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# The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956

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## A WORD OF EXPLANATION

In this Brochure, we have brought together all the presently available source documents involved in the Seventh-day Adventist - Evangelical Conferences during 1955-1956. These documents are from the pens of some of the participants - the chief participants for the Evangelicals, Donald Grey Barnhouse and Walter R. Martin; and for the Seventh-day Adventists, the chairman of the Conferences, T. E. Unruh.

It must be noted that the observations and evaluations of these conferences on the part of the Evangelicals were written immediately at the conclusion of the dialogues, while the summation from the Adventist viewpoint did not come till twenty years later in 1977, and are written as an historical post-script. In fact, it must be remembered that the rank and file of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, including most of its ministry at that time, did not know who all were involved in these conferences, nor who the primary author of the book resulting from these dialogues - Questions on Doctrine - was, until the article appeared in Adventist Heritage written by T. E. Unruh.\*

There remains - still out of reach of research - the original answers given by the Adventist conferees to Barnhouse and Martin. The book - Questions on Doctrine - while purporting to be those answers, is not, but is rather a revision of what was given to these men. Because of this, we must conclude that what Walter Martin and Donald G. Barnhouse have written is an accurate statement of what the Adventist conferees did say to these men, and what the original answers did read as given to them. A careful evaluation of what T. E. Unruh has written reveals that the highest levels of the Adventist hierarchy were involved in the denial of basic, historic Adventist Christology. The list of names reads like a Who's Who of the executive officers of the General Conference at that time.

Although the book - Questions on Doctrine - is not being reprinted, and is no longer available at Adventist Book Centers, the follow-up book - Movement of Destiny - authored by the primary writer of Questions on Doctrine, is still being promoted. Movement of Destiny teaches the same heresies in Christology as did Questions on Doctrine, and bears the nihil obstat of the present president of the General Conference, Neal C. Wilson, and in the first edition, the imprimatur of the then "first minister" of the Church, Robert H. Pierson. In the second edition, a statement by Elder H. M. S. Richards, Sr., was substituted for Pierson's. Further the Statement of Beliefs voted at the 1980 General Conference reflects these same deviations from the historic teachings of the Church in the areas of the Incarnation and the Atonement. This makes it even more important that we understand what did take place during the Seventh-day Adventist-Evangelical Conferences in 1955-1956. The present theological crisis in the Church is not something that happened over night, nor is it the work of one man, but its roots go back to the betrayal of the trust placed in men who were suppose to stand "as guardians of the spiritual interests" of God's professed people. (See Testimonies for the Church, Vol V, p. 211)

Wm. H. Grotheer, Manager  
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\*Adventist Heritage, Vol. 4, #2, pp. 35-46. (Reproduced with Permission)

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# The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956

T. E. Unruh

A series of conferences between Seventh-day Adventist and Evangelical leaders, begun in the spring in 1955 and running into the summer of 1956, led to the publication of two books: the first, *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*; the second, *The Truth About Seventh-day Adventism*. The first is a definitive statement of contemporary Adventist belief, established on a broad international consensus of church leaders and prepared for publication by a representative committee appointed by the officers of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The second work, by Walter R. Martin, a leading expert on American cults, defines and examines Seventh-day Adventist doctrines, using the first work as source and authority. In his book Martin removed the Seventh-day Adventist church from his list of non-Christian cults and acknowledged that all whose beliefs followed the *Questions on Doctrine* should be counted members of the Body of Christ (the Christian church in the Evangelical definition) and therefore his brethren. While some Adventist and non-Adventist dissidents have been vociferous in their denunciation of the Adventist definitions and the Evangelical evaluation, in retrospect the

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*Now living in Grand Terrace, California, T. E. Unruh is a retired minister. When the events described here took place, Unruh was president of the East Pennsylvania Conference.*

conferences improved the understanding and appreciation of the Seventh-day Adventist church on the part of many Evangelical leaders, and likewise warmed many Adventist leaders toward the Evangelicals. It was a time when the gates between sheepfolds stood open.

There was no thought of precipitating anything of such historic consequence when I wrote a letter on November 28, 1949, commending Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse for his radio sermons on righteousness by faith based on the book of Romans. At the time, Dr. Barnhouse was a popular radio preacher, minister of the Tenth Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, author of a number of Evangelical books, and founder and senior editor of the influential *Eternity* magazine. I was the president of the East Pennsylvania Conference, with headquarters in Reading.

