-55; Ps. 146:3, 4; Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10; 1 Tim. 6:15, 16; 2 Tim. 1:10; 1 John 5:11, 12.)
- The condition of man in death is one of unconsciousness. All men, good and evil alike, remain in the grave from death to the resurrection. (Eccl. 9:5, 6; Ps. 115:17; 146:3, 4; Job 14:10-12, 21, 22; 17:13; John 11:11-14; 1 Thess. 4:13; John 5:28, 29.)
- The Christian is called unto sanctification, and his life should be characterized by carefulness in deportment and modesty and simplicity in dress. (1 Thess. 3:13; 4:3, 7; 5:23; 1 Peter 2:21; 3:15, 3-5; Isa. 3:16-24; 1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Tim. 2:9, 10.)
- The Christian should recognize his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. He will therefore honor God by caring for his body intelligently, partaking in moderation of that which is good and avoiding the use of that which is harmful, abstaining from all unclean foods, from the use, manufacture, or sale of alcoholic beverages, the use, manufacture, or sale of tobacco in any of its forms for human consumption, and from the misuse of, or trafficking in, narcotics or other drugs. (1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19, 20; 9:25; 10:31; 2 Cor. 7:1; Gal. 5:17-21; 6:7, 8; 1 Peter 2:9-12; 1 Cor. 10:1-11; Rev. 11:1-8.)
- The church is to come behind in no gift, and the presence of the gift of prophecy is to be one of the identifying marks of the remnant church. (1 Cor. 1:5-7; 12:1-28; Amos 3:7; Hosea 12:10, 13; Rev. 12:17; 19:10.) Seventh-day Adventists recognize that this gift was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White.
- The Bible teaches a definite church organization. The members of this organization are under sacred obligation to be subject thereunto, loyally to support it, and to share in its maintenance. They are admonished not to forsake the assembling of themselves together. (Matt. 16:16-18; Eph. 1:10-23; 2:19-22; 1 Cor. 14:33-40; Titus 1:5-9; Matt. 18:15-18; 1 Cor. 12:12-28; 16:1-3; Heb. 10:25; Acts 4:32-35; 6:1-7.)
- Baptism by immersion typifies the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and openly expresses faith in His saving grace and the renunciation of sin and the world, and is recognized as a condition of entrance into church membership. (Matt. 3:13-17; 28:19; Acts 2:38, 41-47; 8:35-39; 16:32, 33; 22:16; Rom. 6:1-11; Gal. 3:27; Col. 3:1-3.)
- The ordinance of the Lord's Supper commemorates the Saviour's death; and participation by members of the body is essential to Christian growth and fellowship. It is to be preceded by the ordinance of foot washing as a preparation for this solemn service. (Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; John 6:48-56; 13:1-17; 1 Cor. 11:27-30.)
- In the Christian life there is complete separation from worldly practices, such as card playing, theatergoing, dancing, et cetera, which tend to deaden and destroy the spiritual life. (2 Cor. 6:15-18; 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:19-22; Eph. 5:8-11; Col. 3:5-10.)
- Through the study of the Word, God speaks to us, imparting light and strength; and through prayer the soul is united with God. These are Heaven's ordained means for obtaining victory in the conflict with sin and for the development of Christian character. (Ps. 19:7, 8; 119:130; John 6:36; 17:17; 1 Peter 2:2; 1 Thess. 5:17; Luke 18:1; Ps. 55:17; Isa. 50:4.)
- Every church member is under sacred command from Jesus to use his talents in personal soul-winning work in helping to give the gospel to all the world. When this work is finished Jesus will come. (Matt. 25:14-29; 28:18-20; Rev. 22:17; Isa. 43:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:17-20; Rom. 10:13-15; Matt. 24:14.)
- In accordance with God's uniform dealing with mankind, warning them of coming events that will vitally affect their destiny, He has sent forth a proclamation of the approaching return of Christ. This preparatory message is symbolized by the three angels' messages of Revelation 14, and meets its fulfillment in the great Second Advent Movement today. This has brought forth the remnant, or Seventh-day Adventist Church, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. (Amos 3:7; Matt. 24:29-34; Rev. 14:6-10; Zeph. 3:13; Micah 4:7, 8; Rev. 14:12; Isa. 26:2; Rev. 22:14.)

Baptismal Vow

1. I believe in God the Father, in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit.
2. I accept the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary as the atoning sacrifice for my sins, and believe that through faith in His shed blood I am saved from sin and its penalty.
3. I renounce the world and its sinful ways, and have accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour, and believe that God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven my sins and given me a new heart.
4. I accept by faith the righteousness of Christ, recognizing Him as my Intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary, and claim His promise to strengthen me by His indwelling Spirit so that I may receive power to do His will.
5. I believe that the Bible is God's inspired word, and that it constitutes the only rule of faith and practice for the Christian.
6. Loving the Lord with all my heart, it is my purpose, by the power of the indwelling Christ, to keep God's law of Ten Commandments, including the fourth, which requires the observance of the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath of the Lord.
7. The soon coming of Jesus is the blessed hope in my heart, and I am determined to be ready to meet the Lord and to do all in my power to witness to His loving salvation and by life and word to help others to be ready for His appearing.
8. I accept the Biblical teaching of spiritual gifts, and believe that the gift of prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church.
9. I believe in church organization, and it is my purpose to support the church by my tithes and offerings, and by my personal effort and influence.
10. I believe that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and I will honor God by caring for it; I will abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages, narcotics, tobacco in all its forms, and from foods which God has pronounced unclean.
11. Knowing and understanding the fundamental Bible principles as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it is my purpose by the grace of God to order my life in harmony with these principles.
12. I accept the New Testament teaching of baptism by immersion, and desire to be so baptized as a public expression of faith in Christ and His forgiveness of my sins.
13. I believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy and that people of every nation, race, and language are invited and accepted into its fellowship. I desire to be a member in this local congregation of the world church.

