

Old Paths

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

The secret of the LORD is with them that
fear him; and he will shew them his
covenant. Psalm 25:14

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Straight and Narrow

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Jesus wants to sow his seeds in the hearts of our children. Please see page 11.



Last call for the Reorganization Meeting March 11–14

By Allen Stump

During the last two years many within the one true God (OTG) movement have been discussing gospel order and the need to reorganize the work. COVID-19 has put a wrench into the plans of many things, including the work of reorganization, but we trust in the promise that:

*... like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God's purposes know no haste and no delay. (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 32.1)*

The work of reorganization has taken place in the Philippines, where Pastor David Sims has helped to transform the gospel work into proper order, and in France, where Pastor Jean-Christophe Bolotte has led out in the same undertaking.

The last five-plus months have seen progress in the United States. After the 2021 Smyrna camp meeting in West Virginia, a meeting of interested parties took place, and a sample charter and set of bylaws modeled after what had been done in the Philippines and France were examined. Those talks continued online via a Zoom meeting room, and refinements and changes were made to custom fit the United States. We want to share those documents with you. You will find the charter on page 10 and the bylaws on page 14. Please understand these documents are not necessarily in their final form. They are documents to be reviewed by those who wish to participate in the reorganization effort.

A meeting has been called for March 11–14 at Smyrna Gospel Ministries in West Virginia. This is almost two years from the original date of March 20–25, when a conference had been scheduled but was cancelled due to COVID-19.

Meals and shelter will be provided for those attending. However, you will need to bring your own bedding, including an air mattress, sleeping pad or cot.

Proposed schedule

Preparation day:

Friday evening welcoming of the Sabbath and communion service: 6:00 pm EST

Sabbath:

Sabbath School 9:10 am EST
 Worship service 11:00 am EST
 Lunch 1:00 pm EST
 Hike or walk, if the weather allows Afternoon
 Sundown vespers and prayer service 5:30 pm EST

First day of the week:

Saturday night, the first business session will begin with the selection of a chairperson and recording secretary followed by the beginning of the process of reorganization. 7:00 pm EST— 8:30 pm EST

Breakfast 7:00 am EDT
 Devotional 8:15 am EDT
 Morning session 8:45 am EDT
 Break 10:30 am – 10:45 am EDT
 Morning session continued 10:45 am – 1:30 EDT
 Lunch 2:00 pm EDT
 Afternoon session if needed 3:15 pm – 5:30 pm EDT
 Break 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm EDT
 Evening session if needed 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm EDT

Monday:

Schedule of Sunday morning will be repeated.

We are inviting interested parties and church groups to attend and/or to send representatives to the meeting to examine the charter and bylaws. If further refinements need to be made, this will be done by those attending. After any needed final refinements of the documents are accomplished, they will become the basis of the reorganization.

If you wish to attend this historic conference, we need you to respond to this invitation by writing to Pastor Allen Stump at either 750 Smyrna Road, Welch, WV 24801 or allen@smyrna.org or by calling him at 304-732-9204 before March 1, 2022, so we can adequately prepare. We encourage churches to send one to three representatives, with a signed list of those they represent. If you need lodging, we will attempt to house representatives who are coming from churches or to house one member per family otherwise. If room allows, we can open up space for others.

For those who wish to participate but who cannot physically attend, please email us at allen@smyrna.org or call 304-932-9204 or for details on how to participate .

Let us be clear. This invitation is for those in agreement with the fundamental principles of our pioneers. This conference will not be a type of ecumenical gathering for people of varied beliefs. While we realize that there are differences on certain fine points of doctrine, we are calling for a gathering of those who hold to the biblical teachings as expressed in the 1889 Fundamental Principles used during the time of Ellen White.

Please seriously consider this endeavor. The work of heaven is done in order.

The following is a condensed version of a longer study we published in January 2020. It is given as a refresher to remind you of the need of gospel order.

Gospel order is God's plan for his people to work together in an orderly and harmonious manner. This is to be done without the anarchy, confusion, or dictatorial spirit that is represented today within spiritual Babylon. We have been told:

God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. (1 Corinthians 14:33)

God is not the author of confusion. He says, through Paul, "let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40). Further, we have been told: "Order is heaven's first law . . ." (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 200.2).

Not only is order the first law, but there is perfect order in heaven:

In heaven there is perfect order, perfect obedience, perfect peace and harmony. Those who have had no respect for order or discipline in this life would have no respect for the order which is observed in heaven. They can never be admitted into heaven, for all worthy of an entrance there will love order and respect discipline. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 429.2)

Not only is God's will, including order, done in heaven, it is Christ's desire that God's will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Jesus taught us to pray:

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10)

Making reference to Ezekiel 1, Ellen White writes:

God is acquainted with every man. Could our eyes be opened, we would see that eternal justice is at work in our world. A powerful influence, not under man's control, is working. Man may fancy that he is directing matters, but there are higher than human influences at work. The servants of God know that He is working to counteract Satan's plans. Those who know not God cannot comprehend His movements. There is at work a wheel within a wheel. Apparently, the complication of machinery is so intricate that man can see only a complete entanglement. But the divine Hand, as seen by the prophet Ezekiel, is placed upon the wheels, and every part moves in complete harmony, each doing its specified work, yet with individual freedom of action. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol, 13, Ms 13, 1898, par. 9)

God's order is to be in his church in earth, with each member working in perfect harmony in the work that God has chosen for that believer. Not all have the same duties, but all are to perfectly perform the work God has chosen for each in complete freedom. For example, God has ordained that there be pastors in his church (Ephesians 4:11), but not all are pastors. Other members have different duties within the church, but each believer meshes fully and in total harmony with the work that the other believers have, just as planetary gears turn perfectly with each other in perfect harmony.

Heavenly order is further seen in the following two quotations:

We all entered the cloud together, and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass, when Jesus brought the crowns, and with His own right hand placed them on our heads. He gave us harps of gold and palms of victory. Here on the sea of glass the 144,000 stood in a per-

fect square. (Ellen White, *Early Writings*, p. 16.2; all emphasis in this article supplied unless otherwise noted)

The 144,000 form not simply a square but a perfect square. We find the same order for all the redeemed:

On each side of the cloudy chariot were wings, and beneath it were living wheels; and as the chariot rolled upward, the wheels cried, “Holy,” and the wings, as they moved, cried, “Holy,” and the retinue of holy angels around the cloud cried, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!” And the saints in the cloud cried, “Glory! Alleluia!” And the chariot rolled upward to the Holy City. Before entering the city, the saints were arranged in a perfect square, with Jesus in the midst. (*Ibid.*, p. 287.2)

Since creation, God has ordained order upon the earth. Before sin, God ordained that Adam and Eve were to stand shoulder-to-shoulder as equals.

When God created Eve, He designed that she should possess neither inferiority nor superiority to the man, but that in all things she should be his equal. The holy pair were to have no interest independent of each other; and yet each had an individuality in thinking and acting. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 484.1)

But after sin, God allowed the man to lead out in the home:

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. (Genesis 3:16)

In Genesis 3:16, “rule” does not mean being a dictator.

But after Eve’s sin, as she was first in the transgression, the Lord told her that Adam should rule over her. She was to be in subjection to her husband, and this was a part of the curse. In many cases the curse has made the lot of woman very grievous and her life a burden. The superiority which God has given man he has abused in many respects by exercising arbitrary power. (White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 484.1)

During the time of the wilderness wandering of the Israelites, God had order. He chose Moses to be a leader and then, under the counsel of Jethro, God allowed for others to govern under Moses.

And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes

they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves. (Exodus 18:25–26)

In Numbers 2, we learn of the order in the encampment of Israel. No Israelite could pitch his tent anyplace he chose. All the tribes had a specific place to encamp around the Levites and the priests, who were to camp in specific places around the tabernacle.