In his reply to my letter Barnhouse expressed astonishment that an Adventist clergyman would commend him for preaching righteousness by faith, since in his opinion it was a well known fact that Seventh-day Adventists believed in righteousness by works. He went on to state that since boyhood he had been familiar with Adventists and their teachings, and that in his opinion their views about the nature and work of Christ were Satanic and dangerous. He concluded by inviting this strange Adventist to have lunch with him.

We did not then get together for lunch, but we did correspond for a time. I returned a soft answer



*Donald Grey Barnhouse, radio pastor and editor of ETERNITY magazine, put Martin in touch with T. E. Unruh, because of Unruh's earlier exchanges with Barnhouse.*



*Though his first attempts at improving Barnhouse's understanding of Adventism resulted in further criticism, author T. E. Unruh had established that Adventists want to be understood. This provided an opening for future dialogue.*

to the first letter from Barnhouse and sent him a copy of *Steps to Christ*, at the same time affirming the evangelical character of Adventists doctrine. I thought we had an agreement that Barnhouse would publish no further criticism of Adventists before there was further contact and clarification. However, in *Eternity* for June 1950, he sharply criticized *Steps to Christ* and its author. After that, I saw no point in continuing the correspondence.

The Barnhouse article was entitled, "Spiritual Discernment, or How to Read Religious Books." It illustrated the difficulty that conservative Christians sometimes have in understanding one another. Here a man of great spiritual stature, a bold crusader for truth, revealed his prejudice against Adventism and Ellen G. White, whom he erroneously called, "founder of the cult." Concerning the first chapter of *Steps to Christ*, entitled "God's Love for Man," Barnhouse charged that so much emphasis on God's love neutralize His justice and that extending that love to unregenerate man smacked of the universalism

characteristic of the writings of the cult. He quoted a number of statements which he called half truths introducing Satanic error, like a worm on a hook, "the first bite is all worm, the second bite is all hook. That is the way the Devil works." Yet this man came to respect Ellen White as a sincere Christian and a great spiritual leader and to acknowledge that Seventh-day Adventists were his brethren in Christ.

**I**n the spring of 1955, almost six years after my correspondence with Dr. Barnhouse began, I heard from Walter R. Martin, who had seen our correspondence and who asked for face-to-face contact with representative Seventh-day Adventists. Martin had written a chapter critical of Adventism in his *Rise of the Cults* and now wanted to talk with Adventists before doing further writing on the subject of our doctrines.

Walter Martin had come to the attention of Dr. Barnhouse when the former was in his early twenties, a graduate student in the history of



*A sincere Christian who intended to expose Adventism as a sect, Walter R. Martin found himself confronted with evidence that Adventists are indeed Christian. Even though he feared it might mean financial ruin, he determined to present the facts as he saw them.*



*W. E. Read, who was a Field-Secretary for the General Conference in 1955, joined the group of Adventist conferees at Froom's request.*

American religion at New York University. By 1955 Martin had to his credit several books about American cults which were recognized as standard works in that field. He was a consulting editor on the *Eternity* staff, a Southern Baptist clergyman, and a member of the Evangelical Foundation, known to the faithful as "How Firm a Foundation," an organization started by Christian businessmen who managed the financial aspects of the Barnhouse enterprises.

It was understood at the outset that Martin, a research polemicist, had been commissioned to write against Seventh-day Adventism. Nevertheless, he declared that he wanted direct access so he could treat Adventists fairly. When I explained this to friends at the Adventist headquarters in Washington, D.C., they agreed that Martin should be treated fairly, and provided with the contacts he sought. Martin expressly asked to meet LeRoy E. Froom, with whose *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* he was already familiar. Froom suggested the inclusion of W. E. Read, then a field secretary of the General Conference. I served

as moderator or chairman throughout the series of conferences.

In March 1955, Martin came to Washington for his first meeting with the Adventists. With him was George E. Cannon, a professor of theology on the faculty of the Nyack, New York, Missionary College. At this first conference the two groups viewed each other with wariness. As the Adventists had anticipated, Martin had read widely from D. M. Canright, E. S. Ballenger, and E. B. Jones, as well as other detractors or defectors. Martin, for his part, seemed to expect a degree of resistance and cover-up, such as he may have met in some of his other investigations. This first meeting can best be described as a confrontation.