Name _____
 Address _____
 Date _____

Prepared by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Washington, D.C. 20012 OFFSET IN U.S.A.

Baptismal Certificate

In harmony with our Lord's command, _____ *Ingo Willy Sorke* _____
 born on the 4th day of January, 1968, was baptized at _____ Keene _____
 _____ Texas on the 31st day of _____ May _____, 1986, and
 received into the _____ Keene _____ *Seventh-day Adventist Church of the*
 _____ Texas _____ Conference on the 5th day of _____ July _____, 1986.

Phil Payne _____ *Lain Mikesell* _____
 Officiating Minister Church Clerk
 Elder Phil Payne Lain Mikesell

Appendix C: *The Story of Redemption - Chapters 1-3*

Note: A Must Read - *This Masterful Depiction of the Great Controversy leaves no hint of a Trinity but transparently affirms a theology of the Father and the Son. How are the Father and Son - and their relationship - described? Are they "one God"? What impression do you get from their relationship? Why not utilize this excerpt as a reading in private or family worship?! It is here reproduced without alteration.*

Lucifer in heaven, before his rebellion, was a high and exalted angel, next in honor to God's dear Son. His countenance, like those of the other angels, was mild and expressive of happiness. His forehead was high and broad, showing a powerful intellect. His form was perfect; his bearing noble and majestic. A special light beamed in his countenance and shone around him brighter and more beautiful than around the other angels; yet Christ, God's dear Son, had the pre-eminence over all the angelic host. He was one with the Father before the angels were created. Lucifer was envious of Christ, and gradually assumed command which devolved on Christ alone. {SR 13.1}

The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that He might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon His Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. The Father then made known that it was ordained by Himself that Christ, His Son, should be equal with Himself; so that wherever was the presence of His Son, it was as His own presence. The word of the Son was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son He had invested with authority to command the heavenly host. Especially was His Son to work in union with Himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon the earth. His Son would carry out His will and His purposes but would do nothing of Himself alone. The Father's will would be fulfilled in Him. {SR 13.2}

Lucifer was envious and jealous of Jesus Christ. Yet when all the angels bowed to Jesus to acknowledge His supremacy and high authority and rightful rule, he bowed with them; but his heart was filled with envy and hatred. Christ had been taken into the special counsel of God in regard to His plans, while Lucifer was unacquainted with them. He did not understand, neither was he permitted to know, the purposes of God. But Christ was acknowledged sovereign of heaven, His power and authority to be the same as that of God Himself. Lucifer thought that he was himself a favorite in heaven among the angels. He had been highly exalted, but this did not call forth from him gratitude and praise to his Creator. He aspired to the height of God Himself. He gloried in his loftiness. He knew that he was honored by the angels. He had a special mission to execute. He had been near the great Creator, and the ceaseless beams of glorious light enshrouding the eternal God had shone especially upon him. He thought how angels had obeyed his command with pleasurable alacrity. Were not his garments light and beautiful? Why should Christ thus be honored before himself? {SR 14.1}

He left the immediate presence of the Father, dissatisfied and filled with envy against Jesus Christ. Concealing his real purposes, he assembled the angelic host. He introduced his subject, which was himself. As one aggrieved, he related the preference God had given Jesus to the neglect of himself. He told them that henceforth all the sweet liberty the angels had enjoyed was at an end. For had not a ruler been appointed over them, to whom they from henceforth must yield servile honor? He stated to them that he had called them together to assure them that he no longer would submit to this invasion of his rights and theirs; that never would he again bow down to Christ; that he would take the honor upon

himself which should have been conferred upon him, and would be the commander of all who would submit to follow him and obey his voice. {SR 14.2}

There was contention among the angels. Lucifer and his sympathizers were striving to reform the government of God. They were discontented and unhappy because they could not look into His unsearchable wisdom and ascertain His purposes in exalting His Son, and endowing Him with such unlimited power and command. They rebelled against the authority of the Son. {SR 15.1}

Angels that were loyal and true sought to reconcile this mighty, rebellious angel to the will of his Creator. They justified the act of God in conferring honor upon Christ, and with forcible reasoning sought to convince Lucifer that no less honor was his now than before the Father had proclaimed the honor which He had conferred upon His Son. They clearly set forth that Christ was the Son of God, existing with Him before the angels were created; and that He had ever stood at the right hand of God, and His mild, loving authority had not heretofore been questioned; and that He had given no commands but what it was joy for the heavenly host to execute. They urged that Christ's receiving special honor from the Father, in the presence of the angels, did not detract from the honor that Lucifer had heretofore received. The angels wept. They anxiously sought to move him to renounce his wicked design and yield submission to their Creator; for all had heretofore been peace and harmony, and what could occasion this dissenting, rebellious voice? {SR 15.2}

Lucifer refused to listen. And then he turned from the loyal and true angels, denouncing them as slaves. These angels, true to God, stood in amazement as they saw that Lucifer was successful in his effort to incite rebellion. He promised them a new and better government than they then had, in which all would be freedom. Great numbers signified their purpose to accept him as their leader and chief commander. As he saw his advances were met with success, he flattered himself that he should yet have all the angels on his side, and that he would be equal with God Himself, and his voice of authority would be heard in commanding the entire host of heaven. Again the loyal angels warned him, and assured him what must be the consequences if he persisted; that He who could create the angels could by His power overturn all their authority and in some signal manner punish their audacity and terrible rebellion. To think that an angel should resist the law of God which was as sacred as Himself! They warned the rebellious to close their ears to Lucifer's deceptive reasonings, and advised him and all who had been affected by him to go to God and confess their wrong for even admitting a thought of questioning His authority. {SR 16.1}