Israel was a regulated nation with a regulated worship. None were allowed to feel as though they had a right to deviate from God’s word and order in the slightest.

God gave specific directives for how worship would be done in Canaan. Through Moses, God instructed Israel concerning the eating of the sacrifices:

Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes. For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the your God giveth you. (Deuteronomy 12:8–9)

Another translation states it this way:

Do not worship the way we have been doing today, each person doing what he thinks is right. You have not yet come to a resting place, to the land the Lord your God will give you as your own. (Deuteronomy 12:8–9 New Century Version)

Beloved, God is not for anarchy! He had a plan for Israel in every facet of their lives. Sadly, Israel quickly lost their connection to God and shortly after Samson, we read:

In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes. (Judges 17:6)

While the context is different than Deuteronomy, the principle is the same—forsaking God’s way for their own. Later, in the last verse in Judges, we read:

In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes. (Judges 21:25)

Solomon said:

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts. (Proverbs 21:2)

This is antithetic parallelism, where the second line contrasts with the first. Man does what is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs, or judges, the hearts. This indicates that, more often than not, what man thinks is not approved of by God.

The last judge to govern Israel was Samuel and though his wisdom and guidance were above reproach, his wicked sons were of a very different character. This caused the

people to fear for the future and brought about a request to have a king.

And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. (1 Samuel 8:5)

God allowed the kingdom to be formed, and, though it was not his sovereign will, respect was to be shown to this new order. Even when David was being unjustly hunted down by Saul, David showed respect to the one upon the throne by twice refusing to kill the persecuting Saul when it was easily within his power to do so.

In the New Testament we find order. Jesus declared he would build a church:

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:18)

The church Jesus would build would have order and administration. Paul notes five spiritual gifts given to the church to especially help it reach perfection and to help it maintain spiritual order.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (Ephesians 4:11–14)

The context of Ephesians 4 is clear that the “he” in verse 11 is Christ. “Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men” (Ephesians 4:8). The one who ascended up on high, Jesus, is the same one who gives gifts to men. Pastors, evangelists, teachers, apostles, and prophets are not in the church because men decided they should be but because Jesus decided they should be!

Those who would today insist that we need no pastors are not in agreement with the Scriptures. While Jesus is the head of the church, he has chosen under-shepherds. To resist such order is an open defiance to the authority of Christ!

God’s people need leadership, and people can work better together than they can apart. This principle is revealed in the Old Testament:

And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. (Leviticus 26:7, 8)

Let us look at the ratios mentioned. Five would put one hundred to flight, and one hundred could bring down ten thousand enemies. With five working together, each can overcome twenty enemies but when one hundred work together, each can overcome one hundred enemies. That is a fivefold increase in efficiency!

Jesus also made provision for various servants, such as deacons and elders, in his church.

Church governed by representation

During the circumcision crisis, representatives of the early church gathered in council with the apostles:

And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. (Acts 15:1, 2)

Concerning this, we are told:

In the church at Antioch the consideration of the question of circumcision resulted in much discussion and contention. Finally, the members of the church, fearing that a division among them would be the outcome of continued discussion, decided to send Paul and Barnabas, with some responsible men from the church, to Jerusalem to lay the matter before the apostles and elders. There they were to meet delegates from the different churches and those who had come to Jerusalem to attend the approaching festivals. Meanwhile all controversy was to cease until a final decision should be given in general council. This decision was then to be universally accepted by the different churches throughout the country. (Ellen White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 190.2)

The New Testament is the model for God’s people today, and he wants his church to work as a body, not as different parts in various areas.

Independent atoms

God certainly does not wish for his body to be broken up into many factions or into independent atoms. Repeatedly the Spirit of Prophecy has warned the remnant people:

An army in battle would become confused and weakened unless all worked in concert. If the soldiers should act out their own impulsive ideas, without reference to each other's positions and work, they would be a collection of independent atoms; they could not do the work of an organized body. So the soldiers of Christ must act in harmony. They alone must not be cherished. If they do this, the Lord's people in the place of being in perfect harmony, of one mind, one purpose, and consecrated to one grand object, will find efforts fruitless, their time and capabilities wasted. Union is strength. A few converted souls acting in harmony, acting for one grand purpose, under one head, will achieve victories at every encounter. (Ellen White, *Spalding and Magan Collection*, p. 121.1)

I know that the Lord loves His church. It is not to be disorganized or broken up into independent atoms. (Ellen White, *8LtMs*, Lt 16, 1893, par. 20)

Some have advanced the thought that as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man's being independent. The stars of heaven are all under law, each influencing the other to do the will of God, yielding their common obedience to the law that controls their action. And, in order that the Lord's work may advance healthfully and solidly, His people must draw together. (Ellen White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 487.2)

These statements should lay all doubt to the idea that we can please God and finish the work with independent ministries and home churches that bear no accountability to anyone. We have God's arrangement for order in the following statement:

The Lord in His wisdom has arranged that by means of the close relationship that should be maintained by all believers, Christian shall be united to Christian and church to church. Thus the human instrumentality will be enabled to co-operate with the divine. Every agency will be subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all the believers will be united in an organized and well-directed effort to give to the world the glad tidings of the grace of God. (White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 164.1)

Notice that not only should Christian be united with Christian, which most of us understand, but also church with church.

Organization needed

God organized the church in the Old Testament, and then he organized his church in the New Testament. Finally, when the three angels' messages began to be given, he organized the Advent people after the pattern of the New Testament church. Order and structure were given to the people, which we today dare not disregard:

O, how Satan would rejoice if he could succeed in his efforts to get in among this people, and disorganize the work at a time when thorough organization is essential and will be the greatest power to keep out spurious uprisings, and to refute claims not endorsed by the word of God! We want to hold the lines evenly, that there shall be no breaking down of the system of organization and order that has been built up by wise, careful labor. License must not be given to disorderly elements that desire to control the work at this time. (Ellen White, *Testimonies to the Church Regarding Individual Responsibility and Christian Unity*, p. 19.2; 1907)

Under the direction of the inspiration of God, workers, such as Elders White, Bates, and Smith, carefully built up the work. It was not to be allowed to become disorderly elements! This does not mean that we are to have a pope over the church or a president over a conference. Men are not to rule men.

God has not set any kingly power in the Seventh-day Adventist Church to control the whole body or to control any branch of the work. He has not provided that the burden of leadership shall rest upon a few men. Responsibilities are distributed among a large number of competent men. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 236.3)

Instead, God's church is to be representative in its government with each member having a voice:

Every member of the church has a voice in choosing officers of the church. The church chooses the officers of the state conferences. Delegates chosen by the state conferences choose the officers of the union conferences, and delegates chosen by the union conferences choose the officers of the General Conference. By this arrangement every conference, every institution, every church, and every individual, either directly or through representatives, has a voice in the election of the men who bear the chief responsibilities in the General Conference. (*Ibid.*, p. 236.4)

Thus, we have a system that when the church becomes large and when each person representing him or herself

becomes very impractical, all may have a vote or may share in the responsibility of the church by representation.

Are we authorized to begin a new organization?

This brings us to an important point that needs clarification. I recently received a letter cautioning against the reorganization because the corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church is still the remnant and is not a part of Babylon and because “we are not to leave the church.” Indeed, we have been counseled by the Spirit of God that there is to be no new organization. To understand why we need to reorganize, we need to understand how firm the foundation was upon which God placed the Advent movement. Through his messenger, Ellen G. White, God has told us:

After the passing of the time, God entrusted to His faithful followers the precious principles of present truth. (Ellen White, Selected Messages, bk. 2, p. 389.3; 1905)

God gave his people principles, even precious principles, of present truth. God did not raise up this movement in error, as trinitarian Adventists claim. Furthermore, it is these very principles that make us who we are as a people: Seventh-day Adventists!