Martin began going through a list of questions which reflected his reading. We Adventists, rather than launching into a defense, began with a positive presentation in which we emphasized those doctrines held by our church in common with Evangelical Christians of all faiths in all ages. We stated our conviction that the Bible is the

inspired Word of God and the only rule of Adventist faith and practice. We affirmed our belief in the eternal and complete deity of Christ, in his sinless life in the incarnation, in his atoning death on the cross, once for all and all-sufficient, in his literal resurrection, and in his priestly ministry before the Father, applying the benefits of the atonement completed on the cross. And, finally, while setting no time, we affirmed our belief in the imminent premillennial return of Jesus Christ.

It quickly became clear to the Adventist conferees that both questions and answers would have to be formally stated in writing, that the answers would have to be made crystal clear to the Evangelical conferees and to those they represented, and that a way would have to be found to demonstrate the consensus we were sure we had. Martin was given books and periodicals to substantiate the claims we had made in our opening statement.

Following the first day of discussion both groups were busy into the night. The immediate concern of the Adventists was the list of questions with which Martin had begun his interrogation. Froom, who had a facile pen, took the responsibility of composing the initial answers, in a document running into twenty pages, whipped into shape by his secretary after hours. Until two o'clock in the morning Martin gave his attention to the reading matter we had given him.



The second day will never be forgotten by those who participated in the conferences. As the morning session began Martin announced that, as the result of the first round of discussion and the reading matter he had been given, he was admitting that he had been wrong about Seventh-day Adventism on several important points and had become persuaded that Adventists who believed as did the conferees were truly born-again Christians and his brethren in Christ. In a dramatic gesture he extended his hand in fellowship.

Martin faced serious problems as a result of his turn-about. He had become convinced that Adventists stood with other evangelical Christians on an impressive number of basic doctrines. He was not convinced that Adventists were right on doctrines we describe as "present truth," nor was he ever convinced of these. But how was he to write a book in which he would expose what he considered the errors of Adventism, while at the same time revealing his honest conviction that there existed sufficient common denominators to justify the inclusion of Seventh-day Adventists in the Evangelical Christian community — and still satisfy those who had commissioned him to write a book against Seventh-day Adventism? In his concern, he asked the Adventist conferees to join him in praying for divine guidance.

We Adventists also faced problems. The Evangelical conferees were satisfied that we were presenting contemporary Adventist doctrines, because we were supported by the 1931 statement of fundamental beliefs, which appeared regularly in official yearbooks and manuals of the church, and by the amplified statement in the baptismal covenant. But, they asked, if the Adventist church had reached a firm consensus why did they find contrary or misleading statements in Adventist publications, for sale in Adventist book and Bible houses? We explained that this was the result of efforts by the church to avoid an officially adopted creedal statement, and the denomination's preference for an open-end theology which permitted new light to penetrate in depth. This explanation did not impress them. They asked if we did not think that we ourselves were to some extent to blame if these erroneous statements were used against us. We could only reply that correction had begun.

While church leaders had known of the conferences from the start, a point was reached where we thought it was wise to make a formal

← From the first formal meeting, to the publishing of the book *QUESTIONS ON DOCTRINE*, LeRoy E. Froom was actively involved in composing the written distillation of the conferences.

report to the church. In a long letter to Froom and Read, dated July 18, 1955, I reviewed the progress in understanding achieved so far in the conferences, and expressed the hope that the Adventist conferees could be relieved of other responsibilities so as to have more time for what was expanding into a significant encounter, soon to include such a notable Evangelical as Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse. A copy of this letter was sent to R. R. Figuhr, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Thereafter Figuhr gave the support of his office to the conferences and the publication of the definitive statement of Adventist belief which resulted.

Martin's immediate concern was his relationship with his sponsor, Dr. Barnhouse. He reported to his chief his conviction that both had been wrong in their judgment of contemporary Adventists, whom he had become convinced were not cultists but truly members of the Body of Christ. He then asked Barnhouse if he, Martin, was still a member of the team, and if he should go ahead with the book he had been commissioned to write, which now would have to be different from the one they had projected. Barnhouse gave him some reassurance but was not troubled himself. Shortly thereafter he asked to have the conferees meet with him at "Barchdale," his home in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

In anticipation of the extension of Evangelical participation in the conferences Froom early in August urged the enlargement of the Adventist conferee group. He recommended the inclusion of R. Allan Anderson as a regular member because of the latter's background as evangelist, college teacher of religion, author, and especially because of his gift for diplomatic dialogue with leaders of other communions. Anderson was the secretary of the Ministerial Association of the General Conference and editor of *Ministry* magazine. Since April he had been participating in the conferences. Thereafter he was a member of the team, a tireless and valuable participant in the preparation of the text of the developing questions and answers. We four Adventists were authorized by the General Conference to plan with Martin and Cannon for the meeting with Barnhouse at his home in Doylestown. The planning session was held in Anderson's Washington office on August 22.