Many of Lucifer's sympathizers were inclined to heed the counsel of the loyal angels and repent of their dissatisfaction and be again received to the confidence of the Father and His dear Son. The mighty revolter then declared that he was acquainted with God's law, and if he should submit to servile obedience, his honor would be taken from him. No more would he be intrusted with his exalted mission. He told them that himself and they also had now gone too far to go back, and he would brave the consequences, for to bow in servile worship to the Son of God he never would; that God would not forgive, and now they must assert their liberty and gain by force the position and authority which was not willingly accorded to them. [Thus it was that Lucifer, "the light-bearer," the sharer of God's glory, the attendant of his throne, by transgression became Satan, "the adversary."—Patriarchs and Prophets, 40.] {SR 16.2}

The loyal angels hastened speedily to the Son of God and acquainted Him with what was taking place among the angels. They found the Father in conference with His beloved Son, to determine the means by which, for the best good of the loyal angels, the assumed authority of Satan could be forever put down. The great God could at once have hurled this archdeceiver from heaven; but this was not His

purpose. He would give the rebellious an equal chance to measure strength and might with His own Son and His loyal angels. In this battle every angel would choose his own side and be manifested to all. It would not have been safe to suffer any who united with Satan in his rebellion to continue to occupy heaven. They had learned the lesson of genuine rebellion against the unchangeable law of God, and this is incurable. If God had exercised His power to punish this chief rebel, disaffected angels would not have been manifested; hence, God took another course, for He would manifest distinctly to all the heavenly host His justice and His judgment. {SR 17.1}

War in Heaven

It was the highest crime to rebel against the government of God. All heaven seemed in commotion. The angels were marshaled in companies, each division with a higher commanding angel at its head. Satan was warring against the law of God, because ambitious to exalt himself and unwilling to submit to the authority of God's Son, heaven's great commander. {SR 17.2}

All the heavenly host were summoned to appear before the Father, to have each case determined. Satan unblushingly made known his dissatisfaction that Christ should be preferred before him. He stood up proudly and urged that he should be equal with God and should be taken into conference with the Father and understand His purposes. God informed Satan that to His Son alone He would reveal His secret purposes, and He required all the family in heaven, even Satan, to yield Him implicit, unquestioned obedience; but that he (Satan) had proved himself unworthy of a place in heaven. Then Satan exultingly pointed to his sympathizers, comprising nearly one half of all the angels, and exclaimed, "These are with me! Will you expel these also, and make such a void in heaven?" He then declared that he was prepared to resist the authority of Christ and to defend his place in heaven by force of might, strength against strength. {SR 18.1}

Good angels wept to hear the words of Satan and his exulting boasts. God declared that the rebellious should remain in heaven no longer. Their high and happy state had been held upon condition of obedience to the law which God had given to govern the high order of intelligences. But no provision had been made to save those who should venture to transgress His law. Satan grew bold in his rebellion, and expressed his contempt of the Creator's law. This Satan could not bear. He claimed that angels needed no law but should be left free to follow their own will, which would ever guide them right; that law was a restriction of their liberty; and that to abolish law was one great object of his standing as he did. The condition of the angels, he thought, needed improvement. Not so the mind of God, who had made laws and exalted them equal to Himself. The happiness of the angelic host consisted in their perfect obedience to law. Each had his special work assigned him, and until Satan rebelled, there had been perfect order and harmonious action in heaven. {SR 18.2}

Then there was war in heaven. The Son of God, the Prince of heaven, and His loyal angels engaged in conflict with the archrebel and those who united with him. The Son of God and true, loyal angels prevailed; and Satan and his sympathizers were expelled from heaven. All the heavenly host acknowledged and adored the God of justice. Not a taint of rebellion was left in heaven. All was again peaceful and harmonious as before. Angels in heaven mourned the fate of those who had been their companions in happiness and bliss. Their loss was felt in heaven. {SR 19.1}

The Father consulted His Son in regard to at once carrying out their purpose to make man to inhabit the earth. He would place man upon probation to test his loyalty before he could be rendered eternally secure. If he endured the test wherewith God saw fit to prove him, he should eventually be equal with

the angels. He was to have the favor of God, and he was to converse with angels, and they with him. He did not see fit to place them beyond the power of disobedience. {SR 19.2}

Chapter 2—The Creation - This chapter is based on Genesis 1.

The Father and the Son engaged in the mighty, wondrous work they had contemplated—of creating the world. The earth came forth from the hand of the Creator exceedingly beautiful. There were mountains and hills and plains; and interspersed among them were rivers and bodies of water. The earth was not one extensive plain, but the monotony of the scenery was broken by hills and mountains, not high and ragged as they now are, but regular and beautiful in shape. The bare, high rocks were never seen upon them, but lay beneath the surface, answering as bones to the earth. The waters were regularly dispersed. The hills, mountains, and very beautiful plains were adorned with plants and flowers and tall, majestic trees of every description, which were many times larger and much more beautiful than trees now are. The air was pure and healthful, and the earth seemed like a noble palace. Angels beheld and rejoiced at the wonderful and beautiful works of God. {SR 20.1}

After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the Father and Son carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. And now God said to His Son, “Let us make man in our image.” As Adam came forth from the hand of his Creator he was of noble height and of beautiful symmetry. He was more than twice as tall as men now living upon the earth, and was well proportioned. His features were perfect and beautiful. His complexion was neither white nor sallow, but ruddy, glowing with the rich tint of health. Eve was not quite as tall as Adam. Her head reached a little above his shoulders. She, too, was noble, perfect in symmetry, and very beautiful. {SR 20.2}

