

Identifying the Changes Made in the 1980 Doctrinal Statement

COMPARING THE 1980 STATEMENT WITH THE PREVIOUS ONES

There were four *Statements of Belief*: 1872, 1914, 1931, and 1980. Here is a brief survey of significant variants, as I see them,—with special attention to changes introduced into the 1980 Statement approved at the Dallas General Conference Session in April 1980.

We will discover that the important additions, changes, and omissions in the 1980 Statement were primarily the result of implanting the following new theology teachings into our church's doctrinal statement of faith: (1) Only forgiveness of sin is needed, not obedience. (2) Obedience to God's law is not a requirement for salvation. (3) By accepting Christ, we are accounted righteous and are saved.

Throughout the following analysis, everything in bold type consists of changes, additions, or omissions in the 1980 Statement.

1980 section titles are in **bold italic**. In a few instances, bold italic section titles refer to items not in the 1980 edition at all, which were in earlier ones. “==” refers to the 2005 added section (11. *Growing in Christ*).

Lastly, “#” refers to the paragraph numbers of each of the four *Statements of Belief*. (The 1872 document is in Roman numerals.)

1. The Holy Scriptures—1872 (#III), 1914 (#3), and 1931 (#1) are identical. The 1980 is larger, but not a problem.

2. The Trinity—This concept is only in the 1931 (#2) and 1980. The 1931 calls this “the Godhead” and states this important truth in the same, correct manner as the Spirit of Prophecy.

The 1980 omits “Godhead” and speaks of a “unity of three Persons.” The remainder of the paragraph speaks of only one Person, not three as being the Trinity.

3. The Father—Only in the 1980. No problems here.

God—The 1872 (#III) and 1914 (#1) are identi-

cal, and only mention God and the Holy Spirit. (Christ is discussed at length in a subsequent paragraph in both *Statements*.)

4. The Son—In all four *Statements*. The 1872 (#II) and 1914 (#2) are quite similar. The 1931 (#3) is much briefer and does not mention Christ completing His atoning work in the Sanctuary above and blotting out sin, just before His Second Advent. But it fully covers these points in a later paragraph on the Sanctuary.

The 1980 Statement mentions that He “ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf,” but with no mention of the atonement or investigative judgment performed there.

5. The Holy Spirit—No separate paragraph in the 1872. (He is mentioned in the paragraph on the “Godhead.”) No separate paragraph in the 1914 or the 1931. (But, in both, He is mentioned in the paragraph on “God.”)

The 1980 has a full paragraph, but makes no mention of the fact that the Holy Spirit empowers men to obey God's law or that sanctification is involved in this process.

6. Creation—Not in the 1872, 1914, or 1931.

The 1980 has a full paragraph which implies, but does not state, that Creation Week is a literal week. It omits stating that Creation occurred about 6,000 years ago. This is a significant omission, since our liberals reject a recent Creation, claiming that the world was made millions of years ago and gradually evolved.

7. The Nature of Man—Not in the 1872, 1914, or 1931.

The 1980 states the principle of man having a free will (as opposed to predestination), being a complete organism (not having a separate soul), and (following the Fall) having a fallen nature. Man is called by God to love Him, but there is no mention made of obeying Him. There is no mention of the change that ongoing sanctification makes in drawing man closer to God's image. This Statement also mentions caring for the environment, a point ecumenists love.

Prophecy—Not in the 1980. The 1980 Statement downplays the importance of Bible prophecy. That is to be expected, since Daniel and Revelation direct our attention to Rome as “the man of sin” and the mark of the beast, as well as to the fallen churches.

The 1872 (#VII) and 1914 (#7) are identical and

This research report is included in our new book, *Seventh-day Adventist Statement of Belief*. (Much of it is being gradually mailed to you in tract format.)

8½ x 11, 42 pages
Single copy \$5.00 + \$2.50.

HARVESTIME BOOKS - BOX 300 - ALTAMONT, TN 37301
CREDIT CARD ORDERS: 931-692-2777

2 refer to the “great chains of prophecy” which bring us down to the closing scenes. Not in the 1980.

The 1872 (#IX), 1914 (#9) and 1931 (#13) discuss the 1844 mistake. Not in the 1980.

The 1872 (#VI) and 1914 (#6) is about the importance of prophecy. Not in the 1980.