Those who passed through these experiences are to be as firm as a rock to the principles that have made us Seventh-day Adventists. (Ibid., p. 389.4)

To leave these principles would disqualify us from being the remnant people. Ellen White saw this point and clearly warned:

The Lord has declared that the history of the past shall be rehearsed as we enter upon the closing work. Every truth that He has given for these last days is to be proclaimed to the world. Every pillar that He has established is to be strengthened. 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. (Ibid., p. 390.1)

From the three statements above, we see:

- ☞ God entrusted to the Seventh-day Adventist Church “precious principles of present truth.”
- ☞ These principles make someone a Seventh-day Adventist.
- ☞ To step off of the foundation of these principles, to apostatize from these truths, results in a new organization (a new church) and a forfeiting of being Seventh-day Adventist.

When *the professed church* steps off the foundation which God established, discarding the pillars instead of strengthening them, *they* have formed a new organization.

This point was forcibly brought home by former General Conference President Neal C. Wilson at a speech given at the Annual Council, in Washington, D. C., in October 1979. He was quoted in the *Adventist Review*:

Our doctrines cannot be changed without changing the nature of the church. (Neal C. Wilson, Adventist Review, November 8, 1979)

A little thought will help us to see that the difference between any two or more churches is the doctrines that are taught. What makes a Baptist a Baptist is their doctrine, not their Sunday dinners. What makes the Methodist and the Catholic different is the different doctrines they teach. Seventh-day Adventists are those who believe and practice the precious principles of truth given by God.

When Adventists who formerly believed and practiced those precious principles of present truth reject those principles for false principles, they have left Seventh-day Adventism, even if they claim and use said name.

Let us consider those who believe and practice the precious principles of present truth. Perhaps they have been disfellowshipped from those *who call themselves Seventh-day Adventists* but who have left the platform of truth. Are the disfellowshipped ones not truly the real Seventh-day Adventists? They surely are, and if these people reorganize the movement, they are not starting a new organization. For those who hold to the precious principles to reorganize the original church, with its original doctrines, it is not a violation of the instruction to not form a new organization, the very thing the *professed Seventh-day Adventist denomination* has done!

In 1980 the Seventh-day Adventist Church at the General Conference Session in Dallas, Texas, voted on its fundamental principles for the first time in a General Conference session. Instead of holding to the truths of our pioneers, several key doctrines were changed, including the doctrine of God. Instead of the biblical teaching of God, the principles of the Athanasian creed that formed the papacy from the Council of Nicaea were accepted concerning the doctrine of the Trinity.

As Neal Wilson noted and as is truly self-evident, if you change the doctrines, you change the nature of the church, especially doctrines that describe the God you profess to worship.

God was not taken by surprise, however. Through his prophetess, he alerted the remnant people what to expect. Writing in 1903, Ellen White warned:

The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice, but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure. (Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 204.2)

Satan would try to bring in a false reformation that would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith. This would result in a process of reorganization, later said to be a *new organization*. Remember, Seventh-day Adventists were given principles of precious truth, but this false revival would discard those principles of truth, leading to a change in the religion (a new organization). Ellen White then lists the results if this false revival were accepted. Notice clearly the first thing she states is that *our religion would be changed*. Not only are the principles given up, but they would be *accounted as error*! She does not say that God leaves his people because of these issues but, instead, states *God being removed*. God is set aside by the leaders of this movement. God is, if you please, disfellowshipped from the denomination! The final end of the prophecy, that storm and tempest would sweep away the structure, has not yet been realized, but it is the only part still to be fulfilled.

This inspired statement tells us that if we step off of the foundation of the principles given to us in the beginning, we apostatize from the truth and enter a new organization. We have shown earlier that the corporate Seventh-day Ad-

ventist Church has apostatized from its foundational principles concerning God; thus, it is a different church and a new organization from that which existed when the pioneers were living. This is further emphasized by the following statement by former Andrews University professor, George Knight:

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. More specifically, most would not be able to agree to belief number 2, which deals with the doctrine of the Trinity. (George Knight, *Ministry*, October 1993, p. 10)

The principle of separation in the Bible

The following references outline a guiding principle which applies in this case: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed" (Amos 3:3)?

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you, (2 Corinthians 6:16-17)

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. (Revelation 18:1-4)

The principle of separation from the Testimonies

After a long and severe conflict, the faithful few decided to dissolve all union with the apostate church if she still refused to free herself from falsehood and idolatry. They saw that separation was an absolute necessity if they would obey the word of God. They dared not tolerate errors fatal to their own souls, and set an example which would imperil the faith of their children and children's children. To secure peace and unity they were ready to make any concession consistent with fidelity to God; but they felt that even peace would be too dearly purchased at the sacrifice of principle. If unity could be secured

only by the compromise of truth and righteousness, then let there be difference, and even war.

Well would it be for the church and the world if the principles that actuated those steadfast souls were revived in the hearts of God's professed people. There is an alarming indifference in regard to the doctrines which are the pillars of the Christian faith. The opinion is gaining ground, that, after all, these are not of vital importance. This degeneracy is strengthening the hands of the agents of Satan, so that false theories and fatal delusions which the faithful in ages past imperiled their lives to resist and expose, are now regarded with favor by thousands who claim to be followers of Christ. (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 45.3–46.1)

As the light and life of men was rejected by the ecclesiastical authorities in the days of Christ, so it has been rejected in every succeeding generation. Again and again the history of Christ's withdrawal from Judea has been repeated. When the Reformers preached the word of God, they had no thought of separating themselves from the established church; but the religious leaders would not tolerate the light, and those that bore it were forced to seek another class, who were longing for the truth. In our day few of the professed followers of the Reformers are actuated by their spirit. Few are listening for the voice of God, and ready to accept truth in whatever guise it may be presented. Often those who follow in the steps of the Reformers are forced to turn away from the churches they love, in order to declare the plain teaching of the word of God. And many times those who are seeking for light are by the same teaching obliged to leave the church of their fathers, that they may render obedience. (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 232.2)

This statement says that the faithful seeking for light many times have been *obliged* to leave the church of their fathers. What does the word *oblige* mean?

. . . make (someone) legally or morally bound to an action or course of action: doctors are obliged by law to keep patients alive while there is a chance of recovery. (*New Oxford American Dictionary*)

The Spirit of Prophecy references just quoted firmly declare that the biblical principle of separation must be followed to be faithful to Christ. To remain in an apostate church, according to Revelation 18:4, would then result in being a partaker of its sins.

God called for reorganization in the past

At times, when wrong principles were being adopted, God called, through his servant, Ellen White, for a reorganization:

That these men should stand in a sacred place, to be as the voice of God to the people, as we once believed the General Conference to be,—that is past. What we want now is a reorganization. We want to begin at the foundation, and to build upon a different principle. (Ellen White, *General Conference Bulletin*, April 3, 1901, par. 25)

Sadly, the corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church has apostatized from the principles concerning God held during the first fifty years and has formed a new organization, a new church. Since Ellen White counsels us that when the church departs from those principles the appropriate response is to reorganize and return to those first fundamental principles, it is time for those who believe and practice those precious principles of truth to take action. This action is not to create a new organization but to reorganize the movement God raised up in 1844 and to move forward with the work given to the remnant people. We believe that the principles of truth that were given to our people are best expressed by the 1889 principles that were published by the church during the time that Ellen White was alive. Writing shortly before that statement was published, she stated:

It is as certain that we have the truth as that God lives; and Satan, with all his arts and hellish power, cannot change the truth of God into a lie. While the great adversary will try his utmost to make of none effect the word of God, truth must go forth as a lamp that burneth. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 595.4; 1881)

It is still certain that God gave this people the truth, and Satan cannot turn that truth into a lie, even if twenty-plus million people claim to believe the lie.