This sinless pair wore no artificial garments. They were clothed with a covering of light and glory, such as the angels wear. While they lived in obedience to God, this circle of light enshrouded them. Although everything God had made was in the perfection of beauty, and there seemed nothing wanting upon the earth which God had created to make Adam and Eve happy, yet He manifested His great love to them by planting a garden especially for them. A portion of their time was to be occupied in the happy employment of dressing the garden, and a portion in receiving the visits of angels, listening to their instruction, and in happy meditation. Their labor was not wearisome but pleasant and invigorating. This beautiful garden was to be their home. {SR 21.1}

In this garden the Lord placed trees of every variety for usefulness and beauty. There were trees laden with luxuriant fruit, of rich fragrance, beautiful to the eye, and pleasant to the taste, designed of God to be food for the holy pair. There were the lovely vines which grew upright, laden with their burden of fruit, unlike anything man has seen since the fall. The fruit was very large and of different colors; some nearly black, some purple, red, pink, and light green. This beautiful and luxuriant growth of fruit upon the branches of the vine was called grapes. They did not trail upon the ground, although not supported by trellises, but the weight of the fruit bowed them down. It was the happy labor of Adam and Eve to form beautiful bowers from the branches of the vine and train them, forming dwellings of nature’s beautiful, living trees and foliage, laden with fragrant fruit. {SR 21.2}

The earth was clothed with beautiful verdure, while myriads of fragrant flowers of every variety and hue sprang up in rich profusion around them. Everything was tastefully and gloriously arranged. In the midst of the garden stood the tree of life, the glory of which surpassed all other trees. Its fruit looked like

apples of gold and silver, and was to perpetuate immortality. The leaves contained healing properties. {SR 22.1}

Adam and Eve in Eden

Very happy were the holy pair in Eden. Unlimited control was given them over every living thing. The lion and the lamb sported peacefully and harmlessly around them, or slumbered at their feet. Birds of every variety of color and plumage flitted among the trees and flowers and about Adam and Eve, while their mellow-toned music echoed among the trees in sweet accord to the praises of their Creator. {SR 22.2}

Adam and Eve were charmed with the beauties of their Eden home. They were delighted with the little songsters around them, wearing their bright yet graceful plumage, and warbling forth their happy, cheerful music. The holy pair united with them and raised their voices in harmonious songs of love, praise, and adoration to the Father and His dear Son for the tokens of love which surrounded them. They recognized the order and harmony of creation, which spoke of wisdom and knowledge that were infinite. Some new beauty and additional glory of their Eden home they were continually discovering, which filled their hearts with deeper love and brought from their lips expressions of gratitude and reverence to their Creator. {SR 22.3}

Chapter 3—Consequences of Rebellion

In the midst of the garden, near the tree of life, stood the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This tree was especially designed of God to be the pledge of their obedience, faith, and love to Him. Of this tree the Lord commanded our first parents not to eat, neither to touch it, lest they die. He told them that they might freely eat of all the trees in the garden except one, but if they ate of that tree they should surely die. {SR 24.1}

When Adam and Eve were placed in the beautiful garden they had everything for their happiness which they could desire. But God chose, in His all-wise arrangements, to test their loyalty before they could be rendered eternally secure. They were to have His favor, and He was to converse with them and they with Him. Yet He did not place evil out of their reach. Satan was permitted to tempt them. If they endured the trial they were to be in perpetual favor with God and the heavenly angels. {SR 24.2}

Satan stood in amazement at his new condition. His happiness was gone. He looked upon the angels who, with him, were once so happy, but who had been expelled from heaven with him. Before their fall not a shade of discontent had marred their perfect bliss. Now all seemed changed. Countenances which had reflected the image of their Maker were gloomy and despairing. Strife, discord, and bitter recrimination were among them. Previous to their rebellion these things had been unknown in heaven. Satan now beheld the terrible results of his rebellion. He shuddered, and feared to face the future and to contemplate the end of these things. {SR 24.3}

The hour for joyful, happy songs of praise to God and His dear Son had come. Satan had led the heavenly choir. He had raised the first note; then all the angelic host had united with him, and glorious strains of music had resounded through heaven in honor of God and His dear Son. But now, instead of strains of sweetest music, discord and angry words fall upon the ear of the great rebel leader. Where is he? Is it not all a horrible dream? Is he shut out of heaven? Are the gates of heaven never more to open to admit him? The hour of worship draws nigh, when bright and holy angels bow before the Father. No

more will he unite in heavenly song. No more will he bow in reverence and holy awe before the presence of the eternal God. {SR 25.1}

Could he be again as he was when he was pure, true, and loyal, gladly would he yield up the claims of his authority. But he was lost! beyond redemption, for his presumptuous rebellion! And this was not all; he had led others to rebellion and to the same lost condition with himself—angels, who had never thought to question the will of Heaven or refuse obedience to the law of God till he had put it into their minds, presenting before them that they might enjoy a greater good, a higher and more glorious liberty. This had been the sophistry whereby he had deceived them. A responsibility now rests upon him from which he would fain be released. {SR 25.2}

These spirits had become turbulent with disappointed hopes. Instead of greater good, they were experiencing the sad results of disobedience and disregard of law. Never more would these unhappy beings be swayed by the mild rule of Jesus Christ. Never more would their spirits be stirred by the deep, earnest love, peace, and joy which His presence had ever inspired in them, to be returned to Him in cheerful obedience and reverential honor. {SR 25.3}

Satan Seeks Reinstatement

Satan trembled as he viewed his work. He was alone in meditation upon the past, the present, and his future plans. His mighty frame shook as with a tempest. An angel from heaven was passing. He called him and entreated an interview with Christ. This was granted him. He then related to the Son of God that he repented of his rebellion and wished again the favor of God. He was willing to take the place God had previously assigned him, and be under His wise command. Christ wept at Satan's woe but told him, as the mind of God, that he could never be received into heaven. Heaven must not be placed in jeopardy. All heaven would be marred should he be received back, for sin and rebellion originated with him. The seeds of rebellion were still within him. He had, in his rebellion, no occasion for his course, and he had hopelessly ruined not only himself but the host of angels also, who would then have been happy in heaven had he remained steadfast. The law of God could condemn but could not pardon. {SR 26.1}

