

La Sierra Evolution Crisis Intensifies

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— SECTION ONE —

HISTORY OF THIS LSU CRISIS FROM MARCH 16, 2009 TO APRIL 15, 2010

• As mentioned in a recent mailing (*Attention: Delegates Attending the 2010 General Conference Session [WM-1554], pp. 3-4*), an urgent appeal is being made by the Michigan Conference Executive Committee, and other concerned believers, that this year's General Conference Session address the flagrant teaching of evolution at La Sierra University (LSU).

• In late June, the Central California Conference went on record as being deeply concerned about the situation at LSU also.

Here is additional background information on this entire matter:

MARCH 16, 2009, LETTER BY SEAN PITMAN, M.D.

The following letter was written by a faithful medical doctor to Elder Jan Paulsen, General Conference President in mid-March 2009.

March 16, 2009

Elder Jan Paulsen, President, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 USA

Dear Elder Paulsen,

I recently gave a lecture at La Sierra University (LSU) on the topic of Evolution vs. Creation at the invitation of the student body (2/20/09). **It is no secret that the teachers of the upper division science courses at La Sierra are teaching the Theory of Evolution as "more than a theory," the gospel truth in essence, to the science students at LSU—to the active exclusion of any discussion of either creationists concepts or intelligent design theory;** not to mention the unique SDA take on the origin of life on this planet specifically stated in the clarified fundamental positions of the SDA Church (*Belief #6; as of 2004*).

I know this issue has been brought to the attention

of Elder Mostert back when Dr. Geraty was president of LSU (before his retirement in 2008 when the current president, Randal Wisbey, took over). I am also aware of the standard line given when the powers that be at La Sierra are questioned regarding this matter—that "We all believe in God and Creation here at La Sierra." While this may be true in the most general sense, it certainly is not true when it comes to the unique SDA take on this issue.

I have extensive syllabus materials which are being presented to the science students at LSU. I'd like to briefly quote some relevant passages from these syllabus materials to illustrate my point:

From the Syllabus intro: "It is vitally important for you to realize that this course—as a science course—is describing evidence from mainstream science, and is not dealing with beliefs. Some will decide they cannot 'believe' the scientific evidence, and your right to decide that is encouraged and supported. If you expect to be competitive in any modern science-based profession, and hope to perform well on standardized or pre-professional qualifying exams, you simply must know what the scientific evidence is, whether or not you 'believe' it."

From elsewhere in the Syllabus: "Evolution is supported by an overwhelming and constantly growing amount of scientific evidence. New discoveries continue to fill the gaps identified by Darwin in *The Origin of Species*. **The evidence is in the form of direct, measurable, empirical observation.**

"Is it informed to dismiss Darwin's ideas as 'just a theory'? In science, the word theory means something that accounts for many observations and explains & integrates a great variety of phenomena. The colloquial use of the word theory comes close to what scientists mean by a hypothesis. **There is nothing 'theoretical' about the evidence supporting evolution. The research about evolution is ongoing and continues to support and refine Darwin's original ideas. No data have been found to refute the idea. It is the single unifying explanation of the living world, and nothing makes much, if any, sense outside of this unifying theory.**

[The above paragraph is quoted from Larry

McCloskey, in his *Biology 112 Course Notes*; see the confirmation in the January 1, 2010 letter, below.]

“The reason this unifying theory has become so widely accepted in the scientific world is that it has stood up to intense, thorough, continual observation and criticism. The way to become rich & famous in science would be to show a fundamental error in the theory. The built-in skepticism of science prevents these ideas from becoming dogma.”

Aside from such statements in the syllabus, no countering statements, creationist views, interpretations, or any uniquely SDA position on origins is mentioned in the entire syllabus or lecture notes. The students themselves tell me that only the Darwinian-style evolutionary view of origins is being taught in the science classes at LSU and that the teachers openly claim that Darwinian-style evolution is in fact true while the historical view of the SDA Church is clearly outdated and, well, obviously wrong. It seems to me that **the teachers at LSU are actively undermining what the Church, as an organized body, has stated very clearly to be fundamentally important** and that these same teachers are simply thumbing their noses at the GC’s guidelines on this issue:

“Church leaders at all levels are encouraged to assess and monitor the effectiveness with which denominational systems and programs succeed in preparing young people, including those attending non-Adventist schools, with a biblical understanding of origins and an awareness of the challenges they may face in respect to this understanding.”

Such statements seem to carry no weight at LSU and are simply disregarded—quite openly. It seems that, at the very least, an employee of an organization should respect the goals that the employer feels are fundamentally important for the organization. Yet, such respect is lacking at La Sierra. I fear that unless steps are taken to correct this issue that **irreparable damage is being done and will continue to be done to our young people—the future life blood of the SDA Church. It seems to me that this issue is becoming a more and more prominent problem in our Church—especially in our universities and even undergraduate level schools. Sooner or later I think this particular issue has the potential to split the Church.** As painful as it may be steps need to be taken now to limit the severity of this split. I therefore solicit your help in this matter.

Thank you again for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Sean Pitman, M.D.

MAY 18, 2009, LETTER BY PRESIDENT RANDAL WISBEY IN RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS

As president I take seriously any charge that La Sierra University is not fulfilling its sacred task and great responsibility to educate our students to be strong,

thoughtful individuals . . .

In particular, **this letter [of complaint] charges that “naturalistic evolution” is taught at La Sierra University—even while suggesting that evolution should be taught at our Adventist colleges and universities so that our students can better understand the world in which they live. “Naturalistic evolution” is a phrase that either in code or direct definition implies a perspective of “atheistic evolution.”**

We reject this implied atheistic charge . . . [But the charge that “naturalistic (Darwinian) evolution is being taught is not denied.]

As an institution of higher education, **a Seventh-day Adventist university provides an excellent setting for examining evolutionary process—a subject that is foundational to the modern biological and behavioral sciences. This broad topic will recur throughout our students’ educational experience . . .**

People of faith who look at scientific data can reach differing conclusions and still be collegial as brothers and sisters in the church. **The Seventh-day Adventist Church has always benefited from debate and indeed has matured because of it. Faculty in Adventist institutions of higher learning have played an important and sometimes courageous role in extending the boundaries of knowledge** in many fields.

MAY 27, 2009, ASI EXPRESSES DEEP CONCERN
On May 27, 2009, Harold J. Lance, Chairman of the Board of ASI Missions, Inc., wrote to Elder Don Schneider, President of the North American Division (NAD) on May 27, 2009. He told him that, on that date, the ASI board voted unanimously to have Lance send a letter to the head of the NAD, asking that it investigate this matter of the evolution teachings being actively taught at LSU.