I encourage you to be a part of the historic reorganization and to help bring the order needed to the true church to finish the work, and we can all go home! ✍

1889 HSDA CHARTER

A fellowship and revival of those who believe the truths of 1889 Seventh-day Adventists. HSDA stands for Historic Seventh-day Adventists.

Article I—Name and Location of Office

The name of this organization shall be 1889 HSDA, and the office location is to be determined by organizing body.

Article II—Purpose

This entity is organized exclusively as a Christian church to fulfill Christ's great commission to go into all the world to preach the gospel. The gospel includes the teachings of the entire Bible, and the Bible is our only rule of faith. This purpose shall be carried forward through all available means, including but not limited to educational and medical institutions, literature, audio and video productions, and broadcasts of all kinds. All donations or principal acquired by gift, contribution, or otherwise shall be devoted to said purpose.

Article III—Limitations

At all times the following shall operate as conditions restricting the operations and activities of the organization: No part of the donations this organization receives shall be utilized by any director, officer, or trustee of the organization, by any council or committee member, or by any private person, except as reasonable compensation for services rendered to the organization or allowed by the organization as a reasonable allowance for authorized expenditures incurred on behalf of the organization. This limitation shall not prohibit gifts of charity to anyone. The organization shall not lend any of its assets to any of the above-mentioned individuals for personal use.

Article IV—Directors/Members

The organization shall have a voting membership as defined in the organization's bylaws. The management and affairs of the organization at all times shall be under the direction of a council and of a committee, whose operations in governing the organization shall be defined by the organization's bylaws. No member or director shall have any right to, title to, or interest in any property of the organization.

Article V—Debt Obligation and Personal Liability

No member, officer, or director of this organization shall be personally liable for the debts or obligations of this organization of any nature whatsoever, nor shall any of the property of the members, officers, or director be subject to the payment of the debts or obligations of this organization.

Article VI—Dissolution

When no governing body, as specified in the bylaws, exists and when vacancies in the body are not filled, the dissolution of the organization shall take place. After payment of all debts, obligations, liabilities, and expenses of the organization, or making provisions to do so, the assets of the organization shall be distributed by the trustees to an organization or to organizations promoting the teachings of the 1889 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Article VII—Trustees

The founding trustees of this organization shall be three citizens of the United States who are at least eighteen years of age and who have been actively involved in the work of re-organization in the United States for more than two years and actively involved with international 1889 HSDA organizations for more than two years. The number of trustees is three and may be increased up to seven after the first year of operation but must be kept at an odd number. Any trustee may be replaced by the annual council as specified in the bylaws.

The undersigned founding trustees certify that they will execute the articles of the charter for the purposes herein stated.

SIGNATURE, DATE

SIGNATURE, DATE

SIGNATURE, DATE

Youth's Corner — An Heritage of the Lord - A Call for the Ministering of Our Children

By Raquel Akens

Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate. (Psalm 127:3-5)

There is a movement that the Lord has been orchestrating. Many have been coming into the truth as it is in Jesus. Some are able to gather in person in small groups of the same faith, while others have been able to use technology as a means of fellowship and gathering with the brethren. Fellowship, however small with other believers, has proven to be a blessing to those walking in the narrow path. The word of God admonishes us to not forsake fellowship with others.

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24, 25)

But all too often, families with children come to this beautiful truth only to find there is no assembly for their children. Children generally enjoy interacting with other children. I know it can be a lonely experience especially for the young. It is important for our children to share with one another and know that there are other youths in similar circumstances. It will be comforting to the them and will strengthen them in faith.

Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

While the role of parents is of the utmost importance in training these children in the Lord and every effort must be put forth by the parents for the saving of the souls of their children, yet the church still plays a very important role. It is more than a cliché that the children are the future generation. We as the church are to have deep interest in our children. They are the youngest members of God's family and precious in the sight of God. I believe children who feel neglected by the church can readily find acceptance in the world. There is much importance in giving these children the right social influences, influences that will strengthen the faith of these little ones and encourage them to stay on the narrow path. We must guard these young

hearts for Christ before Satan works his deceit to snatch up these young precious souls. Our church has an important part to play in this. The children are his heritage, and the church is his representative. In his earthly ministry, Christ took a special interest in the children:

... Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. (Mark 10:14)

As the children gathered the wildflowers growing so abundantly around them, and crowded up to present to Him their little offerings, He received them gladly, smiled upon them, and expressed His joy at seeing so many varieties of flowers.

These children were His heritage. He knew that He had come to ransom them from the enemy by dying on the cross of Calvary. He spoke words to them that ever after they carried in their hearts. They were delighted to think that He appreciated their gifts and spoke so lovingly to them.

Christ watched children at their play, and often expressed His approval when they gained an innocent victory over something they were determined to do. He sang to children in sweet and blessed words. They knew that He loved them. He never frowned on them. He shared their childish joys and sorrows. Often He would gather flowers, and after pointing out their beauties to the children, would leave them with them as a gift. He had made the flowers and He delighted to point out their beauties."

It has been said that Jesus never smiled. This is not correct. A child in its innocence and purity called forth from His lips joyous song. (Ellen White, *The Upward Look* pp. 57.4-57.7)

Even in the great earthly ministry Christ had to bear, the children were very dear to Him. He did not neglect the children. He took the time to teach the children; he sang to them. In fact, it is told that "a child in its innocence and purity called forth from His lips joyous song." How beautiful! What a scene that must have been. Christ singing in the presence of an innocent child. He calls them his her-

Continued on page 17. column 1



Children Are an H





Heritage of the LORD



1889 HSDA BYLAWS

A fellowship and revival of those who believe the truths of 1889 Seventh-day Adventists. HSDA stands for Historic Seventh-day Adventists.

1. Name

1.1 The name of this organization shall be 1889 HSDA.

2. Location

2.1 The location address of the 1888 HSDA shall be SOMEWHERE, USA

2.2 The location of the office shall be subject to change as determined by the annual council.

3. Membership

3.1 Membership in the 1889 HSDA organization shall consist of individuals who have no local church to join and of duly recognized churches who meet the criteria of 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4.

3.2 Membership in the 1889 HSDA organization shall be approved by a majority vote of the annual council or of the committee.

3.3 Individual members of churches and of the 1889 HSDA organization shall have accepted Christ as their personal Savior, shall have been baptized, shall have covenanted to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and shall understand and be in harmony with the points of faith as summarized in the 1889 Fundamental Principles of Seventh-day Adventists.

3.4 Member churches shall consist of a minimum of three individuals, with at least two individuals from different households.

3.5 Member churches shall keep a record of their local membership.

4. Conducting Business

4.1 Regular business shall be conducted by a committee when the annual council is not in session and by the annual council in session. Special annual council sessions may be called by the chairman of the committee upon majority vote of the committee.

5. Annual Council

5.1 The annual council shall meet in the fall of the year at a date and location decided upon by the committee.

5.2 The annual council shall be composed of representatives of the individual member churches, as follows:

a. Each church shall send a representative for every ten members, with an additional representative to be chosen if at least five members remain unrepresented. The maximum representatives a church may send is five. The pastor of the church cannot be a representative of the local church.

b. The representatives shall supply written evidence of their election to the annual council session.

5.3 Delegates-at-large

a. Ordained or duly recognized ministers of the local churches shall be annual council delegates-at-large.

b. The outgoing committee members shall be annual council delegates-at-large.

5.4 The annual council shall be chaired by the outgoing chairperson of the committee until the chairperson for the new year is elected.

5.5 A quorum shall consist of at least 50% plus one of the annual council members. For online decisions, the annual council members shall vote within one week of being notified by electronic post that their vote is needed.