He repented not of his rebellion because he saw the goodness of God which he had abused. It was not possible that his love for God had so increased since his fall that it would lead to cheerful submission and happy obedience to His law which had been despised. The wretchedness he realized in losing the sweet light of heaven, and the sense of guilt which forced itself upon him, and the disappointment he experienced himself in not finding his expectation realized, were the cause of his grief. To be commander out of heaven was vastly different from being thus honored in heaven. The loss he had sustained of all the privileges of heaven seemed too much to be borne. He wished to regain these. {SR 26.2}

This great change of position had not increased his love for God, nor for His wise and just law. When Satan became fully convinced that there was no possibility of his being reinstated in the favor of God, he manifested his malice with increased hatred and fiery vehemence. {SR 27.1}

God knew that such determined rebellion would not remain inactive. Satan would invent means to annoy the heavenly angels and show contempt for His authority. As he could not gain admission within the gates of heaven, he would wait just at the entrance, to taunt the angels and seek contention with them as they went in and out. He would seek to destroy the happiness of Adam and Eve. He would endeavor to incite them to rebellion, knowing that this would cause grief in heaven. {SR 27.2}

The Plot Against the Human Family

His followers were seeking him, and he aroused himself and, assuming a look of defiance, informed them of his plans to wrest from God the noble Adam and his companion Eve. If he could in any way beguile them to disobedience, God would make some provision whereby they might be pardoned, and then himself and all the fallen angels would be in a fair way to share with them of God's mercy. If this should fail, they could unite with Adam and Eve, for when once they should transgress the law of God they would be subjects of God's wrath, like themselves. Their transgression would place them, also, in a state of rebellion, and they could unite with Adam and Eve, take possession of Eden, and hold it as their home. And if they could gain access to the tree of life in the midst of the garden, their strength would, they thought, be equal to that of the holy angels, and even God Himself could not expel them. {SR 27.3}

Satan held a consultation with his evil angels. They did not all readily unite to engage in this hazardous and terrible work. He told them that he would not entrust any one of them to accomplish this work, for he thought that he alone had wisdom sufficient to carry forward so important an enterprise. He wished them to consider the matter while he should leave them and seek retirement, to mature his plans. He sought to impress upon them that this was their last and only hope. If they failed here, all prospect of regaining and controlling heaven, or any part of God's creation, was hopeless. {SR 28.1}

Satan went alone to mature plans that would most surely secure the fall of Adam and Eve. He had fears that his purposes might be defeated. And again, even if he should be successful in leading Adam and Eve to disobey the commandment of God, and thus become transgressors of His law, and no good come to himself, his own case would not be improved; his guilt would only be increased. {SR 28.2}

He shuddered at the thought of plunging the holy, happy pair into the misery and remorse he was himself enduring. He seemed in a state of indecision: at one time firm and determined, then hesitating and wavering. His angels were seeking him, their leader, to acquaint him with their decision. They would unite with Satan in his plans, and with him bear the responsibility and share the consequences. {SR 28.3}

Satan cast off his feelings of despair and weakness, and, as their leader, fortified himself to brave out the matter and do all in his power to defy the authority of God and His Son. He acquainted them with his plans. If he should come boldly upon Adam and Eve and make complaints of God's own Son, they would not listen to him for a moment but would be prepared for such an attack. Should he seek to intimidate them because of his power, so recently an angel in high authority, he could accomplish nothing. He decided that cunning and deceit would do what might, or force, could not. {SR 29.1}

Adam and Eve Warned

God assembled the angelic host to take measures to avert the threatened evil. It was decided in heaven's council for angels to visit Eden and warn Adam that he was in danger from the foe. Two angels sped on their way to visit our first parents. The holy pair received them with joyful innocence, expressing their grateful thanks to their Creator for thus surrounding them with such a profusion of His bounty. Everything lovely and attractive was theirs to enjoy, and everything seemed wisely adapted to their wants; and that which they prized above all other blessings, was the society of the Son of God and the heavenly angels, for they had much to relate to them at every visit, of their new discoveries of the beauties of nature in their lovely Eden home, and they had many questions to ask relative to many things which they could but indistinctly comprehend. {SR 29.2}

The angels graciously and lovingly gave them the information they desired. They also gave them the sad history of Satan's rebellion and fall. They then distinctly informed them that the tree of knowledge was placed in the garden to be a pledge of their obedience and love to God; that the high and happy estate of the holy angels was to be retained upon condition of obedience; that they were similarly situated; that they could obey the law of God and be inexpressibly happy, or disobey and lose their high estate and be plunged into hopeless despair. {SR 29.3}

They told Adam and Eve that God would not compel them to obey—that He had not removed from them power to go contrary to His will; that they were moral agents, free to obey or disobey. There was but one prohibition that God had seen fit to lay upon them as yet. If they should transgress the will of God they would surely die. They told Adam and Eve that the most exalted angel, next in order to Christ, refused obedience to the law of God which He had ordained to govern heavenly beings; that this rebellion had caused war in heaven, which resulted in the rebellious being expelled therefrom, and every angel was driven out of heaven who had united with him in questioning the authority of the great Jehovah; and that this fallen foe was now an enemy to all that concerned the interest of God and His dear Son. {SR 30.1}