“It seems only fair that this dialog move to a point where our parents and prospective students have a full disclosure of what our colleges and universities are offering, so they can make informed decisions.”

JUNE 1, 2009, LETTER FROM CARLOS CERNA
Key excerpts from a letter sent to Dr. Randal Wisbey, president of LSU, after Carlos Cerna had spoken with him in his office. Cerna also said he sent copies of this to the Southern California Conference, Southeastern California Conference, and the Arizona Conference. Cerna graduated from La Sierra in June 2009; so he knows what he is talking about.

June 1, 2009

Dr. Wisbey, I was born in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and in the home of a pastor. Therefore, **I was reared by my parents with a strong faith and belief in our Creator.**

When I came to La Sierra University and began studying evolution, my thinking was, “yeah right, this ridiculous theory that I’ve heard about all my life, that

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we all come from monkeys, junk that is plain ridiculous.”

Well, Dr. Wisbey, it's hard for me to admit it, and I don't even like talking about it, but **when I studied the theory as it was presented in class plus the studying of the books for the class, I actually started questioning Creation myself!** I'll never forget it. I would say to myself, “now Carlos, you know that this is all junk,” but at the same time Dr. Wisbey, **I was reading the data from the Biology book, and getting indoctrinated by the faculty so much that I genuinely and sincerely had started to question Creation.**

I also remember asking myself that if Creation was in the Bible and it didn't actually take place the way it's written, then what else could there be in the Bible that is also false. To put it bluntly, I questioned the Bible, religion, and the existence of God.

It was only until I went to other sources outside of the teachings that I received here at our beloved La Sierra University, that I was able to realize the fact that science does point to a Designer, and I am thankful for that.

I personally could have been one more lost soul for leaving as an atheist after the teachings I received. I am deeply concerned, Elder Wisbey. **I have friends who HAVE abandoned their faith because of the teachings they received here at La Sierra University.**

As I said to you, perhaps it should be considered taking the teaching of the theory of evolution out of the science classroom, and put it in the Senior Capstone class, along with the theory of Intelligent Design. This way we have two philosophical ideas in a philosophy class, and then in our actual science classes, such as General Biology and others, we can teach actual science which is testable, observable, and repeatable.

Dr. Wisbey, I firmly believe that as an Adventist institution, we should make debunking this theory of evolution a challenge for our young scientists. We as Christians should seek to find the truth that science holds which points nowhere else but to our Creator. Just like Adventists are blessed with the task of spreading the Three Angels Message, I believe this too can be a pleasant task for our young scientists to look for the signs in nature and molecular biology that point towards our Creator.

In closing, I would just like to leave you with a Bible passage that I found in 1 Timothy 6:20-21. I have written the text and have also included Ellen White's Bible commentary pertaining to this text:

“O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, **avoiding profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called;** which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.”—*1 Timothy 6:20-21.*

“God is the foundation of everything. **All true science is in harmony with His works; all true education leads to obedience to His government.** Science opens new wonders to our view; she soars high and

explores new depths; but she brings nothing from her research that conflicts with divine revelation. Ignorance may seek to support false views of God by appeals to science; but the book of nature and the written Word do not disagree; each sheds light on the other. Rightly understood, they make us acquainted with God and His character by teaching us something of the wise and beneficent laws through which He works.”—*Signs, March 20, 1884.*

“**We need to guard continually against the sophistry in regard to geology and other branches of science falsely so-called, which have not one semblance of truth.** The theories of great men need to be carefully sifted of the slightest trace of infidel suggestions. **One tiny seed sown by teachers in our schools, if received by the students, will raise a harvest of unbelief.** The Lord has given all the brilliancy of intellect that man possesses, and it should be devoted to His service.”—*March 1, 1898; 7 Bible Commentary, 916.*

Respectfully,
Carlos Cerna

JUNE 5, 2009, LETTER BY LOUIE BISHOP

Louie Bishop, a former LSU student, received a B.S. in Business from the University of California at Davis. Afterward, he attended the Amazing Facts Center of Evangelism. He then worked as a Bible worker for two churches in Trinity County, California.

I came to La Sierra University knowing the popular scientific views regarding life on earth. I previously attended a secular university, where evolution was taught. That is one reason I chose La Sierra University to begin pre-medicine classes. The first day of General Biology 2 I sat down only to see Charles Darwin's face on the first slide. In my opinion, there would be no problem with that, except for the fact that **we were taught only evolutionary principles of life for the next several weeks, and were told they were the truth.** In fact, we were told Evolution “is the single unifying explanation of the living world, and nothing makes much, if any, sense outside of this unifying theory.”

After a few class lectures, I sat down to talk with Biology department head Dr. Wilson. Though it has now been almost five months since that meeting, I distinctly remember him saying “I was afraid this was going to happen.” In other words, **he was not looking forward to the day when someone would take a stand and speak up concerning the teachings of the Biology department.** Not to go unsaid, I have had many good conversations with members of the Biology department, including Dr. Lee Greer. He has taken the time to talk with me for over an hour on a number of occasions, providing me with reasons for his views of life on earth. I respect him for the fact that he has studied both the Bible and science to a great extent, and is convicted concerning what he believes. Yet what he and many others teaching Biology at La Sierra believe and teach involves

many assumptions and, most importantly, is contradictory to the clear messages of the Bible. This fact was made clear to me when **I attended one of Dr. Greer's worship "breakouts." He talked about the Biblical Creation accounts in detail, and concluded that Genesis chapters 1 and 2 are contradictory accounts. The message I received was a message of doubt toward the Bible,** which is no doubt what many other students were led to feel. I can now believe **this is happening on a Seventh-Day Adventist campus, because I've seen it with my own eyes!**

It is a fact that Evolution is being taught and promoted by professors of Biology on the La Sierra University campus. They are obviously welcome to hold such views, yet I believe they have come to the wrong place to promote those beliefs. I know that La Sierra was founded for the purpose of raising up young people to share God's message of mercy and truth with the world—young people who, out of their own free will choose to say "What does the Bible say?" Yet **many young people on the La Sierra University campus are being led to doubt their beliefs.** I asked my lab TA during Winter Quarter what her views were concerning Evolution vs. a literal Creation week. She ended up giving me her testimony at La Sierra. **She told me that she was the daughter of a Seventh-Day Adventist pastor, and that she came to La Sierra to study Biology. After going through General Biology and being presented with the theory of evolution, she wrestled with her faith in God and seemed to find some middle ground. She then took a Senior Capstone course entitled "Religious, Social, and Moral Aspects of Biology." She was presented with all the "evidence" that seems to support Evolution, and now considers herself to be an agnostic.**