So it came about that on August 25 and 26, 1955, we four Adventists, with Walter Martin and George Cannon, sat down with Donald Grey Barnhouse, one of the most influential men among American Protestants and internationally famous as a representative Evangelical, to discuss what Seventh-day Adventists really believe.

Having welcomed the conferees, our host expressed his deep desire that love might prevail, and invited the small company to kneel with him while he prayed for the Spirit of the Lord to be present and to guide.

Dr. Barnhouse, always a very articulate man, began the conference by explaining his attitudes towards Seventh-day Adventists. He told about his boyhood in California, near Mountain View, where he imbibed the prevailing view that Adventists were ignorant fanatics who believed the Devil to be the sin-bearer, and that a person had to keep the seventh-day Sabbath in order to be saved. Later, his bad opinions had been confirmed, he said, by reading books by men who had been Adventists but had left the movement, notably E. B. Jones. But since Martin had begun his conversations with the Adventists, and had shared his findings, Barnhouse had come to see that there were sober, truly born-again Christians among Seventh-day Adventists. With them he was glad to fellowship as brethren, while reserving the right strenuously to refute the two or three positions taught by Adventists which Evangelicals hold to be in error. On this candid note the Doylestown conference began.

*Chosen for his experience at diplomatic dialogue with leaders of other churches, R. Allan Anderson joined the Adventist conferees before the first meetings with Dr. Barnhouse.* courtesy: R. A. Anderson







*Barchdale, the Barnhouse's home, was the site of several conferences between prominent Evangelicals and certain Adventist leaders in 1955 and 56.*

courtesy: Mrs. Margaret Barnhouse

In the first Doylestown conference there was much discussion of Froom's *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, as providing an historical background for Adventism. It was clear that the Evangelicals had respect for Froom's scholarly attainments. Also, the questions and answers so far developed were reviewed in depth during both days of the conference. We came to see that many misunderstandings rested on semantic grounds, because of our use of an inbred denominational vocabulary. Our friends helped us to express our beliefs in terms more easily understood by the theologians of other communions.

Donald Grey Barnhouse, Jr., a theology consultant on Billy Graham's staff, sat with us for a time on the first day. That evening, having seen his father's attitudes change, the son challenged the father to reveal through the pages of *Eternity* his new position on Seventh-day Adventism. Before we separated that evening our host told us he had decided to do this, though he knew it would precipitate a storm and would cost him many subscriptions.

That same evening, in our motel, Martin and Cannon came to express their amazement over the change they had witnessed in Dr. Barnhouse. To them it seemed a miracle. To Martin it meant that he would not have resistance from Barnhouse in writing the truth about Seventh-day Adventism, as he had come to see it.

On the second day we observed a change in the attitude of Barnhouse toward Ellen G. White. Anderson called Walter Martin's attention to a statement in Mrs. White's *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, which Martin in turn passed to Barnhouse. The latter was so impressed with it that he excused himself to take it upstairs for his secretary to copy. The statement reads in part:

We should come to the investigation of God's work with a contrite heart, a teachable and prayerful spirit . . . We should not study the Bible for the purpose of sustaining our preconceived opinions, but with the single object of learning what God has said.

. . . If there are those whose faith in God's word will not stand the test of an investigation of the Scriptures, the sooner they are revealed the better; for then the way will be opened to show them their error. We cannot hold that a position once taken, an idea once advocated, is not, under any circumstances, to be relinquished. There is but One who is infallible, — He who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

We appreciated the warmth, honesty and deep spiritual dedication of the man who was our host at "Barchdale." We have pleasant recollections of his hearty hospitality and that of his charming wife. Our entire days were spent at the Barnhouse home, necessitating our having our meals there. For these, Margaret Barnhouse went to great lengths exploring the unfamiliar land of vegetarian cookery.