5.6 When convened, the annual council shall have the power by majority vote to make all decisions relative to the affairs of the organization, including acquiring, buying, or selling properties; accepting or rejecting requests of membership in the organization; and hiring gospel workers, secretaries, and

other office staff. It shall have the power to authorize the disbursement of funds for any purpose it deems necessary in harmony with its mission as stated in the articles of its charter. It shall have the power to make contracts, to organize meetings, and to organize institutions for education, health, or other needs to meet its mission. Its powers shall not be limited to promote the mission of the organization as stated in its charter, except as limited in the charter. These powers shall not be construed to limit the powers of the individual member groups to do the same types of activity.

5.7 The annual council shall have the power to replace any of the trustees by a two-thirds vote.

5.8 Election of officers of the organization shall be held at the annual council sessions.

5.9 The bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the annual council.

6. Committee

6.1 The committee members and its number shall be determined by the annual council and shall include the officers of the organization.

6.2 The committee shall meet at least quarterly.

6.3 A quorum shall consist of at least 50% plus one of the committee members to conduct business. For online decisions, the committee members shall vote within one week of being notified by electronic post of their need to vote.

6.4 The organization has the right to recognize and approve faithful self-supporting ministries which work parallel to the purposes and goals of the organization.

7. Responsibilities and Limitations of the Committee

7.1 The committee shall conduct all the affairs of the organization between sessions of the annual council, including the acceptance of new member individuals and groups, the impeaching and/or the replacing of an officer or committee member, and any other issue that pertains to the business of the church, except the changing of the bylaws.

8. Officers

8.1 Officers shall be chosen by the annual council and shall consist of the following:

- a. Chairperson
- b. Vice-chairperson
- c. Secretary
- d. Treasurer
- e. Auditor

8.2 Term of office for the officers shall be one year, renewable if so desired by the annual council.

8.3 Duties of officers of the 1889 HSDA

- a. The officers of the organization and the members of the committee shall be responsible to carry out the decisions of the annual council between sessions.
- b. The chairperson shall organize and chair the committee meetings.
- c. The vice-chairperson shall perform the duties of the chairperson when the chairperson is not present.
- d. The secretary shall perform the duties of the chairperson when the chairperson and the vice-chairperson are not present.
- e. The secretary shall keep and submit reports on the following: member group names; the names of the committee members and of the annual council members; the names of the organization officers; the minutes of both the committee and the annual council meetings; and the proposals, decisions, resolutions, etc., of the committee and of the annual council.
- f. The treasurer shall submit a report at each regular committee or annual council meeting and whenever asked by the committee chairperson or the annual council chairperson. The treasurer

shall assist the auditor to educate treasurers of local churches concerning the maintaining of proper financial accounts.

- g. The auditor shall audit the financial accounts of the organization and the financial accounts of the local churches annually and submit a report at the annual council session. The auditor, with the assistance of the treasurer, shall educate the local church treasurers in their work as needed.

9. Funding

- 9.1 Member churches are encouraged to systematically return the collected tithes to this organization above that which is used in supporting their own gospel worker(s) or are to make arrangements with the committee to give as they are able. Individual members of the organization are also encouraged to return the Lord's tithe to this organization.
- 9.2 Member churches are encouraged to systematically give at least 10% of the general or non-allocated donations they receive to this organization.

10. Disfellowship and Impeachment

- 10.1 Individual members of the organization may be disfellowshipped by a two-thirds vote of the committee for open sin, after the committee has followed the guidelines of Matthew 18.
- 10.2 Individual members of the member church entities shall only be disfellowshipped by the church wherein they hold membership, after the church has followed the guidelines of Matthew 18.
- 10.3 Member churches may also be expelled from this organization by a two-thirds of the annual council.
- 10.4 Officers of the organization may be impeached by a two-thirds vote of the committee. Members of the committee may be impeached by a two-thirds vote of the committee, not including the member(s) being considered for impeachment.

11. Fundamental Principles

- 11.1 We believe the Bible is our creed and that new light does not contradict or undermine the foundation or pillars of our faith revealed in the word of God and in the testimony of Jesus. The 1889 Fundamental Principles of the Seventh-day Adventists most clearly defines the well-defined points of our faith.
- 11.2. We believe all people, including the unborn from conception onward, are endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights; therefore, we oppose the violation of a person's rights through means such as, but not limited to, the taking of the life of the unborn through abortion, compulsory vaccination or other compulsory medical treatment or procedures, compulsory religious mandates or laws, and the compulsory taking of life in military service.



WV Camp Meeting June 7–11, 2022

The 2022 West Virginia camp meeting will be held June 7–11. We are making this announcement as early as we can for those who need to apply for time off from work and/or to make other schedule adjustments. The theme is *Pressing Together To Finish the Work*.

We are living in a time of peril, a time of temptation, of despondency. Every one is beset by the wiles of Satan, and we should press together to resist his power. We should be of one mind, speaking the same things, and with one mouth glorifying God. When unity prevails, the church advances from success to success, and the

various departments of the cause of God fulfill their part in the finishing of the great work before us. (Ellen White, *The Review and Herald*, November 12, 1914, par. 5)

Please plan now to attend. Each year we see developments that clearly show things are swiftly closing up, but who could have anticipated the way things have gone the last two years? It is possible this camp meeting may not even happen. If time allows, however, we certainly need to draw together, and camp meeting is an excellent way to do this.

Allen Stump

Youth's Corner continued from page 11, column 2
itage. We are to have watchful care over the Lord's heritage. We are told in the Spirit of Prophecy that the church is to be the watchman over the children.

Just as Jesus took a special interest in the children, so should we!

Nothing is of greater importance than the proper education of our children and young people. The church should arouse, and manifest a special interest in this work; for now as never before Satan and all his host are determined to enlist the youth under the black banner that leads to ruin and death.

God has appointed the church as a watchman to have a jealous care over the children, and as a sentinel to see the approach of the enemy and give warning of danger. But the church does not realize the situation. It is sleeping on guard. In this time of peril the fathers and mothers must awake and work as for life, or many of the youth will be forever lost. (Ellen White, *Pacific Union Recorder*, November 21, 1901, par. 1, 2)

Although the context in these quotes is regarding church schools, yet the principle, the needs of the youth and responsibility of the church, remains the same, if not greater. How much greater is the need for an online ministry in times where there is no church school or physical church for many of our children to attend? How much greater is the responsibility of the church as we near the end of earth's history? Parents, many who are homeschooling and desiring godly friendships, are praying for goodly influences for their children. Where do these parents go? Where is the support for these families? They step out in faith to leave behind the apostate church and its teachings to protect their little ones from error and stand firm on truth; yet, there is no place for them, no place to take their children. Are we guilty of sleeping on the job, my friends? Are we standing as watchmen over these dear souls? The Lord's heritage?

Beloved, we must work for our children, for Satan certainly will.

Too often, because of the wicked neglect of parents, Satan sows his seeds in the hearts of children, and a harvest of shame and sorrow is borne. The world today is destitute of true goodness because parents have failed to gather their children to themselves in the home. They have not kept them from association with the careless and reckless. Therefore the children have gone forth into the world to sow the seeds of death. (Ellen White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 201.4)

Children are the future and will witness to the truth at the closing of earth's history. They will be the ones to bear the message. This is why our children are under fierce attack by the enemy. They will witness when we can not. Shall the children's ministry be neglected in such a time as this?

In the closing scenes of earth's history, many of these children and youth will astonish people by their witness to the truth, which will be borne in simplicity, yet with spirit and power. They have been taught the fear of the Lord, and their hearts have been softened by a careful and prayerful study of the Bible. In the near future, many children will be endued with the Spirit of God, and will do a work in proclaiming the truth to the world, that at that time cannot well be done by the older members of the church. (Ellen White, *Counsels to Parents Teachers, and Students*, p. 166.4)

Shall we have a children's ministry? A place where children can gather, have short object lesson studies, do online Bible activities, share their experience with one another and be encouraged in the faith?