I won't go without referring to the blessings of my experience at La Sierra. This Spring Quarter, **Professor Perumal has taught Biology with contagious excitement.** His teaching has given me and others good reason to study hard. Professor Perumal tells me that he is a creationist, and we also have enjoyed some good discussions. Yet I see where this could make any student very confused. Last quarter we were told that Evolution is the truth. This quarter we have still studied Evolution via secular class materials, but at a lesser intensity. **My point is that only Evolution is presented and studied at an objective level.** My teacher this quarter has spoken openly of the glory of God in nature, and for that I am thankful! But **evidence for a young-age earth, in support of the Biblical account, is not presented for study.** The objective support of the Bible is not touched on. So **in the mind of many students, objective "Science" is seeming to overshadow the Biblical account, leaving them trying to balance contradictory teachings. In my mind this has a tendency to**

lift up the teachings of man and belittle the authoritative utterances of the Word of God. This either leads to doubt toward the Bible or to extreme Biblical reinterpretations which pick and choose what fits. **The Bible is made subject to man's teachings. If I was an eighteen-year-old freshman, I honestly can tell you, I don't know what I would be putting my faith in right now.**

I have shared this testimony to show the reality of what is taking place on a Seventh-Day Adventist campus. I know that **there are many parents who are sending their sons and daughters to our schools, trusting that they will be grounded in their faith and that they will be taught that the Bible is the authority** in all matters of faith and duty. I believe they should receive a return on their generous investment in a Seventh-Day Adventist education. How about you? Please share these realities with your friends and family, that we as a church body can make our voices heard.

NOVEMBER 6, 2009, LSU FACULTY SENATE RESOLUTION

On this date, the teachers of LSU issued a brief resolution with two points: "[We] **affirm our strong support for our colleagues in the Department of Biology; and affirm our commitment to the preservation of academic freedom,** with the intellectual and moral integrity in the context of our heritage and service as a Seventh-day Adventist Christian university."

[This is intellectual double-talk; for "We reserve the right to believe and teach whatever we believe, while pretending that it has some relation to the 'context' of Adventism."]

NOVEMBER 9, 2009, LSU BOARD NEWS RELEASE AND ACTIONS

In an official statement, the board stated two primary points: First, that it believes the 28 Statements of Belief, including Belief #6, that God is the Creator of all things. Second: **"The Board of Trustees is committed to a spirit of inquiry** and open discussion in the university's classrooms and laboratories."

JANUARY 1, 2010, ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

The following two quotations are included in a letter, entitled "Darwinism at La Sierra University," dated January 1, 2010, by Sean Pitman, M.D., to Elders Paulsen and Schneider.

"Larry McCloskey, in his *Biology 112 Course Notes* writes:

"There is nothing 'theoretical' about the evidence supporting evolution. The research about evolution is ongoing and continues to support and refine Darwin's original ideas. No data have been found to refute the idea. It is the single unifying explanation

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**PART TWO
OF THREE**

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

of the living world, and nothing makes much, if any, sense outside of this unifying theory.'

"LSU Biology Professor Lee Greer, in his *Biology 112 Course*, has this written statement:

"As a species, **humans have only been around about 200,000 years**, and have low within-species genetic variation. **The genes encoding various globin proteins evolved from one common ancestral globin gene**, which duplicated and diverged about 450-500 million years ago.'"

Did you know you came from a "globin gene" half a million years ago?

MARCH 31, 2010, REVIEW ARTICLE: EVOLUTION CONTROVERSY STIRS LA SIERRA CAMPUS—

Adventist school reaffirms church's teachings; some critics unsatisfied; one is placed on probation. By Mark Kellner, News Editor, reporting from Riverside, California. Here are excerpts:

Contention is brewing over how La Sierra, owned by the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, presents its students with information on how the Earth, and life on the planet, came into existence. The stark question being asked by some alumni, parents, and church leaders: Is the Adventist Church's fundamental belief ("God is Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity") what is being taught, or are some of La Sierra's biology instructors presenting evolution as the explanation of origins?

In a letter to trustees and the university community last May, La Sierra president Randal Wisbey refuted the charge: "Every one of our science faculty share the goal of students experiencing a vibrant Adventist Christian faith while pursuing their education in the sciences . . . At La Sierra University, we take seriously the challenge of how to best integrate science education and faith development. Ultimately, our goal is to help students develop a personal relationship with their Creator." . . .

Additional reporting appeared in the Riverside, California, *Press-Enterprise* and *Inside Higher Education*, a trade journal covering colleges and universities.

In the latter journal, **La Sierra biology professor Gary Bradley was quoted as saying, "It's very, very clear that what I'm skeptical of is the absolute necessity of believing that the only way a creator God could do things is by speaking them into existence a few thousand years ago."** Bradley further noted, **"That's where my skepticism lies. That's the religious philosophical basis for what I call the lunatic fringe."** (Bradley is "semiretired" but remains on the biology faculty and is teaching classes, La Sierra's executive director of

university relations Larry Becker told the *Review* in a March 30, 2010, telephone interview.)

One member of the La Sierra board of trustees, Dr. Carla Lidner-Baum, a dentist in Riverside, California, is concerned about the potential direction an evolutionary view could take the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

"This is a real time of threat to the historically held Adventist beliefs. . . Either we are accepting this change or we are not," Dr. Lidner-Baum said in a telephone interview, referring to those supporting a move away from the traditional view of creation.

In November of 2009, La Sierra's trustees voted a statement in which they affirmed that school leaders have "heard and taken to heart the concern that Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and teachings have not been given appropriate priority in biology curriculum and instruction. Specifically, the Board is committed to assuring that the teaching of the theory of evolution takes place within the context of the Adventist belief regarding creation." . . .

Caught in the crossfire has been Louie Bishop, a La Sierra student. Bishop said **he was placed on "citizenship probation" by the school for circulating letters opposing the teaching of evolutionary concepts and for posting notes of a professor's lecture online,** despite a verbal agreement that Bishop would not do so without consulting the teacher.

In a January 25 interview, Bishop said he "thought a lot about that before I did that and I talked to a lot of people because I was wrestling with certain things and the administration issued me this status of citizenship probation. **From U.S. copyright law I understand the university doesn't have the right to do anything if I am posting a lecture online for academic critique.** There is nothing wrong with reproducing that."