Following the two days with Dr. Barnhouse the conferees went to their tasks with renewed confidence. We Adventists had come to see that we could state our doctrinal positions with clarity, in language understood by theologians of other churches, yet never bending for the sake of clarity or harmony alone. Our position was clearly stated by Froom in a letter to Martin:

In our statements we seek to honor and safeguard truth, not merely to pass . . . scrutiny of some group. We are not seeking the approbation of any organization. All we ask is understanding of our actual teachings. We must live our own denominational life under the eye and scrutiny of God. Our sole purpose is to please Him, to whom we are accountable and whom we adore.

We saw that, while there had been doctrinal deviation, and this was still a possibility, it was essential for us to demonstrate the existence of a majority position, a preponderant view, that a consensus actually existed, and that we were correctly reflecting that consensus. As means to this end the General Conference arranged a trip



R. R. Figuhr, General Conference president from 1954 to 1966, supported the Adventist conferees in their meetings with other Christian leaders.

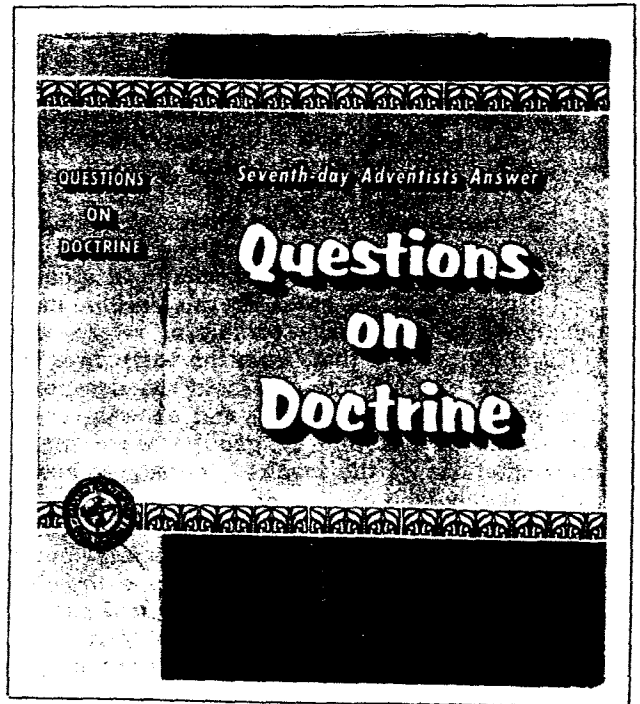
for Martin to the West Coast, where Anderson was to introduce him to representative Adventists. On this trip Martin spoke in Adventist churches and met the staff of the Adventist radio station, Voice of Prophecy. In the East, Martin met with the staff of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and spoke at an assembly there. On overseas trips he observed Adventist missions in action and found occasion to clarify misconceptions about Adventists held by missionaries of other denominations.

In another dimension, it was planned to demonstrate consensus by submitting the questions and answers to Adventist leaders in North America, and then around the world, using a mailing list of more than 250 names. The document by this time had grown to some sixty questions and answers, and was beginning to be thought of as having book possibilities — a definitive statement of contemporary Adventist

\*Members of the committee: R. R. Figuhr (chairman), A. V. Olson, W. B. Ochs, L. K. Dickson, H. L. Rudy, A. L. Ham, J. I. Robison, W. R. Beach, C. L. Torrey, F. D. Nichol, T. E. Unruh, R. A. Anderson, L. E. Froom, W. E. Read.

theology, in convenient reference book form. A committee of fourteen members was appointed with General Conference approval, to prepare the document for distribution to church leaders, then to analyze and evaluate the feedback. Figuhr, the president of the General Conference, was chairman of this committee.\* Correspondence relating to the project was entrusted to J.I. Robison, the president's secretary. The response was good, the consensus was demonstrated, and the decision to publish was made. Thus *Questions on Doctrine* came into being.

The conferees on the Evangelical side were also assessing the support of their new stand on Adventism. Martin, in November 1955, reported talks with Pat Zondervan, who was to publish *The Truth About Seventh-day Adventism* and who was interested in the new direction the book was taking. A month later, Martin reported going over the questions and answers in their entirety in a five-hour session with Dr. Barnhouse, and stated that Barnhouse was satisfied that Adventists were fundamentally evangelical in all matters concerning salvation.