If you are a parent or anyone with an interest in the youth and would be willing to play a part in doing this important work, please contact Lee Ann Acevedo at 321-505-4015 or leebachan@hotmail.com. ✍



True education does not ignore the value of scientific knowledge or literary acquirements; but above information it values power; above power, goodness; above intellectual acquirements, character. The world does not so much need men of great intellect as of noble character. It needs men in whom ability is controlled by steadfast principle. (Ellen White, *Education*, p. 225.1)

A Further Note of Clarification

The Issue of the Baptismal Formula

This is an updated version of a clarification we published last month.

There are some dear brethren who have indicated that they cannot participate in the reorganization because of a difference on the baptismal formula the minister should say when performing a baptism. As someone who has been a part of this movement for over thirty-five years, I have never heard of this being an issue until recently.

Most people who have been baptized in this movement during the last thirty-five years have been baptized in the name of Jesus. This probably has been done for three reasons. Firstly, this was the mode for every baptism recorded in the book of Acts (2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5). Secondly, in order to avoid any confusion concerning the doctrine of the trinity, the expression in Matthew 28:19 was not used. However, it is not that any believe Matthew 28:19 is a gloss. We have no issue with the text, only with the interpretation that some give the text. Thirdly, it would not be possible to literally baptize in the proper name of the Holy Spirit because the Bible makes no mention of such a name.

To my knowledge, prior to the last couple of years, I have never heard of a dogmatic view on this one way or the other. I have known people who used the formula of Matthew 28:19, and they are going to be a part of the reorganization. While we believe that baptism is a fundamental principle of the remnant, we have not tried to define this detail of the service. The 1889 fundamental does not define it, and we have chosen to not define it.

To clarify, we are not trying to reorganize with the idea of forcing any minister to baptize in “the name of Jesus” or with any specific formula. I was in conference ministry for four years and in that time and in what I have listened to carefully since, I have not heard of any conference or conference president ordering ministers to use any special wording at a baptism, nor have I, and we certainly should not also.

For myself, I have no issue with someone who wishes to use the Matthew 28:19 formula. I do, however, have an issue with those who would try to force it upon others.

We want to invite all who believe in water-immersion baptism and in the rest of the 1889 Fundamental Principles to come to the reorganization meeting. Dear brothers and sisters, particularly in two well-known ministries, you are welcome to attend and to help re-organize the movement and to finish the work that Jesus is waiting for us to do.

Allen Stump



The Times of Refreshing

By Onycha Holt

Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. (James 4:17)

The people described in James 4 were quarrelsome and lustful, were friends of the world, and prayed amiss. They spoke evil of one another and were double-minded, but, still, they laughed and were proud and boastful and made long-range plans to buy and sell and to get gain. James instructed them that their boasting was evil and that they needed to draw nigh to God; to resist the devil; to cleanse their hands and purify their hearts; to afflict themselves; to weep, mourn, and humble themselves; to turn their laughter into mourning and their joy into heaviness; to stop speaking evil of one another; and to not presumptuously plan for the morrow. He ended his counsel by saying they now knew what the good was they should do and if they refused to do it, they would be sinning, which leads us to consider the parable of the good Samaritan.

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him

that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. (Luke 10:30–37)

Both the priest and the Levite knew what they needed to do, but they refused to do it and by so doing, they sinned. Only the Samaritan stopped to help the man set upon by thieves, and Jesus said we are to likewise show mercy.

Inspiration connects some of the same sins common among the scattered brethren of James 1:1—envy (James 3:16), evil-surmisings, and evil-speaking (James 4:11)—with the absence of the latter rain:

When the latter rain is poured out, the church will be clothed with power for its work; but the church as a whole will never receive this until its members shall put away from among them, envy, evil-surmisings, and evil-speaking. (Ellen White, *The Review & Herald*, October 6, 1896, par. 9)

James develops the concept of sin in his letter. Starting in Chapter 1, he explains that when lust conceives, it brings forth sin, which brings forth death (v. 15). In Chapter 2 we read that if one has respect to persons, favoring the rich and well-dressed over the poor and vilely-clad, one sins (v. 9). Chapter 3 contains a detailed explanation of the wickedness of the untamed tongue, stating that it is a world of iniquity (v. 6) and an unruly evil, full of deadly poison (v. 8), and Chapter 4 recites a long list of sinful behaviors of the believers who were scattered among the twelve tribes. One thing James does not dwell upon is the process of confession and repentance. He does say that he who endures temptation, i.e., he who does not sin, will receive a crown of life (1:12) and that a man is justified (declared righteous) by works *and* faith (2:24).

Other places in the Bible do explain the forgiveness and justification of the sinner. Acts 3, for example, speaks of the blotting out of sins. Peter introduced this concept in a conversation he had with the Israelites in the temple:

And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him

hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. (Acts 3:12–17)

Their only recourse was to repent and be converted:

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; (Acts 3:19)

The concept of sins being blotted out was not newly-learned from Peter. David and Isaiah both had written of it:

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. . . . Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. (Psalm 51:1, 9)

I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. . . . I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee. (Isaiah 43:25; 44:22)

The referral to blotting out in both the Old and the New Testaments means to wipe clean, to erase, or to eliminate. Names can be wiped clean from God's books, and sins can also be erased. What we do learn new from Peter, however, is the connection of the blotting out of sins with the times of refreshing.

The Greek phrase translated *when* in Acts 3:19 is *hopōs an*, and “only here is it translated ‘when.’ Elsewhere it is translated ‘how’ (Matt. 22:15; Luke 24:20), ‘so that’ (Luke 16:26), ‘because’ (Acts 20:16), but most frequently it is translated ‘that,’ or by some other expression of purpose (Acts 8:15; 9:12, 17, 24; Rom. 3:4; etc. . . . [and] the Greek should be translated, ‘that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord’ (RSV)” (F. H. Yost, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 159).

Lexicographers and grammarians are unanimous that *hopōs an* indicates purpose rather than time. . . . [even though] a certain time sequence is here set forth by Peter. He called on his hearers to “repent” and “be converted.” These acts, said he, would be followed by (1) the blotting out of their sins, (2) the coming of the “times of refreshing,” and (3) the glorious advent of Jesus Christ.” (*Ibid.*)

So, even though it seems a broad sequence is presented by Peter of repentance and conversion, the blotting out of sins, the times of refreshing, and finally the second coming of Christ, most people do not understand it to be a detail of a sequence but to show a cause and effect. In the following reference, Ellen White depicts the true sequence to be: re-

pentance, overcoming sin, the times of refreshing, and the blotting out of the record of sins. The blotted-out sins are then to be placed upon Satan, the scapegoat.

When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, then the sins of the repentant soul who received the grace of Christ and has overcome through the blood of the Lamb, will be removed from the records of heaven, and will be placed upon Satan, the scapegoat, the originator of sin, and be remembered no more against him forever. The sins of the overcomers will be blotted out of the books of record, but their names will be retained on the book of life. (Ellen White, *The Signs of the Times*, May 16, 1895, par. 4)

We do not know how much time elapses between each step, but we do know that the blotting out of the record of sins occurs after the judgment and before the second coming of Jesus:

The work of the investigative judgment and the blotting out of sins is to be accomplished before the second advent of the Lord. Since the dead are to be judged out of the things written in the books, *it is impossible that the sins of men should be blotted out until after the judgment* at which their cases are to be investigated. But the apostle Peter distinctly states that the sins of believers will be blotted out “when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ.” Acts 3:19, 20. When the investigative judgment closes, Christ will come, and His reward will be with Him to give to every man as his work shall be. (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 485.2; all emphasis in this article supplied unless otherwise noted)

But what are these times of refreshing? In the following quotation, we read that the prophecies fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain will be fulfilled again in the outpouring of the latter rain:

The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. (*Ibid.*, p. 611.3)

What are those prophecies? Without question, they are, at least, the prophecies of Joel 2:28, 29:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also

upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

In *The Great Controversy*, we read that God’s people will be filled with the Spirit of God to proclaim the last message to the world:

Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Revelation 13:13. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.

