

04-From the Shadow of 1919 to Andreasen's Perfectionism

With 'omage to Professor Michael Campbell, Southwestern Adventist University, Keene, TX

Karl Wagner

November 8, 2020; 2:00 PM, Sabbath Afternoon

A. The Battle Lines are Drawn

1. "For now, let it suffice to say that the 1919 Bible Conference set the stage for every hermeneutical battle in Adventist history. Thus, it is essential to understand what happened in 1919 and to do so on its own terms."¹
 - a. "The transcripts of the 1919 Bible Conference give the bulk of what is known about the meeting. The two bundles of transcripts, containing 1,303 pages, were discovered by F. Donald Yost on Dec. 6, 1974, in the process of setting up the General Conference Archives."²
 - b. Published in Spectrum Magazine, March 1979.³
2. Background to the Fundamentalist movement
 - a. Prophetic Conferences and the rise of Fundamentalism⁴
 - i. Modernism was threatening Bible based Christianity, diminishing doctrines such as the virgin birth, the flood and the creation story. Relegated to myths, the churches stood up to declare their fidelity to Christ. Adventists would join in with them to declare their own version of Fundamentalism.
 - b. F. M. Wilcox, editor of the Review and Herald.
 - i. "In a strange irony of history, Wilcox, one of the more conservative and stalwart Seventh-day Adventist leaders within the denomination at the time, espoused an ecumenical form of Adventism because he resonated strongly with facing a common foe and emphasizing points Adventists held in common with these conservative Christians, who were the harbingers of the rising Fundamentalist movement."⁵

¹ Michael W. Campbell, 1919: The Untold Story of Adventism's struggle With fundamentalism, (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2019), page 19.

² Campbell, Michael W., "The 1919 Bible Conference and its Significance for Seventh-day Adventist History and Theology" (2008). Dissertations. 21. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations/21>, page 92

³ "The Bible Conference of 1919," by Molleurus Couperus, Spectrum: Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums (March 1979), 23-26.

⁴ Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930 Reprint Edition*, (University of Chicago Press-2008)

⁵ Ibid, page 28

- ii. Carlyle B. Haynes attended the 1918 Philadelphia Prophecy Conference. Other conferences were attended by Adventists who saw the significance of their attention to the second coming.
- B. Hermeneutics and what to do with a dead prophet
3. The Conference explored how prophetic writings are interpreted.

a. Prophetic Interpretation:

- i. Ten Kingdoms
- ii. 1260 day/year
- iii. Seven Trumpets
- iv. The “daily”
- v. King of the north
- vi. Trinity

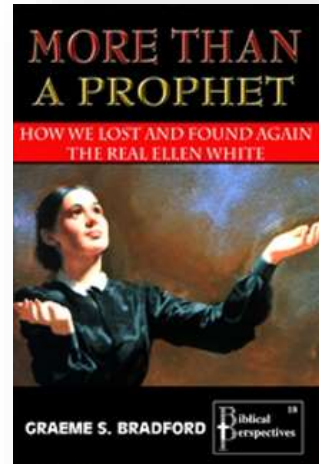
4. Interpreting Ellen White

a. What this means for fundamentalism

- i. Inspiration and Authority: What is the authority of Ellen White?
- ii. Graeme Bradford and his book, *More Than a Prophet* (2006).
 - 1. “To the reader of these minutes,” wrote Bradford, “it is obvious that the leaders of the church, along with the Bible teachers present, did not feel comfortable in presenting . . . to the laity of the church” what the leaders “knew to be the truth regarding the subject of inspiration of Ellen White’s writings.” “To the reader of these minutes,” wrote Bradford, “it is obvious that the leaders of the church, along with the Bible teachers present, did not feel comfortable in presenting . . . to the laity of the church” what the leaders “knew to be the truth regarding the subject of inspiration of Ellen White’s writings.”