8. The Great Controversy—Not in the 1872, 1914, or 1931.

The 1980 appears to be quite complete. But it is worded in such a way that **obedience to God’s law is never mentioned as important, a requirement for salvation, or that the plan of salvation restores man in this life through enabled obedience (sanctification).**

9. The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ—The 1872 (#II), 1914 (#2), and 1931 (#3)—all quoted next to “4. The Son,” above,—refer to Christ’s life, death, etc. The 1872 and 1914 mention Christ’s making atonement in heaven. The 1931 only mentions that He is making intercession for us.

The 1980 emphasizes the atonement made on the cross, while saying nothing about Christ’s ministry in heaven. This atonement at Calvary “vindicates God’s law” and “provides for our forgiveness.” Nothing is said about it enabling us to obey the law. Christ’s death is “substitutionary” (that is, we do not have to also die; Rom 6:1-7) and “transforming” (Calvary changes us, not Christ’s ministry in heaven). Accepting the Calvary atonement (alone) will bring us final victory over sin (at the Second Advent, not in this life).

10. The Experience of Salvation—The 1872: #V is about the new birth. It mentions that it produces “a moral change by conversion and a Christian life” (sanctification). #XIV is about how we can have a “radical transformation” which “follows repentance and faith” and is “regeneration.”

The 1914: #5, #17, and #18 are identical to the 1872, above.

The 1931 (#4 and #8) is worded somewhat differently, but repeats the same points as the 1872 and 1914. Most of #8 deals with justification. But, at the end, it touches on sanctification (“their lives are brought into conformity to the divine precepts”).

The 1980: **It teaches that we repent and exercise faith, and thus we receive salvation. “Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified,” God’s law “of love” is written in our hearts, and we have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment. There is nothing here about obeying God’s law and the necessity of doing so. The closest to it is: “We are given the power to live a holy life,” without mentioning how this is done and implying that it comes automatically.**

== 11. Growing in Christ—This is the newly added statement, which was inserted into the 27-point *Statement of Belief* at the 2005 General Conference Session in St. Louis. Because the present analysis is about the original 27-point *Dallas Statement*, we will retain the original numbering (which is why there is more than

one “11” in this list), but if you will check in any current *Yearbook*, you will find that 28 statements are now listed.

Here is this new paragraph:

“11. Growing in Christ. By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. He who subjugated the demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made certain their untimely doom. Jesus’ victory gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us, as we walk with Him in peace, joy, and assurance of His love. Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us and empowers us. Continually committed to Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we are set free from the burden of our past deeds. No longer do we live in the darkness, fear of evil powers, ignorance, and meaninglessness of our former way of life. In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into the likeness of His character, communing with Him daily in prayer, feeding on His Word, meditating on it and on His providence, singing His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the Church. As we give ourselves in loving service to those around us and in witnessing to His salvation, His constant presence with us through the Spirit transforms every moment and every task into a spiritual experience (Ps 1:1-2; 23:4; 77:11-12; Col 1:13, 14; 2:6, 14-15; Luke 10:17-20; Eph 5:19-20; 6:12-18; 1 Thess 5:23; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:18; 2 Cor 3:17-18; Phil 3:7-14; 1 Thess 5:16-18; Matt 20:25-28; John 20:21; Gal 5:22-25; Rom 8:38-39; 1 John 4:4; Heb 10:25).”

Because of all that is omitted, this newly added statement is loaded with new theology concepts and only strengthens the liberal grip on our current *Statement of Belief*. The above paragraph is supposedly about the sanctified life and may sound beautiful, but it is false. *Here is why:*

The truth is that, having received forgiveness from God as we plead for it, we arise and walk in newness of life. Sanctification begins. It consists of continually studying God’s Word and, through the enabling grace of Christ, obeying it. As we progress, we constantly wage war with the forces of evil. But, as we cling to Him, God strengthens us to continue on in a godly life. But if we fall we quickly run back to Christ, plead for forgiveness, and put sin away from us. As long as we maintain a close relationship with Him, we experience all the wonderful things stated in this added *Statement*.

The new theology error is that, having received justification, we arise and (without putting away sin; without obedience to God, His law, and His Word; and without bothering to resist temptation) live a magical life of happiness and joy that continues on and on till our death. This is a lie.

In reality, those who try to follow the new theology path only become more and more worldly and sinful.

11. The Church—This topic was not in the 1872, 1914, or 1931.

The 1980: **The church is said to be the “community” of believers who accept Christ. “Community” is a code word for all Christians in a locality or everywhere. The word, “church,” is not identified anywhere in this para-**

graph as being the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, the remnant church, or the commandment-keeping people of God—which are the names by which God’s faithful Sabbathkeepers are identified. This paragraph was implanted here to make the ecumenicals and other churches happy—for they are included in this paragraph. The all-inclusive phrasing even includes the Catholic Church. *This paragraph does not belong in our Statement of Belief!*

12. The Remnant and Its Mission—The 1872 (#XVII) and 1914 (#20) are identical. And the 1931 (#15) says almost the same thing. No problem here.