They told them that Satan purposed to do them harm, and it was necessary for them to be guarded, for they might come in contact with the fallen foe; but he could not harm them while they yielded obedience to God's command, for, if necessary, every angel from heaven would come to their help rather than that he should in any way do them harm. But if they disobeyed the command of God, then Satan would have power to ever annoy, perplex, and trouble them. If they remained steadfast against the first insinuations of Satan, they were as secure as the heavenly angels. But if they yielded to the tempter, He who spared not the exalted angels would not spare them. They must suffer the penalty of their transgression, for the law of God was as sacred as Himself, and He required implicit obedience from all in heaven and on earth. {SR 30.2}

The angels cautioned Eve not to separate from her husband in her employment, for she might be brought in contact with this fallen foe. If separated from each other they would be in greater danger than if both were together. The angels charged them to closely follow the instructions God had given them in reference to the tree of knowledge, for in perfect obedience they were safe, and this fallen foe could then have no power to deceive them. God would not permit Satan to follow the holy pair with continual temptations. He could have access to them only at the tree of knowledge of good and evil. {SR 31.1}

Adam and Eve assured the angels that they should never transgress the express command of God, for it was their highest pleasure to do His will. The angels united with Adam and Eve in holy strains of harmonious music, and as their songs pealed forth from blissful Eden, Satan heard the sound of their strains of joyful adoration to the Father and Son. And as Satan heard it his envy, hatred, and malignity increased, and he expressed his anxiety to his followers to incite them (Adam and Eve) to disobedience and at once bring down the wrath of God upon them and change their songs of praise to hatred and curses to their Maker. {SR 31.2}

Appendix D: At the Risk of Temporal Loss - My Personal Journey

A Personal Perspective - What Happened?!

How I got into this topic to begin with . . . [originally written 1.9.2021]

For years I had questions in my mind when presenting the doctrine of the Trinity - not that we can fully understand God by any means, but the concept of the Trinity lacked a “Thus sayeth the Lord”, and it defied the most basic of logic. Many texts used to defend this doctrine simply don’t say what we make them say, which was quite disturbing at best, and intellectually dishonest at worst.

But beyond doctrinal and denominational squabbles, I truly wish to know Jesus better. Deeper. Closer. So here’s my story, still unfolding.

I was a “mainstream” pastor and professor for 20+ years, earnestly searching my heart, seeking to teach the truth, learning (and yearning) to love people more genuinely (including my family); in short, going about the Lord’s work.

Turning Point: The TOSC Committee on Ordination

Then came the TOSC Committee on ordination at the General Conference (2012-2014). After an insightful presentation by a pastor on the relations within the Godhead, a top-tier biblical scholar stood up and categorically exclaimed (in my hearing!): “God does not have a Son!” I was stunned - and vowed to make this my next topic of study. [The scholar has since clarified that God didn’t have a “natural” Son, like humans do via pro-creation. I maintain, however, that God had a literal Son, though the details are not revealed).

With the ordination debate getting old and not going anywhere (it was irredeemably paralyzed by analysis, emotions, misunderstandings, and presuppositions), I had asked God for a while what to study next. All during the ordination debate I knew there was something else amiss in our theological exchange; I just couldn’t put my finger on it. But here it was: The Sonship and true identity of Jesus Christ - really, the heart of the Great Controversy and the depth and height of the Gospel.

Reading the Bible

To that end I proceeded to read through the entire New Testament (in Greek), simply paying attention to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - no other literature or sources.

I was stunned again by the clear and consistent distinction between God and His Son Jesus Christ, and the absence of stock phrases such as “God the Son” and “God the Spirit”. The introductions to the New Testament letters in particular caught my attention. Here just one example (it works with every letter!):

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 1:7).

Mind you, again, I wasn’t in any contact with any anti-trinitarian movements, people, literature, or sources at that point. I was simply reading, studying, pondering. Alone with the Alone!

I embraced - and wrestled with - John 17:3; Rom 15:6; 1 Cor 8:4-6; 11:3; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Thess 1:9-10; 1 Tim 2:5; 2 John 3; Rev 3:12. *Please pause right now and simply read these text - What do you think?!*

Then at a church conference (at which I presented seminars) a speaker was expounding on Jesus' relation to the Father. I sat up in my chair and elbowed my wife: "This guy knows what I know!"

To my surprise, other pastors and scholars were studying the issue of the Trinity as well and were independently coming to similar conclusions!

Michigan Camp Meeting

During that time I was also invited to speak at Michigan Camp Meeting on the topic of the Trinity. I eagerly agreed and kept studying. A few weeks before the camp meeting (Summer 2016) I realized that I could not defend the doctrine of the Trinity (meaning 3 divine persons = 1 God, as formulated traditionally and by our fundamental beliefs) in good conscience, esp. not with the Bible in one hand and the Spirit of Prophecy in the other. It slowly dawned on me that I was in big trouble!

Michigan graciously granted me permission to speak on a different topic. I took the opportunity to sit in the Trinity seminar, led by a Conference officer. In startling disbelief I patiently listened to the now familiar misuse of Scripture on the topic, and a puzzling oversight (avoidance?) of key Ellen White quotes. I carefully read the presenter's book (whom I greatly respected), underlining and taking notes - increasingly confirming in my conclusion that the doctrine of the Trinity was unbiblical.

I was an ordained minister of the Seventh-day Adventist church and it began to dawn on me that I was in serious trouble.

The 28 Fundamental Beliefs

In the Summer of 2017 representatives from the NAD (North American Division) came and shared with our Religion Department at Southwestern Adventist University that all professors of religion would eventually have to sign an affirming statement of the church's 28 Fundamental Beliefs. (I don't think this was in any way related to my situation). If a professor could not support those Fundamental Beliefs in any way, a peer review process of that professor's beliefs would be initiated. I saw the writing on the wall, but it never came to that process for me.