Despite Bishop's individual case, about which the school is reluctant to comment citing federal student privacy laws, La Sierra's Becker said the school is trying to move beyond the web-fueled controversy.

"Seventh-day Adventists across North America are appropriately concerned that students at Adventist colleges and universities emerge from higher education with a strong confidence in the Genesis account of origins," says Larry Blackmer, director of education for the North American Division. **"This issue is larger than any one campus in our system, and goes to the heart of what it means to operate an academically credible and faith-based school. Parents and alumni have the right to expect our schools and educators to teach the standards and philosophies of the Adventist Church.** But we must also remember that the discussion itself should be conducted with Christian civility and a respect for fairness in all that's said or written.'

The next major administrative event for the school

is a **May 12, 2010, constituency meeting**. According to a 2008 “Campus News Feature” from La Sierra, “the constituents elect board trustees, approve changes to university bylaws, and conduct other business matters involving the university. La Sierra University’s Board of Trustees consists of 23 members, of which 14 are elected to rotating six-year terms. Constituents meet every two years to vote on bylaws, trustee nominations, and other matters.”

At the *Review*’s deadline during the end of March, Becker said he had not seen an agenda which is expected to be sent to constituency members “some time in April.”

MAY 11, 2010, OPEN LETTER BY LOUIE BISHOP

In order to deflect criticism, LSU printed an advertisement for its biology seminar (BIOL 111A) in the November 2009 issue of the *Pacific Union Recorder*. The ad said that it would include “the Seventh-day Adventist teachings on the biblical doctrine of creation.” But Bishop, who had taken the class, said this was an untrue statement.

According to Bishop, quite the opposite was occurring in the classroom. It is of interest that LSU recorded the lectures, but refuses to release them to the public. In his letter, Bishop challenged President Wisbey to post the videos; so people can see for themselves what is really being taught. *Here are portions of his letter:*

“I came to LSU expecting to receive a Seventh-day Adventist Christian education. I resent paying expensive tuition, only to see my beliefs ridiculed and undermined . . . If a Seventh-day Adventist University builds its teachings on a foundation different from Jesus Christ, then it needs to be rebuilt, for it has lost its purpose!

“Because of my concern for the salvation of other students who could lose their faith because of the promotion of evolution in Biology classes at LSU, I wrote a personal note which I gave to about 20 of my fellow classmates . . . For this alleged infraction I was disciplined by the so-called ‘Judicial Committee,’ which does not appear to be an official committee of LSU. I was given a ‘Letter of Censure’ for not having my note approved by LSU before I distributed it.”

May 16, 2010, Action Taken by the Northern California Conference

On this date, the Northern California Conference (NCC) officially requested the *General Conference Church Manual Committee* to rewrite *Fundamental Belief #6* (about our belief in Creationism) to reflect the more specific language found in an earlier statement submitted to the General Conference in October 11, 2004, but never acted upon. The statement was entitled *An Affirmation of Creation and Response to An Affirmation of Creation*. This NCC decision was in response to a request by the Oroville Seventh-day Adventist Church, that this request to the GC be made.

It is not commonly known that two of LSU’s previ-

ous presidents were key players in preparing the wording of Belief 6, prior to the 1980 Dallas Session.

APRIL 15, 2010, MICHIGAN CONFERENCE ACTION. *The complete text of this action was printed in a recent Waymarks tract [WM-1554]. Brief excerpts are given here:*

Whereas, the *Adventist Review* (in the article by Mark Kellner in April 15, 2010) has now publicly addressed the issue of evolution being taught at, and supported, by La Sierra University; and, whereas their board of trustees and constituency have collectively been unwilling to rectify this vital spiritual issue, the Michigan Conference Executive Committee has voted the following actions:

1. Effective June 1, 2010, the Michigan Conference has removed La Sierra University from its list of Adventist Colleges and Universities which qualify for employee subsidy. This means that no employee may expect tuition support if they have a dependent attending La Sierra.

2. With sorrow we feel it is our spiritual responsibility to notify Michigan Conference members that we do not believe that La Sierra can currently be trusted to be supportive of Seventh-day Adventist spiritual values, especially in reference to faith in the biblical understanding of creation, and thus the authority of Scripture in the life and practice of the believer.

3. Resolved: To encourage each Seventh-day Adventist college and university to continue to strengthen the principles of biblical authority and faith. In support of these principles we urge continued development of educational strategies and faculties which would move these institutions to becoming centers of excellence in promoting, cultivating, and defending creation science. **We define creation science in the context of the recent creation week of seven ordinary, literal, historical, consecutive, contiguous twenty-four hour days of divine creation and rest as described in Genesis.**

4. Furthermore: We request that the 2010 General Conference session vote a resolution affirming number 3 above, with the direction of bringing to the following GC session a statement that would serve to strengthen our fundamental belief number six. Hence, our Creation doctrine would clearly articulate our biblical view of “a literal, recent, six-day Creation,” in which “the seven days of the Creation account were literal 24-hour days forming a week identical in time to what we now experience as a week,” as the statement affirmed by the General Conference Executive Committee in October 2004 noted.

Darwinist professors were teaching Darwinism as truth in the pre-existing classes; and now they plan to solve the problem with a “new seminar class” that tells freshman that they need to try to understand Genesis in a new way, a way different from how Adventists have

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1 always understood it. Ricardo Graham, Pacific Union
5 Conference President and Chairman of the LSU Board,
7 has promised to review and make some “adjustments”
to that seminar class. But the seminar could be completely eliminated, and it would not solve the underlying problem. It would only solve the problem created by La Sierra’s response to negative publicity.

Unfortunately, the article is susceptible to being read as saying that the problem has been solved when, in reality, the underlying problem has not even been addressed. The very same professors in charge of this seminar were those responsible for attacking the foundational pillars of the Church in the upper division science classes to begin with.

If this is happening in the Freshman introductory class, what do they think is happening in the upper division science classes?

In the *Review* article, referred to earlier, **Simmons poses the concern that “My fear is the possibility that La Sierra, as with all of our colleges and universities, could move away from our Christocentric perspective.” I’m sorry, but this has already happened.** And whatever Christocentricity is there is mainly there as adornment to cover a seeking after the world. **So they teach evolution in Biology. What do they teach in English? Is the Great Controversy ever explored in the History classes? What humanism is taught in Psychology?** No, it’s a worldly education with a Christian tag on it.