5. Aftermath of 1919 and the General Conference in Session

- a. “Throughout the conference, there were a number of conversations about holding another Bible conference to continue what had been done at these meetings - perhaps the 1919 Conference would mark the beginning of such meetings annually. Yet it would be an entire generation before another major Bible conference to be held, in 1952. This may in part be due to the vitriolic attacks of



Claude Holmes and J. S. Washburn, who perceived the 1919 meetings as the proof of Adventist apostasy.”⁶

- b. “Is it well to let our people in general go on holding to the verbal inspiration of the Testimonies? When we do that, aren’t we preparing for a crisis that will be very serious some day?” 1919 Transcript, J. N. Anderson, page 1231
- c. The conference revealed the prevailing views of the day that would lead the church towards Fundamentalism. Someone at the forefront of that was Milian L. Andreasen.

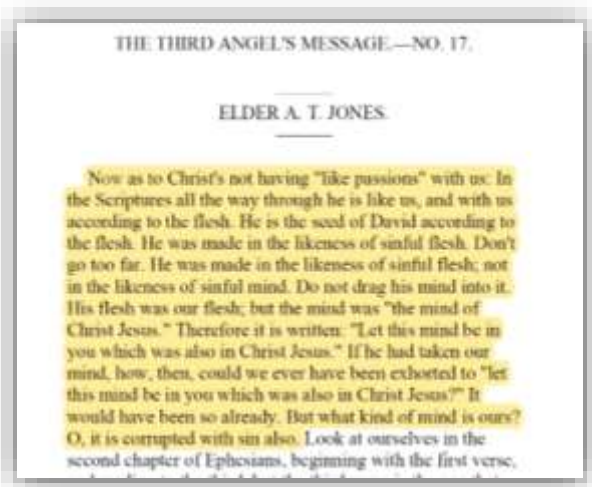
6. Systemizing Adventist Behavior Modification.

- a. Milian Lauritz Andreasen (June 4, 1876 – February 19, 1962), was a Seventh-day Adventist theologian, pastor and author. He was one of the Seventh-day Adventist church's most prominent theologians during the 1930s and 1940s. Andreasen held to the belief that Christians can overcome sin, known popularly as Last Generation Theology, controversial for its views on atonement and salvation. Andreasen became well known for his protests against Seventh-day Adventist church leaders during the last years of his life.
- b. “Their view of Christ’s nature created no controversy in the Adventism of the 1890s. . . . But that would all change in the 1950s when it would become the theological subject for many Adventists on both sides of the question. M. L. Andreasen, who formed a student/mentor relationship with Jones in the late nineties and who had become one of the denomination’s foremost theologians by the middle of the twentieth century, held that the doctrine of Christ’s sinful’ nature is one of Adventism’s ‘foundation pillars.’”⁷

c. A. T. Jones: “Christ took our flesh in the incarnation, with ‘just the same tendencies to sin that are in you and me.’”⁸

i. “He is our example in all things. He is a brother in our infirmities, but not possessing like passions. As the sinless One, his nature recoiled from evil” (ST. Aug. 7, 1879).

7. 1937 formation of LGT: First put into print in Andreasen’s book, *The Sanctuary Service* (1937). Revised in 1947. The seedbed for his theology on the last generation is found in the chapter, “The Last Generation.”



1895 General Conference Bulletin

⁶ Ibid, page 109.

⁷ George Knight, A. T. Jones: Point Man on Adventist’s Charismatic Frontier (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc.-2011), p. 167