When Elder Neal C. Wilson introduced the 27 Fundamental Beliefs to the delegates in Dallas, he gave this assurance (<https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH19800423-V157-20.pdf>)

"There are others who think they know why this is being done. They believe it is being prepared as a club to batter someone over the head, to try to get people into a narrow concept of theology, not leaving any opportunity for individual interpretation of prophecy, or any individual views with respect to theology or certain areas of doctrine. This also is unfortunate, because this never has been and is not the intention of any study that has been given to the Statement on Fundamental Beliefs. Some academicians, theologians, and others have expressed the fear that this statement was being developed so that the church could confront them with a checklist to determine **whether they should be disqualified from teaching in one of our institutions of higher education**. It is very, very tragic when these kinds of rumors begin to develop."

Rumors, I suppose, become reality. And words are, well, just words.

The Beginning of the End

After simply liking some relevant and non-antagonistic questions on the Trinity on Facebook, one thing led to another and I lost several camp meetings in 2017 and 2018 over this issue. Some cancellations were based on mutual agreement of cordiality and respect. I did not want to bring ill repute on any church entity or leaders. “Touch not mine anointed” (1 Chron 16:22; Ps 105:15). This is one reason I had not engaged in theological debate on social media at that point. The tone of sarcasm, irony, belittling, ridicule, etc. is not befitting a dialogue involving divinity.

A mere Like on Facebook . . . and the emails started coming. Mind you, I hadn’t spoken, printed, published, preached, or taught any anti-trinitarian sentiments. I also discovered along the way that other denominational employees can deny Ellen White, 1844, the heavenly sanctuary, the perpetuity of the Ten Commandments, the veracity of the Sabbath from Friday evening to Saturday evening (from the pulpit!) with no implications. But merely touch the doctrine of the Trinity and the axe falleth quickly. Unfortunately, rational thinking, biblical dialogue, and historical frameworks are overshadowed by emotional, knee-jerk reactions and dismissal - and much bearing of false witness. If the pioneers could turn over in their graves, the inside of their caskets would be polished to a silver shine!

I very much appreciate the handful of scholars, pastors, and leaders who have reached out to me in a spirit of respect and constructive dialogue. Face-to-face dialogue is still the best.

Summer 2018: At the Risk of Temporal Loss

After confiding in a church leader that it was best for me not to participate in a Conference’s camp meeting due to the rumblings of a rising rumor mill, word quickly spread of my pre-1980 pioneer views (which, again, I had neither taught, preached, or published at that point). A couple of phone calls by third parties in May 2018 led to the quick end of a 20-year teaching/pastoring career for the denomination - overnight, with no study committee, no peer review, no departmental consultation, no prescribed denominational processes, and no pioneer-like wrestling with Scripture together and prayer.

In my over 25 years of denominational ministry - and during those difficult summer days - I have learned that it is best to speak to people face-to-face. Regretfully, this is often not the case. How much misunderstanding and interpersonal harm would be prevented by following this simple procedure!

Most stunning (and stinging) was a comment by a church administrator during all this: “Ingo, you might be right (!), but they have to protect the institution.”

No comment. The statement speaks for itself.

The need for my resignation became most apparent - though I entertained no “new light” . . .

I discovered and supported a belief acceptable for over 100 years!

Historical Context: Landmarks

Consider this historical factor - and affirmation:

“The leading points of our faith as we hold them today were firmly established. Point after point was clearly defined, and all the brethren came into harmony. The whole company of believers were united in

the truth. There were those who came in with strange doctrines, but we were never afraid to meet them. Our experience was wonderfully established by the revelation of the Holy Spirit” (3MR [413 1903](#)).

“As a people we are to stand firm on the platform of eternal truth that has withstood test and trial. We are to hold to the sure pillars of our faith. The principles of truth that God has revealed to us are our only true foundation. They have made us what we are. The lapse of time had not lessened their value” (Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, p. 51. 1904/CWE 52).

Simply put, "God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son" (8T 268).

“No line of truth that has made the Seventh-day Adventist people what they are, is to be weakened. We have the old landmarks of truth, experience, and duty, and we are to stand firmly in defense of our principles, in full view of the world” (6T 17).

The Gospel is so precious and meaningful in the framework of the one true God and His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ. Honestly and humbly, I have gained a whole new understanding (and really appreciation and admiration) of the love of God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Gospel. My heart is warmed, my mind at awe. I bow as the shepherds did, with really no gift in my hand. The gift is all His.

For the sake of peace and unity, I also resigned as head elder from my beloved church plant my wife and I helped raise between 2014 and 2018. I did not wish to split a thriving congregation into an independent movement, or cause discord among the brethren. I also did not want to put my local conference in an awkward position.

Interestingly, since my departure from denominational labor literally dozens of staunch church members and respected elders (even pastors) have quietly confided in me, sharing my concerns about the wording of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs - which were never meant to be a creed AND are subject to change at every General Conference.

Some high-ranking leaders have admitted to me privately that the wording of Fundamental Belief #2 in particular was, indeed, problematic.

I simply advocate for a return to a previous, more biblical wording of our fundamental beliefs. In my studies I have concluded that trinitarian formulations are the result of a misguided attempt for the Advent movement to become ecumenically acceptable to other Christian entities.

The oneness of God is clearly not one of 3=1, but as Ellen White defined in MH 422 (which, I have discovered, is what many faithful Adventists believe):

“The Scriptures clearly indicate the relation between God and Christ,...The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person. **It is thus that God and Christ are one**” (MH 421; John 17:22!).

Therefore, I am convinced and convicted that our **1872 Statement of Fundamental Principles** was sufficient in concept and wording:

“IN presenting to the public this synopsis of our faith, we wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible. We do not put forth this as having any authority with our people, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them, as a system of faith, but is a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them.

I. That there is one God, a personal, spiritual being, the creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal, infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by his representative, the Holy Spirit. Ps. 139:7.

II. That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father”

Simple. Straight-forward. Biblical.