What benefit does the school offer the church? Where is the army of youth, rightly trained to take the Three Angel’s Message to the world? Fully 99.9% of them are merely trained to get a good job, pay back their school loans, and to get trapped into the fiscal machinery of the world. La Sierra may turn out some pastors; but they are trained to babysit churches, not push the victories of the cross into unentered areas! The whole concept of “missions” is nearly dead.

Administration struggles over policy because they are focused on surviving, not fulfilling God’s purpose for them. If they would focus on finding and fulfilling His purpose for His church, there would not be so much delaying of duty, which is to fire the biology department and replace it with individuals like Walter Veith and Robert Gentry, who, as genuine scientists, know how to look at the real evidences that there are for the Flood and young age of the earth.

Our schools have lost their vision, their purpose, and now are losing their fundamental belief in a God who can do anything and who is worth obeying. Why is a six-day creation so important? If God cannot create the earth, then He cannot recreate your heart and my heart.

Sean Pitman said LSU isn’t challenging the general concept of God as the ultimate Creator. The problem is that LSU is challenging the SDA position that God created all life on this planet in six literal days—not with

the aid of an evolutionary mechanism of “survival of the fittest” that requires the suffering and death of billions of creatures over vast periods of time. It is how God created that is at issue here.

Does anyone have a clear picture as to how we can remove the Board, the President, and those evolution teachers at La Sierra? This should be our primary goal if they refuse to dismiss these instructors!

— SECTION TWO —

HOW THE DOCTRINAL CHANGE IN OUR CREATION BELIEF WAS MADE

Here is the little-known story on *Fundamental Belief 6* and how it relates to Adventist universities advocating long ages of life on earth.

How can it be that some of our college and university professors teach that science convincingly shows that life has been on earth for millions of years,—yet, all the while promoting evolutionary theory, they declare that they accept *Belief 6*.

The answer is that, prior to the 1980 General Conference Session at Dallas, the very wording of *Belief 6* was deliberately written by Adventist liberals—to be “inclusive;” that is, to provide an umbrella for both conservative, as well as liberal, new theology advocates in the Adventist denomination. (At the same time, they reworded all the other *Statements of Belief* to accommodate both camps.)

In 1977, the General Conference announced plans to rewrite our basic beliefs. W.J. Hackett, disclosed these plans in the *Review* in a guest editorial on May 26, 1977 (p. 2), entitled “*Preserve the Landmarks.*”

The objectives were (1) the “unity of faith” and the “need for a clear statement of our beliefs.” “In a church adding many new members each year it is necessary from time to time to spell out clearly . . . the basic body of truth that accounts for the church’s unique place. . . Other church bodies facing similar challenges have lost their identity. . . None of us would like to see the Adventist Church travel down this road.”

“It [the Adventist Church] is preparing carefully formulated statements on our Fundamental beliefs. . . These statements will be presented to a large circle of church leaders and scholars . . . and will be published in the church papers. . . Areas to be explored are those concerning the church’s positions that have been challenged. . . Some . . . include . . . a literal, seven-day Creation, a universal Flood, and the age of life on the earth.”

—Thus, historic Adventist landmarks regarding Creation were clearly stated. Elder Hackett was a good man and had very sincere intentions. What went wrong? Keep reading. I am going to tell you how the entire objective was sidetracked into supporting Fordite new theology! (Back in 1981, I reported in *Waymarks* that, at the Glacier View meetings—held in Colorado only weeks after

the *Dallas Statement* was voted on,—Desmond Ford told a startled Neal C. Wilson that he, Ford, was in full agreement with that *Statement!*

But, continuing on with our story:

Over a two-year period (1977-1979), the GC *Creation Statement* was presented at Adventist colleges and universities, and published in the *Review* on January 17, 1980, p. 11:

“[W]e believe . . . The Noachian flood of world-wide dimensions.” “God created all living things on earth in six literal consecutive days of Creation.” “The Bible . . . clearly indicates a short history for life and the human race upon earth.” “We do not consider the fossils to be a record of the outworking of a gradual, sequential development of living things from simpler beginnings or the result of any pattern of successive creations over vast periods of time.”

This *Creation and Re-Creation Statement* identifies the historic Adventist landmarks regarding creation.

But the responses of our colleges and universities in America were ominous: Some Pacific Union College teachers were very negative toward this document. (They kept Desmond Ford on as a church member for decades after his discharge as a minister in July 1980.) West Coast Adventist college religion teachers, in a joint gathering to discuss it, were generally not supportive of the document. Union College had a mixed reception.

It was in this atmosphere that *Belief 6* was rewritten shortly before it (and the other *Statements*) was presented to the delegates at the Dallas GC Session in late April 1980.

On August 24, 1979, W. Duncan Eva (a close friend of Desmond Ford) sent the *Belief Draft* to the Seminary for their final “revising.” The foxes were placed in charge of the henhouse.

Late in 1978, the General Conference appointed an *ad hoc committee* with Duncan Eva as chairperson to draft this new belief statement.

In light of *Creation and Re-Creation*, the committee drafted a new statement of beliefs, called “X-1535 *Church Manual Revision-Fundamental Beliefs*,” and sent it to the Seminary for review on August 24, 1979.

The draft sent to the Seminary, with its new paragraph on creation, was written in the light of the document, *Creation and Re-Creation*, and thus clearly reflected the historic Adventist landmarks stated in *Creation and Re-Creation*—such as a “literal” week, a “short history of life on earth,” and a “world-wide Flood.”

—But the Bible teachers at Andrews Seminary completely rewrote it—and all the other Doctrinal Statements.

In an article by Lawrence Geraty (“A New Statement of Fundamentals] Beliefs,” *Spectrum 11:1, July 1980, p. 5*), it was later admitted that a Seminary review “Com-

mittee of 12” “recommended that the statement be completely rewritten.”

Lawrence Geraty produced the original draft of section six, “Creation.” Fritz Guy wrote “*Uncovering the Origins of the Statement of the Twenty-Seven Fundamental Beliefs*,” *Spectrum 32:3, Summer 2004, p. 23*.

Fritz Guy drafted *Belief 2*, The Trinity, and *Belief 3*, The Father (*ibid.*). He also served as secretary of the Seminary rewrite team.

