

erosion of scriptural authority even in churches long known as bastions of biblical truth.

The literalness of the creation and flood narratives, the divine establishment of the seventh-day Sabbath, the need for a substitutionary atonement, the intercession of Christ as portrayed through the symbols of the sanctuary, and the concept of an end-time remnant church have all come under question, even among some Seventh-day Adventists.

It is the purpose of the Society to provide papers that speak specifically to basic Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. The Society hopes to set forth in clear lines the issues confronting Bible-believing Christians and the choices we must make.

The leaders of the Society are convinced that a biblical understanding of the issues involved in earth's final days will nourish faith—and that faith thus nourished will bring forth more honest lives, lives filled with reverence for what is sacred, committed deeply to the Lord Jesus, and devoted to His loving service in preparing others for His soon return.

May this JOURNAL be the help it is intended to be. May it beget a new beginning to your life by helping you put first things first as never before. Surely He who died for us and whom we love is coming soon. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

JACK

New, Yet Historic

By Gordon Hyde, Editor

Adventist Perspectives

The first General Meeting of the Adventist Theological Society (ATS) convened September 7-10, 1989, in Lincoln, Nebraska. By invitation of President Joel O. Tompkins, the Society met in the well-appointed headquarters building of the Mid-America Union Conference. Gracious accommodations, food service, and transportation were provided on the campus of nearby Union College.

These open sessions drew an international gathering of more than a hundred seminary and college theologians, college administrators, division and union presidents, active and retired General Conference officers, editors, and departmental directors, lawyers, physicians and dentists, doctoral candidates from the Seminary, active and retired pastors, Bible instructors, and business people.

On Thursday evening Elder Francis W. Wernick, former General Conference vice president, gave the keynote address. He reaffirmed the supreme authority of the Bible in the faith of the Seventh-day Adventist church—a faith that is not subordinated to human reason, science, history, philosophy, or any other source of human knowledge and wisdom.

Friday's program included presentations by four of the theologians present. Panel discussions followed each presentation. The morning was devoted to the biblical basis of our faith. Dr. Gerhard Hasel, of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary of Andrews University, traced the vicissitudes of the historical-critical method (higher criticism) in Seventh-day Adventist history, and Dr. Richard Davidson, also of the Seminary faculty, outlined his personal pilgrimage of faith into and out of the same critical approach to the Bible.

The Friday afternoon program dealt with another major topic of ATS emphasis, the atonement. Dr. Norman R. Gulley of Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists compared the many theories of atonement with

what the Bible says about it. Dr. Leslie Hardinge, retired but recently president of the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary (Far East), drew upon the rich blood symbolism of the atonement in the sanctuary services.

On Friday evening Elder J. Robert Spangler, editor of *Ministry* magazine, appealed earnestly for the speedy fulfillment of the mission assigned the Adventist church. His hearers responded with testimonies, prayers, and renewed consecration.

Sabbath School the next morning was superintended by Elder D. A. Delafield, president of Adventist Retired Workers. Elder R. G. Peck, president of the Rwanda Union Mission, presented a well-illustrated mission report. Dr. Gordon Hyde, editor of *Adventist Perspectives* at Southern College, led out in the lesson study. During the worship service the speaker, Elder Joel Tompkins, expressed his concerns regarding the responsibility of educational boards, administrators, and teachers for the parents and youth of the church and for trends that are undermining faith today.

Dr. C. Mervyn Maxwell, of the Seminary Church History faculty, discoursed in the afternoon upon the problem of identity within the Seventh-day Adventist church, stirring considerable appreciative discussion.

The agape supper that closed the Sabbath was chaired by Dr. Jack Blanco, chairman of the Religion Department at Southern College and president of ATS. Elder Cyril Miller, president of the Southwestern Union, then presented a telling analysis of trends that he has observed in the church.

The weekend closed with a Sunday morning business session. For the special benefit of overseas members and visitors, it was decided that the 1990 General Meeting would be coordinated with the General Conference Session in Indianapolis.

Many who attended the weekend in Lincoln commented on the spirit of united fellowship and spiritual concern that was fostered by the ministries of Dr. Raymond Holmes, director of Student Life at the Seminary, and by Dr. Derek Morris, religion teacher at Southern College. Singing, morning prayer seasons, and personal testimonies made the gathering a spiritual feast. As one college administrator said, "It was just like camp meeting."

Why I'm Glad for the ATS

By Jacob J. Nortey, President
Africa-Indian Ocean Division

Not long ago I had a taste of good "old-time religion."

In response to an invitation from a friend, I attended the first General Meeting of the Adventist Theological Society. I found a group made up of Seventh-day Adventists from all walks of life. They spent many hours, from Thursday night to Sunday morning, September 7-10, 1989, attending sessions in the chapel of the Mid-America Union headquarters. I heard hearty singing, the study of God's Word, discussions, prayer, and earnest testimonies.

The presentations, studies, and sermons directed attention to the Word of God and the assurance of salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. The atmosphere was pleasant and Spirit-filled. It reminded me of the time I had first attended a Seventh-day Adventist meeting, thirty years before.

The Baden-Powell Memorial Hall in Ghana, that night thirty years before, was packed. Every seat was taken and all the standing room was jammed. The choir sang beautifully. The smiling ushers were dressed in white.

Then as Evangelist Earl Cleveland presented his subject, "A Day When Money Will Be Thrown in the Streets of Accra and No One Will Care to Pick It Up," the crowded hall was hushed. We heard that God's prophecies had been fulfilled to the letter. We saw the evangelist, holding his open Bible in his left hand, point to it with his right hand and declare, "Brothers and Sisters, this is the Word of the living God. It is the Bible. The basis of Christian faith and doctrine is the Bible, the Bible alone."

That presentation thirty years ago was an answer to my prayers and search. It led me to study further and to become a member of this "Thus saith the Lord" denomination.