Understanding God

Many have pointed out to me that “we cannot understand God”. Agreed. But also consider this:

“We must know Him as He reveals Himself...all depend upon a right knowledge of God. This is the knowledge that is essential preparation both for this life and for the life to come”... “A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and of all true service” (MH 409).

Hospice Chaplaincy

From August 2018 - December 2020 I had the privilege of working as a hospice chaplain. What a blessings this ministry is. But the times are critical; I believe we live in the final generation. I have decided to dedicate myself full-time to the proclamation of the 3 Angels' message.

Labor in Bonds

At times we labor in bonds. Many who have embraced the truth of the Father and Son of late are experiencing this hardship. But courage! Gen 50:20!

”And yet in less than two years the gospel found its way from the prisoner’s lowly home into the imperial halls. Paul is in bonds as an evildoer; but ‘the word of god is not bound’” (2 Tim 2:9; AA 462).

”Yet it was at this very time, when its chief advocate was apparently cut off from public labor, that a great victory was won for the gospel” (AA 462).

”In his epistle to the Philippians, Paul ascribed to his own imprisonment his success in winning converts to the faith from Nero’s household. Fearful lest it might be thought that his afflictions had impeded the progress of the gospel, he assured them: **‘I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel’** Phil 1:12; AA 463).

”Human expectations had failed, but not the purpose of God. Not by Paul’s sermons, but by his bonds, was the attention of the court attracted to Christianity. It was as a captive that he broke from so many souls the bonds that held them in the slavery of sin. Nor was this all. He declared: ‘Many of the brethren

in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear” (Phil 1:14; AA 464).

Finally . . .

“Paul’s patience and cheerfulness during this long and unjust imprisonment, his courage and faith, were a continual sermon His spirit, so unlike the spirit of the world, bore witness that a power higher than that of earth was abiding with him. And by his example, Christians were impelled to greater energy as advocates of the cause from the public labors of which Paul had been withdrawn. In these ways were the apostle’s bonds influential, so that when his power and usefulness seemed cut off, and to all appearance he could do the least, then it was that he gathered sheaves for Christ in fields from which he seemed wholly excluded” (AA 464).

”By meekness under trial, no less than by boldness in enterprise, souls may be won to Christ. The Christian who manifests patience and cheerfulness under bereavement and suffering, who meets even death itself with the peace and calmness of an unwavering faith, may accomplish for the gospel more than he could have effected by a long life of faithful labor.

Often when the servant of God is withdrawn from active duty, the mysterious providence which our shortsighted vision would lament is designed by God to accomplish a work that otherwise would never have been done.

Let not the follower of Christ think, when he is no longer able to labor openly and actively for God and His truth, that he has no service to render reward to secure. **Christ’s true witnesses are never laid aside . . . From the ashes of the martyrs has sprung an abundant harvest for God”** (AA 465).

[I’m indebted to my faithful wife for pointing out this admittedly painful reality to me from her personal devotional time.]

“The wrath of man shall praise Thee,” says the psalmist; “the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain.” God means that testing truth shall be brought to the front and become a subject of examination and discussion, even if it is through the contempt placed upon it. The minds of the people must be agitated. Every controversy, every reproach, every slander, will be God’s means of provoking inquiry and awakening minds that otherwise would slumber.

Thus it has been in the past history of God’s people. For refusing to worship the great golden image which Nebuchadnezzar had set up, the three Hebrews were cast into the fiery furnace. But God preserved His servants in the midst of the flames, and the attempt to enforce idolatry resulted in bringing the knowledge of the true God before the assembled princes and great men of the vast kingdom of Babylon.

So when the decree went forth forbidding prayer to any God save the king. As Daniel, according to his custom, made his supplications three times a day to the God of heaven, the attention of the princes and rulers was called to his case. He had an opportunity to speak for himself, to show who is the true God, and to present the reason why He alone should receive worship, and the duty of rendering Him praise and homage. And the deliverance of Daniel from the den of lions was another evidence that the Being whom he worshiped was the true and living God.

So the imprisonment of Paul brought the gospel before kings, princes, and rulers who otherwise would not have had this light.

The efforts made to retard the progress of truth will serve to extend it.

The excellence of truth is more clearly seen from every successive point from which it may be viewed. Error requires disguise and concealment. It clothes itself in angel robes, and every manifestation of its real character lessens its chance of success. The people whom God has made the depositaries of His law are not to permit their light to be hidden. The truth must be proclaimed in the dark places of the earth. Obstacles must be met and surmounted. A great work is to be done, and this work has been entrusted to those who know the truth. They should make mighty intercession with God for help now. The love of Christ must be diffused in their own hearts. The Spirit of Christ must be poured out upon them, and they must be making ready to stand in the judgment. While they are consecrating themselves to God, a convincing power will attend their efforts to present the truth to others, and its light will find access to many hearts. We must sleep no longer on Satan's enchanted ground, but call into requisition all our resources and avail ourselves of every facility with which Providence has furnished us. The last warning is to be proclaimed "before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings;" and the promise is given, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (5T 453-454).

I encourage all believers in the one true God and the Lord Jesus Christ not to let "any root of bitterness springing up" (Heb 12:15).

A church leader recently asked me what I consider myself, regardless of outcome of all this? Without hesitation I responded: *A Seventh-day Adventist. From head to toe.*

So, at the risk of temporal loss, onward, Waldensians.

"Lord! Open the eyes of the King of England!" - Tyndale

"Unless I am convicted of error by the testimony of Scripture or by manifest reasoning I stand convicted by the Scriptures to which I have appealed, and my conscience is taken captive by God's word.

I cannot or will not recant anything.
For to act against our conscience is neither safe for us, nor open to us."

(Martin Luther)

Annotated Bibliography

[Under Construction]

Systematic Trinitarian Defenses

Creeds

<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=3054&context=auss>