An editorial committee chosen by the General Conference prepared the book *SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS ANSWER QUESTIONS ON DOCTRINE*, based on the points raised in the evangelical conferences.

credit: Review and Herald

Martin also reported that Grank E. Gaebelein had written to James DeForest Murch, stating his opinion that the Seventh-day Adventist church would qualify for membership in the evangelical group, if they so desired. Dr. Gaebelein was the founder and director of the famed Stony Brook School (of which Martin was a graduate), a member of the Reformed Episcopal church, and an official in the National Association of Evangelicals. Dr. Murch, prolific author of religious works, publications director and later president of the National Association of Evangelicals and the editor of *United Evangelical Action*, was a member of the Disciples of Christ.

Meanwhile, correspondence between Froom and E. Schuyler English, editor of *Our Hope* and chairman of the revision committee of the *Scofield Reference Bible*, resulted in an editorial statement by Dr. English in February 1956, correcting misconceptions about Adventist doctrines as to the nature of Christ in the incarnation, the Trinity, and the completed atonement on the cross, followed by an article by Walter Marin in November 1956, the earliest affirmation of the essential Christianity of the theology of Adventism on matters relating to salvation to appear in a non-Adventist journal of note.

A second two-day conference at the home of Dr. Barnhouse took place in May of 1956, days which Barnhouse described as spent in mediation, communion, and discussion. This time our host questioned the Adventist conferees closely about our concept of the role of Ellen G. White as God's messenger to the remnant church and the weight the Seventh-day Adventist church gave to her writings compared to the Scriptures. There was also thorough discussion of the Adventist teaching regarding the heavenly sanctuary and the role of Christ as priest, mediating the sacrificial atonement completed on the cross. By this time we had assembled an impressive exhibit of references which demonstrated that, from the early days of our church, Mrs. White had held the doctrinal concepts we were espousing, and showing that deviations of persons or groups were misrepresentations of the inspired messages, however sincerely held.

In August 1956, Russell Hitt, the managing editor of *Eternity*, came to Washington to go over with us the long-awaited Barnhouse article repudiating his former position on Adventism. Supporting articles by Martin, to follow in *Eternity*, were also gone over. We were given permission to quote or otherwise refer to these articles.

So it came about that a year after the first Doylestown conference, where Dr. Barnhouse had come to see that he would have to report his new position on Adventism, *Eternity* for September

1956, carried his article, entitled "Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians?" The article was written with courage and clarity, and it was lengthy. The author began:

In the past two years several evangelical leaders have come to a new attitude toward the Seventh-day Adventist church. The change is a remarkable one since it consists of moving the Seventh-day Adventists, in our opinion, out of the list of anti-Christian and non-Christian cults into the group of those who are brethren in Christ; although they still must be classified, in our opinion, as holding two or three very unorthodox and in one case peculiar doctrines. The steps in our change of attitude must be traced and the justification of our changed attitude documented. Adventists who read this should realize that evangelical readers have been conditioned through the years for thinking that Adventists must be classified as non-Christians. This present article will explain reasons why this should no longer be so.

Barnhouse went on to give an account of the conferences and the mutual understandings resulting, and to announce the two forthcoming books, Martin's and ours. He defined the areas of agreement which he considered sufficient for identifying Adventists as members of the Body of Christ, within the evangelical definition. The three major areas of disagreement he described as conditional immortality, observance of the Seventh-day Sabbath, and the investigative judgment. To these he could give no credence at all, though the first two had historical foundation in the Christian church. The last he described as a doctrine never known in theological history until the second half of the nineteenth century.

The supporting articles by Martin appeared in later issues of *Eternity*. The first gave the historical background of modern Adventism, the second a comprehensive statement of what Adventists really believe, and the last dealing with Adventism's unique or unusual doctrines. In these articles Martin was both lucid and fair. And while Adventists did not find his criticism of their distinctive doctrines either palatable or convincing, they did appreciate his candor, as he wrote at the end of his second article:

However, whatever else one may say about Seventh-day Adventism, it cannot be denied from their truly representative literature and their historic positions that they have always as a majority, held to the cardinal, fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith which are necessary for salvation, and to the growth in grace that characterizes all true Christian believers.