The 1980: Sentence one refers back to #11 (“The Church”). **It is included to let the other churches be assured that they are also saved through belief in Christ. (As usual, no obedience is necessary on their part either.)**

Much of the remainder of the paragraph may have been added in by concerned delegates at the Dallas Session because it mentions keeping the commandments, the Revelation 14 message, and a last-day judgment; all of these result in “personal reform.” Sounds good, but looking deeper: **It does not say, “the three angels’ message,” but “a proclamation symbolized by three angels.” Frankly, that sounds ethereal and only symbolic. It does not say what that message is. Next, notice that the “work of judgment” results in repentance and reform on earth. That is not true!** Read chapter 28 in *Great Controversy*. We are now to send our sins “ahead to judgment”; we are now to prepare our hearts to meet its searching scrutiny. The Investigative Judgment does not result in giving anyone more time for repentance and change! It results in the sealing for some and eternal condemnation for others.

13. Unity in the Body of Christ—Not in the 1872, 1914, or 1931.

The 1980: **As is “11. The Church,” this is another paragraph implanted solely to please the other churches and make it easier for us to draw closer to them. Indeed, it should have been combined with #11,—except to do so would draw attention to why #11 was so lengthy! This paragraph has nothing to do with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, its people, or its core beliefs! The message of this paragraph is that we are “one body,” “all equal,” “in one fellowship,” sharing “the same faith,” giving “one witness,” and in “unity” with all the other churches! And why? Because God is a one-in-three, “triune” God! This paragraph should not be in our Statement of Belief!**

14. Baptism—1872 (#IV) and 1914 (#4) are identical. 1931 (#5) is a little shorter, omitting the last part.

The 1980: **It very carefully speaks of “forgiveness of our sins” and “repentance of sin,” with no mention of empowered obedience. Thus only justification is here, not sanctification.**

15. Lord’s Supper—Not in the 1872, 1914, or

1931.

The 1980: **Preparation for the Lord’s Supper only includes repentance and confession; there is nothing here about putting away sin or determining, through Christ’s grace, to obey in the future. Foot washing represents “renewed cleansing,” but does not tell that it is achieved through putting away sin and obeying God’s law.**

The Papacy—Not in the 1931 or 1980.

The 1872 (#XIII) and 1914 (#13) are essentially the same. Both point to the papacy as the “man of sin” who changed the Bible Sabbath to Sunday.

16. Spiritual Gifts and Ministries—In all four *Statements*. The 1872 (#XVI) and 1914 (#19) are the same—but do not mention Ellen White or the Spirit of Prophecy. (Because the 1931 deals specifically with the Spirit of Prophecy, it is listed below under [#17].)

The 1980: **The “spiritual gifts” are given to everyone.**

17. The Gift of Prophecy—As stated, this is not in the 1872 or 1914.

The 1931 (#19) focuses directly on two important truths: (1) The “spirit of prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church.” (2) This gift was revealed “in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White.”

The 1980: This may be another paragraph which was probably made more accurate by the delegates at the Dallas Session: “The gift of prophecy . . . is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White.” The next sentence, also helpful, states that those writings “are a continuing and authoritative source of truth,” which provide “guidance, instruction, and correction.” **But it omits saying that she was an inspired prophet and her writings are on a level of divine Inspiration equal to that of the Bible.**

18. The Law of God—The 1872 (#XI) and 1914 (#11) are identical. They mention that the original law is in the ark of the Sanctuary in heaven.

The 1931 (#6) is brief in the extreme, but manages to cover the raw basics.

The 1980: Although most of this is good, **it is undercut by the last half, which overly emphasizes that salvation is entirely apart from obedience. —This is not true.** The truth is that we are saved by grace, but without obedience we will not be saved!

19. The Sabbath—The 1872 (#XII) and 1914 (#12) are the same. The 1931 (#7), although brief, is well stated. It agrees with them in saying that the law requires obedience to the Sabbath. It adds the point that the Sabbath is both “a memorial of Creation and a sign of sanctification.”

The 1980: This statement is longer and perfectly acceptable. It adds the point about keeping the Sabbath from sunset to sunset. But it does not mention the preparation day.

20. Stewardship—Not in the 1872. The 1914

4 (#16) mentions both improper methods of fund-raising and the Biblical requirement of tithes and offerings.