The attitude of the *Committee of 12* toward the *Creation and Re-Creation Statement* was later stated: “Having dutifully aired our views on the (creedal) document [the ‘Creation and Re-Creation’ Statement] . . . [we] returned to the more positive task of articulating our fundamental beliefs” on creation (*Geraty, A New Statement, p. 5*). Those liberal theologians at Andrews decided that they wanted an umbrella statement, under which the liberals could take shelter—and which would adequately satisfy the conservatives. The Committee of 12 described their objective in rewriting those doctrinal paragraphs as focusing on “where the action was” (*ibid.*). —The “action” was where the liberals were trying to change our beliefs!

In early 2009, I published a book, *Seventh-day Adventist Statements of Belief (8½ x 11, 42 pages, \$5.00 + \$3.50)*, which covers the entire 27 *Beliefs* and changes made by those men in greater detail. It will provide you with a helpful overview of the history of those official beliefs, and how this small group of men at Andrews University changed them in 1979-1980.

For, you see, those men at Andrews not only changed our *Creation Statement of Belief*,—they also watered down our other *Statements* as well.

For example, a key point they were (and still are) strongly opposed to was the necessity of obedience to the law of God.

At the General Conference Session, in late April 1980, the delegates were suddenly confronted with point after point of this changed *Doctrinal Statement*; but, when they vigorously protested over this and that point, either it would be “sent back to committee” or they were eventually told, “We do not have much time remaining” before the Conference will be over. The delegates recognized that there was a definite watering down of the statements, so that they were more indefinite.

Regarding *Belief 6*, Fritz Guy (one of the key authors of the changed document) said this in a paper he wrote 39 years later:

“The only ‘official position’ of the Seventh-day Adventist Church [about our Creation doctrine] is stated in *Fundamental Belief #6*, where the language is deliberately Biblical, and broad enough to accommodate various views about Earth’s natural history” (*Fritz Guy*,

La Sierra Evolution Crisis Intensifies

**PART THREE
OF THREE**

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

“Seven Considerations for Productive Conversation about the History of Life on Planet Earth,” June 18, 2009).

There you have it! The language had been modified so as to permit almost any type of Christian or evolutionary viewpoint to be acceptable!

On September 18, 1979, just prior to the Annual Council that year, the two committees (the *Ad Hoc Committee based at the General Conference* and the *Committee of 12* in Andrews) met and reviewed what the Andrews team had done.

Ad Hoc Member W.J. Hackett was utterly shocked at how thoroughly all the wording had been changed.

“[I]n trying to arrive at consensus wording for Creation Week, Hackett gave up with the comment, ‘Oh, well, you can word it anyway you want to here; we’ll get another crack at it back in Washington’ (*ibid.*)”

What was it that so upset Elder Hackett? The historic Adventist landmarks regarding creation were missing in the Seminary rewrite about creation. Here is the Seminary rewrite of *Creation*, as voted at the GC Session in 1980:

“God is Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity. In six days the Lord made ‘the heaven and the earth’ and all living things upon the earth . . . (Gen 1; 2; Ex 20:8-11; Ps 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Heb 11:3).”

Other than that, there was no more specificity about the nature of the creation days given in *Belief 6*.

The Seminary rewrite of *Belief 6* is an incomplete definition of Creation.

- There is no mention of when the creation week occurred, whether recently or millions of years ago.

- There is no short chronology texts listed in support of a recent creation—such as Genesis 5, 11; 1 Chronicles 1; or Matthew 1.

- There is no use of “literal” days or “historical” days. Each day could be interpreted as long ages of time.

- There is no mention of a global, worldwide flood.

- There is no mention that the Scripture intends to give us an earth history account of, for example, the origin of life on earth or a cosmogony, but only of “God’s creative activity.” Every thing is purposely stated in a foggy manner.

—Yet all of the above missing elements constitute the landmarks mentioned specifically by Hackett’s 1977 “*Preserve the Landmarks*” statement. Those points are needed today in a new, current Adventist statement about creation.

The General Conference *Ad Hoc Committee*, in all likelihood, sent a distinctive historic Adventist creation statement to the Seminary. The Seminary returned it to

the General Conference with all the distinctive historic Adventist creationism characteristics stripped from it!

The special points of identification about the Creation were missing.

When, on the floor of the Session, delegates protested, their requests for changes were ignored. All attempts to restore the special points were rejected.

- Example: “E.J. Humphrey: ‘Would we do any injustice if we said ‘six literal days,’ since so many religious bodies teach that each day was a 1,000 years?’” (*General Conference Session Bulletin*, p. 20).

Nothing was done.

- “John V. Stevens: ‘I would not really see any redundancy if the word, literal, were to be inserted. It would certainly let the world know what we believe’” (*ibid.*).

Nothing was done.

- “Humberto R. Treiyer: ‘I fully agree with the idea of inserting the word, literal. I would like also to see something in relation to our position about the earth’s chronology’” (*ibid.*).

Elder N.C. Wilson was also surprised.

- “Neal C. Wilson: ‘Doesn’t that appear anywhere here? It does clearly appear in the statement issued in the *Adventist Review*, where we speak in terms of a short chronology’” (*ibid.*).

It seems that Wilson was open for *Belief 6* to address the time issue. —Yet no action was taken.

Twenty-four years later, Fritz Guy made this telling remark: “Perhaps as important as the revisions that were made were the revisions that were not made. These included a number of suggestions for greater specificity regarding the days of creation week” (*Fritz Guy, “Uncovering the Origins of the Statement of the Twenty-Seven Fundamental Beliefs,” Spectrum 32:3, Summer 2004, p. 26*).

Why is it that Fritz Guy can so easily make such calloused comments that have removed one of our historic doctrines from the church?

He can do it because he believes that the historic Adventist position regarding Creation, which claims that the early chapters of Genesis provide information about when and how God’s creative activity occurred, “is not merely unwarranted but actually refuted by Scriptural evidence” (*Fritz Guy, “The Purpose and Function of Scripture: Preface to a Theology of Creation” in Understanding Genesis, 2006, p. 87*).

But, in addition, Fritz Guy was (and continues to be) in full agreement with those “who find the scientific evidence compelling that the world is very old and that life has existed on it for a long, long time” (*Brian S. Bull and Fritz Guy, “Then a Miracle Occurs,” Understanding Genesis, p. 53*).

Ervin Taylor, another staunch liberal, fully agrees

with both reasons for rejecting a literal six-day Creation of our world:

“The words “in six days . . .” were added . . . without mention of how long ago that happened (*Ervin Taylor, “Adventist Creationism in the 21st Century: Fundamentalist or Constructive?” Adventist Today, 11:4, 2003, p. 18.*)

“The framers of this statement wisely did not go beyond the words of the biblical affirmation, to define what exactly ‘six days’ signified” (*Ervin Taylor, “A Non-negotiable Fundamental Truth?” Adventist Today, 15:5, September/October 2007, p. 26.*)

In view of both statements, Taylor seems to be happy that the “when” of creation is absent from *Belief 6*, as well as the words, “literal” or “historical.”