# eternity

MAGAZINE OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH



In this issue

The Truth About Seventh-day Adventism . . . . . Walter R. Martin  
A Northern Christian Looks at the Race Question . . . . . Joseph T. Berft  
Report from Hong Kong . . . . . Donald Cary Barnhouse

OCTOBER  
1955

*ETERNITY* magazine, which carried both Barnhouse's and Martin's articles acknowledging Adventists as Christians, lost nearly one-fourth of its subscriptions as a result. The loss was temporary though, for within a year circulation was higher than ever. credit: Eternity Magazine

Barnhouse, speaking for Martin as well as himself, ended his historic article with these words:

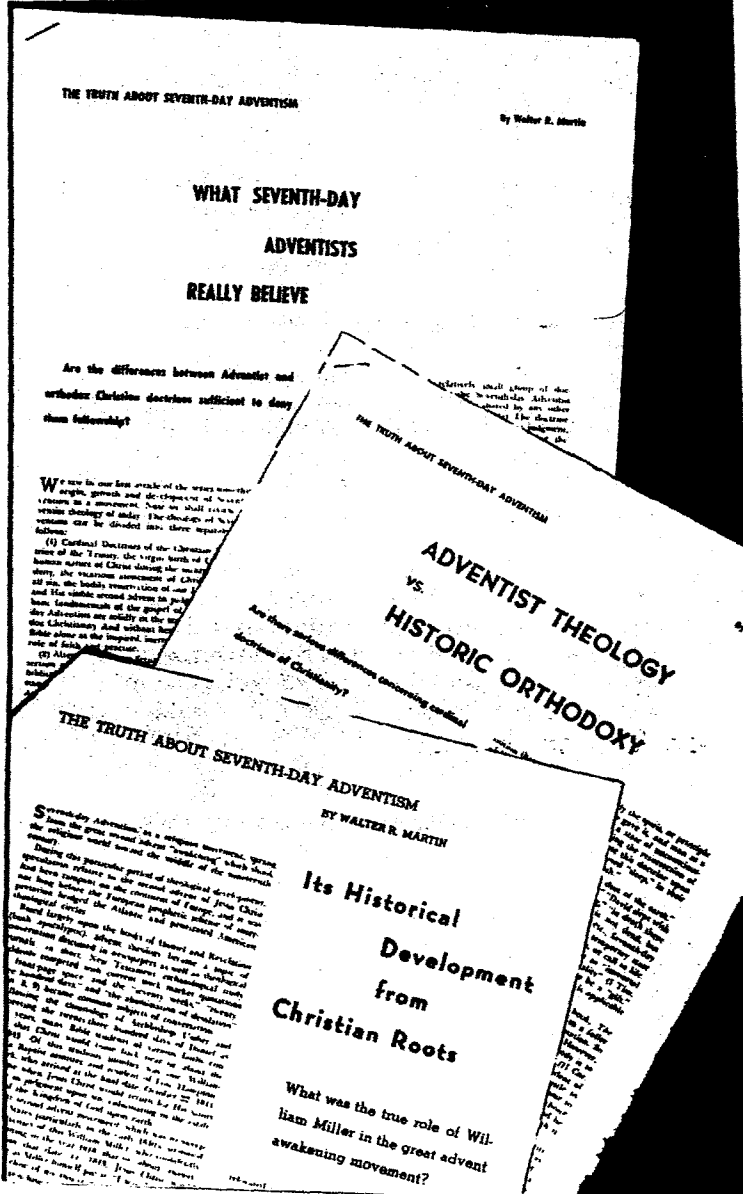
In conclusion, I should like to say that we are delighted to do justice to a much-maligned group of sincere believers, and in our minds and hearts take them out of the group of utter heretics . . . . to acknowledge them as redeemed brethren and members of the Body of Christ. It is our sincere prayer that they may be led to consider further the points on which they are so widely divergent from the rest of the Body of Christ and in so doing promote their own spiritual growth and that of their fellow Christians.

It was a sobering experience as the conferees came to this point in the lengthy dialogue to see the warm Christian friendliness of the Evangelicals. They expressed a concern that the Adventists might come to see as they saw. But they also

realized that we Adventists, moved by the same Christian spirit, hoped that exposure to the special truths we believed would lead the Evangelicals to believe as we did. This we all saw as a dilemma of the Body of Christ, which only the Holy Spirit could resolve.