The 1931 (#18) is very brief, and mentions tithes and offerings as “an acknowledgement,” not a required duty. It adds that we “must render account” to God of all our possessions.

The 1980: Mention is made of several aspects of our stewardship (including ecological ones, which ecumenists love to talk about, while doing little about). “Faithful service to Him” is also included. **Tithes and offerings only “acknowledge God’s ownership”; we are not told that they are a requirement.**

21. Christian Behavior—Not in the 1872. The 1914 mentions that (#14), because we are a peculiar people, we do not love the pleasures of this world and (#15) we should dress modestly.

The 1931 (#17) is not overly long, but very well worded. It adds a slight mention of proper diet, plus avoidance of harmful substances.

The 1980: This discusses activities which will ensure “purity, health,” and be of the “highest standards.” **The norms by which those standards are to be determined are not Biblically based, but man-made: “Christian taste and beauty.”** Clothing should be “simple, modest, and neat.” Here we find the only mention that our bodies are temples, as a reason for caring for them. While mentioning that we should adopt “the most healthful diet possible,” it also says we should “abstain from unclean foods,” **thus permitting meat eating—which is not the “most healthful diet” possible.**

22. Marriage and the Family—Not in the 1872, 1914, and 1931.

The 1980: This is a good statement. Notice that divorce is only “for fornication” and that children should be raised “to obey the Lord.” The delegates at Dallas probably added these.

23. Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary—*The heavenly Sanctuary and its cleansing:* The 1872 (#X) and 1914 (#10) are essentially the same. The 1931 (#14), although an abridgement, covers the main points.

The Investigative Judgment: The 1872 (#XVIII) and 1914 (#21) are essentially the same.

The 1980: This lengthy paragraph, about the Sanctuary and Investigative Judgment, covers the subject adequately. It must have been worked over at the Dallas Session, in order to make it so accurate. Note that part of this statement correctly states the purpose of the Investigative Judgment: to determine who are “keeping the commandments” (whereas, “10. The Experience of Salvation” gave the new theology excuse that “we have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment”). Unfortunately, this paragraph also says that, **by this investigation, all will be saved “who believe in Jesus.” Our salvation also re-**

quires, through the strengthening grace of Christ, the putting away of sin and obedience to the Word of God.

There is a variant here: The 1872 (#XVIII) says the cleansing of the Sanctuary is also when the third angel’s message is proclaimed and the investigative judgment occurs. It also mentions that this judgment determines who will be raised in the first resurrection. No other *Statement* covers any of this.

24. The Second Coming of Christ—Apparently, this topic is not specifically discussed in the 1872 and 1914.

The 1931 (#20) and the 1980 cover nearly the same points. The 1980 adds that Christ’s return will be seen “worldwide.” While the 1931 speaks of the “destruction of the wicked,” the 1980 calls them “the unrighteous.” This avoids whether or not they were sinners.

25. Death and Resurrection—The 1872 (#XIX, XX, XXI and XXII) and the 1914 (#22, 23, 24, and 25) are essentially the same. They discuss the state of the dead, the first resurrection, and translation.

The 1931 (#9, #10, #11, and #12) adds about who has immortality and mentions the state of the dead. Then it adds about how, after the millennium, the wicked will be purged by fire from the universe. It is a very good statement.

The 1980: **This statement is extremely sparse, giving almost no information about the state of the dead, and the first and second resurrections.**

26. The Millennium and the End of Sin—The 1872 (#XXII) and 1914 (#8) are essentially identical, disproving the error of a millennium of happiness here on earth, following the world’s conversion.

The 1872 (#XXIII) and 1914 (#26) are the same about their discussion concerning the righteous in heaven judging, while Satan is bound on earth.

The 1872 (#XXIV) and 1914 (#27) are identical about what they say regarding the end of the thousand years, when the wicked are raised and then eternally destroyed. The 1931 (#21) is extremely brief.

The 1980: **This statement does not mention that the saints will judge the wicked; instead they only “reign” in heaven during that time. The wicked are only referred to as “unrighteous.” “Wickedness” implies sinning. And the new theology teaches that we (while holding on to our sins) need only be covered by “Christ’s righteousness.”** Someone added the last sentence after Andrews finished the paragraph: It mentions “sinners” coming to their end.

27. The New Earth—The 1872 (#XXV) and 1914 (#28) are the same. The 1931 (#21) is much more descriptive of the new earth.

The 1980: Although quite brief, that which it contains is correct.

—vf