⁸ IBID, 170; See 1895 General Conference Bulletin, pages 233, 333, 266, 267

- a. The first paragraph of the chapter, “The Last Generation” reads: “THE FINAL DEMONSTRATION OF WHAT THE gospel can do in and for humanity is still in the future. Christ showed the way. He took a human body, and in that body demonstrated the power of God. Men are to follow His example and prove that what God did in Christ, He can do in every human being who submits to Him. The world is awaiting this demonstration. Rom. 8:19. When it has been accomplished, the end will come. God will have fulfilled His plan. He will have shown Himself true and Satan a liar. His government will stand vindicated.”⁹
 - i. Stop Sinning and Overcome
 1. “A person can no more love God and fail to manifest it by deeds, than he can live without breathing.” (Honor Due to God 4)
 2. **Victory over sin** comes from the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit in a Christian life. Only those who gain the victory over sin will be in the eternal kingdom.” (ibid 48)
 3. **Nature of Christ:** Andreasen writes, “the false statement in ‘Questions on Doctrine’ p. 383 that Christ was ‘exempt from the inherited passions and pollutions that corrupt the natural descendants of Adam.’”¹⁰
 - a. And on page 4 that Christ takes this sinfulness as an obligation. “It is a duty He owes and must not avoid. He cannot make reconciliation for men unless He takes His place with them and in all things becomes like them. It is not a question of choice. **He should, He must, He ought to, He is under obligation to, He owes it.**”¹¹
- b. THE BAKER LETTER: (1900) “Be careful, exceedingly careful as to how you dwell upon the human nature of Christ. Do not set Him before the people as a man with the propensities of sin. He is the second Adam. The first Adam was created a pure, sinless being, without a taint of sin upon him; he was in the image of God. He could fall, and he did fall through transgressing. Because of sin, his posterity was born with inherent propensities of disobedience. But Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God. He took upon Himself human nature, and was tempted in all points as human nature is tempted. He could have sinned; He could have fallen, but not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity. He was assailed with temptations in the wilderness, as Adam was assailed with temptations in Eden” (13MR – #1002, page 18).

⁹ M. L. Andreasen, *The Sanctuary Service* (Tacoma Park, MD: Review Herald, 1937), P. 279

¹⁰ M. L. Andreasen, *Letters to the Churches*, (Facsimile with repaging: Payson, AZ: Leaves of Autumn-n.d.) p. 5; Series A – No. 1: The Incarnation: Was Christ Exempt? Another edition available online from Teach Services, <https://teachservices.com/letters-to-the-churches-andreasen-milian-lauritz-m-l-paperback-lsi/>

¹¹ *Ibid*, page 4

- c. The Message has turned in upon us
 - i. Leaving the Great Commission behind to focus on self.
 1. Letters to the Churches 1959 – “The Incarnation-Was Christ Exempt?”
 2. “Only as Christ placed Himself on the level of the humanity He had come to save, could He demonstrate to men how to overcome their infirmities and passions. If the men with whom He associated had understood that He was exempt from the passions with which they had to battle, His influence would immediately have been destroyed and He would be reckoned a deceiver. His pronouncement, "I have overcome the world" (John 16:33), would be accepted as a dishonest boast; for without passions He had nothing to overcome. His promise that "to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Revelation 3:21), would be met by the claim that if God would exempt them from passions, they also could do what Christ had done.”¹²

8. The Stage is Set to Restore Our Voice

The stage is set for the Fundamentalism to rise against the onslaught of the New Theology. It would signal the beginning of an open conflict between ideas of Soteriology within the Adventist movement. Since 1957 we have been in an open conflict between a gospel of grace and a gospel of works. Only until recently has this battle spilled out onto the pages of three noted books published by Adventist publishers.

Go to: 05-Fanning the Flames of LGT: 1957 to the Historic Church Movement

Suggested Reading:

Andreasen, Milian L., *Sanctuary Service, The* (Takoma Park, MD: Review and Herald, 1937/1947). See the chapter, “The Last Generation.”

Andreasen, Milian L.; *Letters to the Churches* (1959).

Campbell, Michael W.; "The 1919 Bible Conference and its Significance for Seventh-day Adventist History and Theology" (2008). Dissertations. 21.

<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations/21>

Campbell, Michael W.; *1919: The Untold Story of Adventism's Struggle With Fundamentalism* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Assoc., 2019).

Knight, George; *A. T. Jones: Point Man on Adventist's Charismatic Frontier* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2011).

¹² Ibid, page 9