The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 612.1, 2)

Under the mighty angel of Revelation 18, the final work for the world will be accomplished, and then the investigative judgment and probation will end. Some time after the investigative judgment begins and before the close of probation the refreshing of Acts 3:19 takes place:

The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. *Here are “the times of refreshing” to which the apostle Peter looked forward . . . (Ibid.*, p. 611.3)

Let us stop for a minute and consider the latter rain. One of the early messages by Ellen White describing the latter rain was written in 1857:

November 20, 1857, I was shown the people of God, and saw them mightily shaken. Some, with strong faith and agonizing cries, were pleading with God. Their countenances were pale, and marked with deep anxiety, expressive of their internal struggle. Firmness and great earnestness were expressed in their countenances, while large drops of perspiration fell from their foreheads. Now and then their faces would light up with the marks of God’s approbation, and again the same solemn, earnest, anxious look would settle upon them. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 179.3)

Some, I saw, did not participate in this work of agonizing and pleading. They seemed indifferent and careless. They were not resisting the darkness around them, and it shut them in like a thick cloud. The angels of God left these, and I saw them hastening to the assistance of

those who were struggling with all their energies to resist the evil angels . . . (*Ibid.*, p. 180.2)

I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen, and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this will cause a shaking among God's people. (*Ibid.*, p. 181.1)

Said the angel: "Look ye!" My attention was then turned to the company I had seen, who were mightily shaken. I was shown those whom I had before seen weeping and praying with agony of spirit. The company of guardian angels around them had been doubled, and they were clothed with an armor from their head to their feet. They moved in exact order, firmly, like a company of soldiers. Their countenances expressed the severe conflict which they had endured, the agonizing struggle they had passed through. Yet their features, marked with severe internal anguish, now shone with the light and glory of heaven. They had obtained the victory, and it called forth from them the deepest gratitude, and holy, sacred joy. (*Ibid.*, p. 181.3)

The numbers of this company had lessened. Some had been shaken out, and left by the way. The careless and indifferent, who did not join with those who prized victory and salvation enough to perseveringly plead and agonize for it, did not obtain it, and they were left behind in darkness . . . (*Ibid.*, p. 182.1)

I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth in great power. It had effect. I saw those who had been bound; some wives had been bound by their husbands, and some children had been bound by their parents. The honest who had been held or prevented from hearing the truth, now eagerly laid hold of it. All fear of their relatives was gone. The truth alone was exalted to them. It was dearer and more precious than life. They had been hungering and thirsting for truth. I asked what had made this great change. *An angel answered: "It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel."* (*Ibid.*, p. 182.2)

We should carefully weigh these words. Ellen White stated in 1857 that a mighty shaking would occur among God's people due to the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. "Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this will cause a shaking among God's peo-

ple" (*Ibid.*, p. 181.1). Those who received this counsel would be led to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth, and only those who heed the counsel of the True Witness obtain the victory and receive the latter rain.

And this brings us to the times of refreshing, for they involve the pouring out of God's Spirit in the latter rain. It is God's Spirit that brings the refreshing we all desire, and this refreshing is necessary to prepare us for "the trying hour" we are to face. The latter rain also has an effect on the honest in heart who have been prevented from receiving the truth. Their bonds will be broken when those clothed with armor speak the truth with great power. They receive the truth and stand with God's people, but the latter rain has another very important function. It prepares God's people for the trying hour before them:

When the third angel's message closes, mercy no longer pleads for the guilty inhabitants of the earth. The people of God have accomplished their work. They have received "the latter rain," "the refreshing from the presence of the Lord," and *they are prepared for the trying hour before them*. Angels are hastening to and fro in heaven. An angel returning from the earth announces that his work is done; *the final test has been brought upon the world, and all who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts have received "the seal of the living God."* (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 613.2)

The final test has been passed, the seal of the living God has been placed, and God's people are prepared for the great time of trouble:

Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. (Jeremiah 30:7)

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. (Daniel 12:1)

Visualizing this time of trouble before it occurs is beyond our imagination:

The time of trouble such as never was, is soon to open upon us; and we shall need an experience which we do not now possess, and which many are too indolent to obtain. It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. *The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal*. And now, while the precious Saviour is making an atonement for us, we should seek to become *perfect in Christ*. God's providence is the

school in which we are to learn the meekness and lowliness of Jesus. The Lord is ever setting before us, not the way we would choose, which is easier and pleasanter to us, but the true aims of life. None can neglect or defer this work but at the most fearful peril to their souls. (Ellen White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 440.2)

But God will have prepared us for this time, if we have let him. If we have learned in the school of Christ his meekness and lowliness and the denial of self, we will be fitted for the time of trouble, and the angels of God will make a wall of fire around us to protect and to deliver us:

. . . let me tell you, He is fitting you up all the time, giving you His grace. You need not be worried. You need not be thinking that there is a special time coming when you are to be crucified; the time to be crucified is just now. Every day, every hour, self is to die; self is to be crucified; and then, when the time comes that the test shall come to God's people in earnest, the everlasting arms are around you. The angels of God make a wall of fire around about and deliver you. (Ellen White, *7LtMs*, Ms 35, 1891, par. 49)

The sweet indwelling of the Spirit will refresh us and will give us the power we need to obey.

The latter rain is to fall upon the *people of God*. A mighty angel is to come down from heaven, and the whole earth is to be lighted with his glory. Are we ready to take part in the glorious work of the third angel? Are our vessels ready to receive the heavenly dew? Have we defilement and sin in the heart? If so, let us cleanse the soul temple, and prepare for *the showers of the latter rain*. *The refreshing from the presence of the Lord* will never come to hearts filled with impurity. May God help us to die to self, that Christ, the hope of glory, may be formed within! (Ellen White, *The Review & Herald*, April 21, 1891, par. 11)

Not only will we have times of sweet refreshment, but:

Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Revelation 13:13. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand. (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 612.1)

We have seen miracles wrought, the sick healed, and Satan working with lying wonders, but has fire come down from heaven in the sight of men yet? Let us now turn our attention to the beginning of modern spiritualism in 1848 in Hydesville, New York, at the Fox home:

I saw that soon it would be considered blasphemy to speak against the rapping, and that it would spread more and more, that Satan's power would increase and some of his devoted followers would have power to work miracles and *even to bring down fire from heaven* in the sight of men. (Ellen White, *Early Writings*, p. 59.2; written August 24, 1850)

So, not only will Satan himself bring fire down from heaven, but some of his devoted followers will do so also, but has this ever happened? First of all, let us consider the extent of modern spiritualism in its beginning. It spread like wildfire. Here are a few reports:

From the Rochester area Spiritualism spread rapidly throughout the nation and then to England and Europe, attracting the illustrious as well as the illiterate. The friends of Spiritualism and psychic research included Sir William Barrett, Henri Bergson, Elizabeth Browning, William Cullen Bryant, James Fenimore Cooper, Sir William Crookes, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Mary Baker Eddy, Thomas Edison, William Lloyd Garrison, William Gladstone, Horace Greeley, Victor Hugo, William James, Carl Jung, Abraham Lincoln, Sir Oliver Lodge, Cesare Lombroso, William McDougall, Robert Owen, John Ruskin, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Alfred Russell Wallace, Lester Frank Ward, and Daniel Webster. To all of them, Spiritualism brought the message that "death" is only a transition to another level of spiritual growth and that the living can communicate with those who are no longer on the earth plane. Through the instrumentality of the medium in a church service or private circle, developed spirits are able to advise the living about personal problems and about how to live in harmony with divine and natural law. (Michael Richard, Albert Adato, "The Medium and Her Message")