Thus we find that the current wording of *Belief 6* permits pluralistic interpretations:

- There is no mention of when the Creation Week occurred. This permits anyone to insert as many years of life on earth as evolutionary theory demands.

- There is no mention of a literal or historical week. This permits anyone to interpret the week in symbolic or theological fashion, in order to harmonize it with evolutionary theories.

- There is no mention of a global Flood. This permits anyone to interpret the Flood story in Genesis 6-9, not as part of earth history, but as serving only some theological purpose.

Fritz Guy’s changes in our doctrinal beliefs were made, so we could draw closer to the world and be accepted both by the other churches and by atheistic scientists as well.

For example, he says that *Belief 6*, as changed, is now open to pluralistic interpretations:

“[T]he language [of *Belief 6*] is deliberately Biblical, and broad enough to accommodate various views about Earth’s natural history” (*Guy, “Seven Considerations,” 2009*).

In this current controversy over what is being taught at La Sierra University, we can understand why:

- LSU likes *Belief 6* as it currently reads. The various views about Earth’s natural history taught at LSU all nicely fit into the mold of *Belief 6* about Creation.

- LSU gives whole-hearted support to *Belief 6*.

- LSU says it will only be guided in its teaching of Creation—by *Creation as defined by Belief 6*.

- The LSU Board has not voted its formal approval of the entire *Response to An Affirmation of Creation*; this is being urged by conservatives, to correct the flaws in that official *Statement on Creation*. To do so would be for the LSU Board to endorse the historic Adventist landmarks which some at LSU no longer believe or teach.

Let us now return to this *Response to An Affirmation of Creation*:

In the fall of 2004, the *General Conference Executive Committee* voted its approval of this *Response*. That statement would restore all points, and more, which

Hackett wished to see in a current Adventist definition of Creation.

Here are these historic Adventist truths about Creation, as restored in this *Response*:

- “We strongly endorse the document’s affirmation of our historic biblical position of belief in a literal, recent six-day Creation.”—*Response to An Affirmation of Creation*.

Both “literal” and “recent” are here mentioned, both of which are not in *Belief 6*.

- “We reaffirm the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the historicity of Genesis 1-11 and that the Flood was global in nature.”

- Two more landmarks are named: “historical” days, and a “global” Flood, which are not in *Belief 6*.

Thus we see that *Belief 6* needs to be amended in a General Conference Session as soon as possible, to reflect the historic Adventist landmarks on creation which are recently affirmed in *A Response to An Affirmation of Creation*. There are those who are demanding that this will be done at the Atlanta 2010 Session. Whether this was done will be known shortly.

The two key men who worked intently to change our doctrinal beliefs, back in late 1979 and early 1980, were Fritz Guy and Lawrence Geraty.

First: Why were they entrusted with that task?—Because they have Ph.D.s from non-Adventist universities in theology! Why should that make them qualified for this task? Should not seasoned, faithful veteran church workers and evangelists have been assigned that job? *For the answer, obtain a copy of my book, The Broken Blueprint, and read it. A single copy of this 432-page book only costs \$5.00, ppd.* You will then understand how accreditation by non-Adventist accrediting agencies and advanced degrees from non-Adventist universities has ruined our educational system!

Second: Why were those two men so intent on changing our beliefs in late 1979 and early 1980?

For the answer, read my New Theology Tractbook, and you will learn the entire story of what happened back in those years! A copy of this 220-page book is \$24.00, plus \$3.50.

In the providence of God, I had come on the scene as a full-time writer in the summer of 1979. Busy with producing missionary tracts on doctrinal subjects, I was not aware of the new theology crisis that was about to explode until a friend sent me a tape of Desmond Ford’s October 1979 Adventist Forum lecture on a Sabbath afternoon at Pacific Union College. In it, he had so thoroughly ridiculed a number of our historic beliefs, that the General Conference was forced to confront the growing problem.

Fritz Guy and Lawrence Geraty were both Bible teachers at Andrews Seminary; and, when the General Conference *Ad Hoc Committee* foolishly sent them the initial draft of the forthcoming restatement of our *Doctrinal Beliefs* to be presented at the 1980 General Conference Session, these Andrews teachers immediately

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1 recognized that if they could essentially muffle all our
5 distinctive beliefs—it would nicely solve a problem which
5 they knew was shortly to break upon our denomina-
8 tion.

In close contact with Ph.D. Bible teachers in other Adventist colleges, they knew what those men believed. They knew from what was said, as well as their personal experience while obtaining doctoral degrees in outside universities,—that a significant number of our Bible teachers no longer believed historic Adventism.

They also knew that many of the theology graduates from those Adventist colleges had been tainted by those errors. They knew that, within a very few years, faithful church members in our local churches would begin protesting that their pastors were no longer teaching genuine Adventist beliefs.

So they feverishly set to work to change our only official *Doctrinal Statements*.

By the way, what did our people have in all the decades prior to 1980? You can read all about it in my book, *Seventh-day Adventist Statements of Belief*, which includes a complete history of how the changes were made just prior to, and at, the 1980 General Conference Session.

—In earlier times, our people had the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy as their doctrinal guides! They did not need *Doctrinal Statements*,—and, throughout most of our earlier history, they did not have them.

Here is additional information on Fritz Guy:

Born in 1930, he is a Seventh-day Adventist theologian and Research Professor of Philosophical Theology at La Sierra University. After attending our Seminary in Washington, D.C., he became a member of the La Sierra faculty in 1961. Guy then earned a Ph.D. in Christian theology from the University of Chicago.

What do you think he learned about “Christian theology” at that place? For your information, it was the University of Chicago which, in 1925, led out in helping the evolutionists in their battle at the famous Dayton, Tennessee, “Monkey Trial.” What kind of “theology” could Fritz Guy possibly learn from that den of atheists?

In 1967, during Guy’s Chicago study leave, La Sierra became a campus of Loma Linda University. Upon his return, Fritz served as associate dean (1972–1974) and dean (1974–1977) of Loma Linda’s College of Arts and Sciences.

In 1977, he left southern California in order to accept an appointment as Professor of Theology at Andrews University.