The expected storm broke quickly. There were at least a few of the peers of Barnhouse and Martin, English, Caebelein and Murch, for whom their stand was gall and wormwood. The *Sunday School Times*, published in the City of Brotherly Love where Dr. Barnhouse had his pastorate, carried a series of

The three part series Martin wrote for *ETERNITY* magazine cited points of agreement and difference between Evangelicals and Adventists. Though he still argued against certain doctrines, he acknowledged that they had been held by Church leaders throughout history, such as Luther. credit: Eternity Magazine



articles against Adventism. The *King's Business*, official organ of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA), ran articles by Louis Talbot, the editor, attacking not only the Adventists but the editor of *Eternity* as well. While these attacks could not be considered typical, they at least showed that the editor of *Time* was less than correct when he announced in the December 31, 1956 issue that the Fundamentalists had made peace with the Adventists.

When *Eternity* lost one-fourth of its subscribers in protest, and the sale of Martin's books plummeted, Barnhouse asked anxiously, "Are you sure of your positions?" On Martin's affirmative answer, Barnhouse said, "Then we will go ahead." Within a year the *Eternity* subscriptions were higher than before, and there was again a good market for Martin's books.

Meanwhile, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was taking a direct hand in planning the book taking shape from the questions and answers. In September 1956 the General Conference Officers appointed a small editorial committee.\* On January 23, 1957, the Review and Herald Publishing Association was invited to manufacture the book "as compiled by a committee appointed by the General Conference," accepting the manuscript in its completed form. And on January 30 the executive committee of the publishing house accepted the manuscript for publication on a "text basis." The General Conference officers approved the title, *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, and also the short title, *Questions on Doctrine*. The officers also approved the exact wording of the introduction as it later appeared in the book over the signature of the editorial committee. Here it was made clear that the book was the work of a representative selection of participants, not of an individual, nor even of the committee, and that those preparing the answers made no claim to having provided the final word on Christian doctrine.

In September the officers recorded a series of actions having to do with publicity and distribution. Union conference papers and Adventist magazines would be asked to run advertisements. Non-Adventist periodicals would be invited to run ads and to publish book reviews. A suitable four-page folder was to be printed for distribution to non-Adventist clergymen. High-ranking religious leaders in North America were to receive complimentary copies. Churches were to be invited to

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Members of the editorial committee: A. V. Olson (chairman), W. E. Read, M. Thurber (book editor of the Review and Herald Publishing Association), W. G. C. Murdoch, R. Hammill, L. E. Froom, and R. A. Anderson, consultants.

put copies in their libraries and to present complimentary copies to Protestant ministers in the community. Book and Bible houses were to stock *Questions on Doctrine*.

*Questions on Doctrine* was published late in 1957. It was designed to begin with the "Statement of Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists," first published in 1931, later given General Conference approval, and regularly included in church manuals and yearbooks of the denomination. This was to make clear to Adventists and non-Adventists alike, that in presenting an amplified statement on doctrine the General Conference was not setting forth a new theology, but was clarifying and amplifying the doctrines most generally believed by contemporary Seventh-day Adventists. Included in appendices was an extensive compilation from the writings of Ellen G. White, covering such subjects as the Diety and eternal preexistence of Christ and His place in the Trinity; His divine-human nature in the incarnation; His completed sacrificial atonement on the cross; and His priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. These were the areas which had been found to be most frequently misunderstood and misquoted. This compilation was later included in Volume 7-A of the *Seventh-day Adventists Commentary* series. Many of these same quotations appeared in the *Ministry* magazine, between May 1956, and March 1957, under the title, "Counsels from the Spirit of Prophecy."

The editor of *Ministry*, R. A. Anderson, made sure during the months preceding the publication of *Questions and Doctrine*, that the Adventist clergy was fully informed of what to expect. He described the conferences with the Evangelicals and the removal of century-old misunderstandings. He explained the procedure for getting a doctrinal consensus from world leaders in the church. The unity of belief so demonstrated he attributed to the influence of the writings of Ellen G. White. There were also articles during this period from W. E. Read on the nature of Christ and from L. E. Froom on the atonement.

It came as a surprise to the planners, after the demonstration of a solid consensus from world leaders in the church and the preview in *Ministry* of what was to come, that *Questions on Doctrine* should be subjected to attack from Adventist sources. The critics seemed to be saying the same things, suggesting a common source. This was not hard to find. M. L. Andreason, a respected retired Adventist theologian, author and Bible teacher, had widely circulated eleven mimeographed documents and six printed leaflets addressed to the churches. In these the writer