At the present time this monster [of spiritualism], which has so recently reared its head, now numbers its votaries by multiplied millions, the exact number of whom it would be quite as impossible to arrive at as that of the drops in the ocean. Among these are not only ex-Presidents, Congressmen, and other statesmen, both now in office and who have been, in this country, but also doctors, lawyers, and clergymen, in great numbers, Protestant and Catholic bishops, reverend presidents of colleges, judges of our higher courts, foreign ambassadors, etc. And now, crossing the Atlantic Ocean, we find yet to be added to the distinguished multitude Her mighty Majesty and Sovereign, Queen Victoria, the late Emperor and Empress of France, the late Queen of Spain, Pope Pius the Ninth, deceased, Alexander II., the Grand Duke of Russia, Alexander III., and many others

who might be added. (John Bourbon Wasson, *Modern Spiritualism Laid Bare, Unmasked, Dissected*, p. 134; 1887)

Dr. Wasson next chronicles some fire-working wonders among the early adherents of modern spiritualism:

The beginning of these fire working wonders seems to have been seen in the celebrated “fire test” of D. D. Home, in England. He took live coals in his fingers, plucking them out of the bed of fire in the grate, and placing them on his naked hand, or on the hands of others, and in their hair, without leaving a mark of smut much less a burn, or without singeing a hair. It was seen also in the State of Michigan, some time ago, at a place where a young medium worked as a domestic, that fire would break out in trunks which had been unopened for months, and in carpets where there had been no stove or fire for months. (*Ibid.*, p. 136)

All this was attested by many. It has also been clearly shown in the State of California, that similar instances have occurred repeatedly, one of which at this moment presents itself to our mind: that of a boy some twelve or fourteen years old, of whom it was positively declared that he had been seen to set fire to haystacks when he was quite a distance away from them, simply by looking towards them, and burn them up. The same also with barns and stables, and he actually did set fire to and burn up his father’s barn, house and stable.

He also was expelled from school, having been seen, while sitting at his desk, to not only cause fire to break out by a look into the desk, but on throwing his eyes toward the ceiling of the schoolroom, it was seen to take fire, and had to be extinguished to save the house. In the same way, he caused a fire to start inside of the closed closet in the schoolhouse, which had not been opened or used for some time. He also set fire in the same way to one corner of the schoolroom outside, which also had to be extinguished . . . (*Ibid.*, pp. 136, 137)

Let us now consider a view Ellen White has given us of the future:

At the transfiguration Jesus was glorified by his Father. We hear him say, “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.” Thus before his betrayal and crucifixion he was strengthened for his last dreadful sufferings. (Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4b, p. 112.4)

Just as Jesus was strengthened by his Father at the transfiguration for his last dreadful sufferings, so God’s people will be strengthened during the latter rain for their last great struggle:

As the members of the body of Christ approach the period of their last conflict, “the time of Jacob’s trouble,” they will grow up into Christ, and will partake largely of his Spirit. As the third message swells to a loud cry, and as great power and glory attends the closing work, the faithful people of God will partake of that glory. *It is the latter rain which revives and strengthens them to pass through the time of trouble.* Their faces will shine with the glory of that light which attends the third angel. (*Ibid.*, p. 112.5)

And just as Jesus poured out his soul in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane just before his arrest, so God’s people will be agonizing with God for deliverance during the time of Jacob’s trouble:

I saw that God would in a wonderful manner preserve his people through the time of trouble. As Jesus poured out his soul in agony in the garden, they will earnestly cry and agonize with him day and night for deliverance. The decree will go forth that they must disregard the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and honor the first day, or lose their lives; but they will not yield, and trample under their feet the Sabbath of the Lord, and honor an institution of Papacy. Satan’s host, and wicked men, will surround them, and exult over them, because there will seem to be no way of escape for them. But in the midst of their revelry and triumph, there is peal upon peal of the loudest thunder. The heavens have gathered blackness, and are only illuminated by the blazing light and terrible glory from Heaven, as God utters his voice from his holy habitation. (Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4b, p. 113.1)

The latter rain, or the refreshing, is vital to prepare us to be faithful to God during this dark time. Without the preparation it gives us, we would capitulate and follow the world in desecration of God’s law. It is important to note that we will not receive this refreshing from God unless we have obtained the victory over every sin:

I saw that none could share the “refreshing” unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. (Ellen White, *Early Writings*, p. 71.2)

Let us consider our opening text again: “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:17). Is our failure to do good registered in the record of our lives?

God has made every provision for the saving of every soul; but if we spurn the gift of everlasting life, purchased at infinite cost for us, the time will come when

God will also spurn us from his presence, whether we are rich or poor, high or low, learned or unlearned. The principles of eternal justice will have full control in the great day of God's wrath. *We shall not hear a charge against us on the ground of the outbreking sins we have committed, but the charge will be made against us for the neglect of good and noble duties enjoined upon us by the God of love.* The deficiencies of our characters will be held up to view. It will then be known that all who are so condemned *had light and knowledge, were intrusted with their Lord's goods,* and were found unfaithful to their trust. It will be seen that they had no appreciation of the heavenly trust, *that they did not use their capital in loving service to others,* that they did not, by precept and example, *cultivate faith and devotion* in those with whom they associated. It will be according to the light they have had that they will be judged and punished. (Ellen White, *The Youth's Instructor*, June 8, 1893, par. 3)

We are responsible for the light we have been given, and if we do nothing with it, condemnation comes, as we read in the following verses:

Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth. (John 9:41)

And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. (Luke 12:47-48)

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. (John 15:22)

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. (Matthew 25:42-43)

These people were not sent away because they were murderers, thieves, or liars but because they had not done that which was good. Likewise, the servant with one talent was not a bad man by today's standards. He did not lose his master's talent. He did not spend it on himself in selfishness. He did not gamble it away. He kept it carefully and returned it to his master, but the Bible calls him a wicked servant (Matthew 25:26). In like manner, the fig tree with no fruit was cursed (Matthew 11:13, 14).

Let us close by considering if James 4:17 is a definition of sin. The Seventh-day Adventist Church teaches it is:

The Bible defines sin in two ways . . . The first definition is given by John: "sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). . . . The second definition is given in James 4:17: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (Clinton Wahlen, *Adult Bible Sabbath School Study Guide*, fourth quarter 2014, p. 77)

Dr. Clinton Wahlen is a respected Adventist theologian by many and an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. His area of expertise is the New Testament, but he is deadly wrong in his statement above. There is only one definition of sin in the Bible, and it is found in 1 John 3:4.

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." *This is the only definition of sin given in the Holy Scriptures, and we should seek to understand what sin is, lest any of us be found in opposition to the God of heaven.* (Ellen White, *The Review & Herald*, July 15, 1890, par. 2)

The avoidance of doing good is an example of sin. We would never say reading is a definition of sin, but it can be an example of sin, and we would be hard-pressed to say that reading the Bible is even an example of sin, but it can be. If we read it to maliciously trap someone in their words or actions, we are sinning. If we read it to misinterpret it to our advantage, we are sinning. If we sit down and read it at the end of a long day when we could help our companion, who is also tired but still toiling, we are sinning by avoiding to do the good to that person. Brothers and sisters, let us love one another—the stranger, the sick, and those close to us—and may the sweet presence of the Lord fall afresh upon us.

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:31, 32) ✍

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