As mentioned earlier, it was in that same year that the General Conference announced plans to rewrite our basic beliefs. W.J. Hackett disclosed these plans in the *Review* in a guest editorial on May 26, 1977 (p. 2), entitled “*Preserve the Landmarks.*”

Over a two-year period (1977-1979), the GC *Creation Statement* was presented at Adventist colleges

and universities, and published in the *Review* on January 17, 1980, p. 11. With Elder W.J. Hackett in charge of the revision, it was a very good one!

But the response from faculty members at our colleges was far from favorable. They knew they believed errors which were not Adventist. They also knew they wanted to begin quietly teaching them; yet a clear statement of our *Doctrinal Beliefs* would interfere with their planned objectives.

Late in 1978, the General Conference appointed W. Duncan Eva to oversee the final draft of this forthcoming document. On August 24, 1979, W. Duncan Eva sent the *Belief Draft* to the Seminary for a final “revising.” He talked GC leaders into sending him along with it to Andrews, to oversee the proposed *Statement* and the results there.

It just so happens that, although high up in the General Conference, Eva was a very close friend of Desmond Ford, who at that time was a Bible teacher at Pacific Union College. Eva was also a close friend to the Bible teachers at Andrews. He also well-knew that trouble was ahead of this clearly stated *Doctrinal Statement*, when it would be voted on at the forthcoming Dallas Session—which was scheduled to begin only eight months later.

(Just after Glacier View, in July 1980, at which time President Neal C. Wilson was about to discharge Ford from the ministry,—it was W. Duncan Eva who pled with Wilson to not fire him—but send him to our college in England! Such an action would only accelerate the new theology crisis in Adventism, but Wilson refused to do it.)

As mentioned earlier, it was in this atmosphere that *Belief 6* was rewritten shortly before it (and the other *Statements*) was presented to the delegates at the Dallas GC Session in late April 1980.

A *Committee of 12* was appointed,—and they decided not to follow orders and merely look it over,—but to totally rewrite that *Doctrinal Statement!* This had not been what they were told to do, but they did it anyway.

Fritz Guy was appointed as secretary of the university committee that drafted a new Statement of Fundamental Beliefs for the Adventist Church. He was a primary author of all that it contained.

Yet, what were his qualifications for the task? A Ph.D. degree from the Department of Religion at the University of Chicago!

On Thursday at the Glacier View Meeting in Colorado, many of the council members grudgingly went along with N.C. Wilson’s decision, that Ford must be discharged; and Ford’s future in denominational employment appeared at an end. But W. Duncan Eva pled with Wilson to send him to our British college instead; and Ford himself spoke to Wilson—and astonished him by saying that he, Ford, should not be fired—for he could sign the Dallas Statement which only a short time ear-

lier had been voted in by the Dallas Session!

The forthcoming years were turbulent. When it became apparent that other college teachers and local church pastors were teaching variant views, these leaders solidly defended their “loyalty to the church” by declaring that they were in accord with the Dallas Statement!

In 1984, Fritz Guy returned to California as pastor for university faculty and staff relations, and “theologian-in-residence” at the Loma Linda University Church.

Then, in 1990, he was appointed president of the newly independent La Sierra University. In 1993, at the age of 63, he rejoined the full-time faculty as University Professor of Theology and Philosophy. Since 2002, he has been Research Professor of Philosophical Theology; he is currently the senior active member of La Sierra’s faculty.

—————
Here is additional information on Lawrence Geraty:

Born in 1939, Geraty was another member of the *Committee of 12* and had a secondary role in the re-writing of our *Doctrinal Statement* at Andrews. (You can find a complete list of the 12 members in my book,

Seventh-day Adventist Statements of Belief.)

Fully in accord with Fritz Guy’s objectives, he was an active helper.

Geraty’s Ph.D. was obtained at Harvard University in 1972. Harvard is as liberal a university as you will find in America. His field was Old Testament studies and archaeology.

When Fritz Guy resigned from the presidency of LSU in 1993, Geraty arrived from Andrews and was appointed to be the next President of the institution.

In November 2006, at the age of 67, he announced that he would resign from the LSU presidency at the end of the 2006-2007 school year. Randal Wisbey, previously president of Columbia Union College (now Washington Adventist University), then became president of La Sierra University.

So both of the men who saved hundreds, even thousands of new theology men and women from being dropped from Adventist employment in the 1980s, when faithful laymen protested to their conference presidents, later became presidents of La Sierra University.

Now you can better understand why that institution of “higher learning” is so anxious to not have the *Dallas Statement* changed.

“In the Saviour’s parable teaching is an indication of what constitutes the true ‘higher education.’

Christ might have opened to men the deepest truths of science. He might have unlocked mysteries which have required many centuries of toil and study to penetrate. He might have made suggestions in scientific lines that would have afforded food for thought and stimulus for invention to the close of time. But He did not do this. He said nothing to gratify curiosity or to satisfy man’s ambition by opening doors to worldly greatness. In all His teaching, Christ brought the mind of man in contact with the Infinite Mind. He did not direct the people to study men’s theories about God, His Word, or His works. **He taught them to behold Him as manifested in His works, in His Word, and by His providences.**

“Christ did not deal in abstract theories, but in that which is essential to the development of character, that which will enlarge man’s capacity for knowing God and increase his efficiency to do good. He spoke to men of those truths that relate to the conduct of life and that take hold upon eternity.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, 22-23.

“The Bible is God’s great lesson book, His great educator. The foundation of all true science is contained in the Bible. And above all else it contains the science of all sciences, the science of salvation. The Bible is the mine of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

“The true higher education is gained by studying and obeying the Word of God. But when God’s Word is laid aside for books that do not lead to God and the kingdom of heaven, the education acquired is a perversion of the name.

“There are wonderful truths in nature. The earth, the sea, and the sky are full of truth. They are our teachers. Nature utters her voice in lessons of heavenly wisdom and eternal truth. But fallen man will not understand. Sin has obscured his vision, and he cannot of himself interpret nature without placing it above God. Correct lessons cannot impress the minds of those who reject the Word of God. The teaching of nature is by them so perverted that it turns the mind away from the Creator.

“By many, man’s wisdom is thought to be higher than the wisdom of the divine Teacher, and God’s lesson book is looked upon as old-fashioned, stale, and uninteresting. But by those who have been vivified by the Holy Spirit it is not so regarded. They see the priceless treasure and would sell all to buy the field that contains it. **Instead of books containing the suppositions of reputedly great authors, they choose the Word of Him who is the greatest author and the greatest teacher the world has ever known**, who gave His life for us, that through Him we might have everlasting life.”

—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, 107-108