



Email: [sdaf.org@gmail.com](mailto:sdaf.org@gmail.com)

[www.sandiegoadventistforum.org](http://www.sandiegoadventistforum.org)

PO Box 421320, San Diego, CA 92142

## **2015 Spring Meeting**

**April 4, 9:30 a.m.**

*Meet the Speaker* lunch to follow  
worship service at Souplantation  
(Further Info on Page 2)

### **The Adventist Origins of Creation Science**



### **Ronald Numbers, Ph.D.**

Hilldale Professor of the History of  
Science and Medicine Emeritus

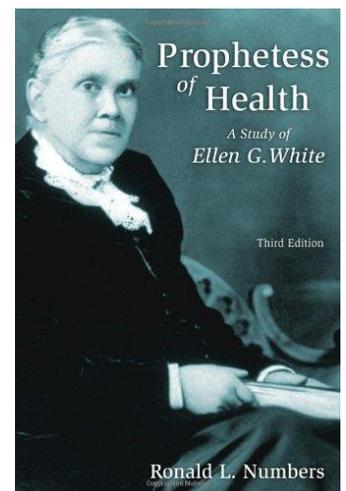
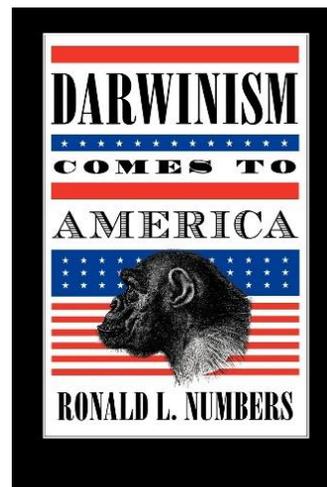
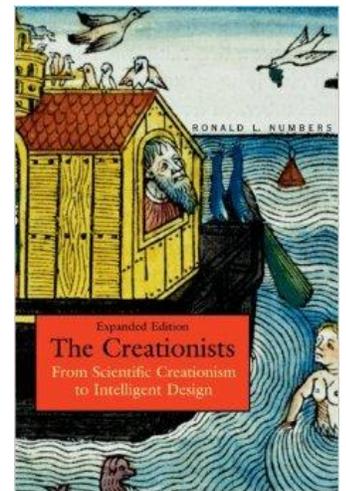
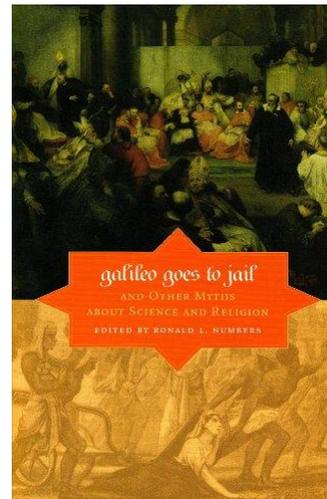
University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Tierrasanta SDA Church**  
11260 Clairemont Mesa Blvd.  
San Diego, California  
Church phone: 858-576-9990

### **Synopsis**

Ronald Numbers offers both a unique and expert perspective on the relationship of Seventh-day Adventism with creation science. Part of what is fascinating about Numbers is that he is the product of what seems to be a conventional SDA upbringing. He was born and raised a fourth-generation Adventist, "all [his] male relatives were

ministers of one kind or another",<sup>1</sup> he graduated from Southern Missionary College (now Southern Adventist University), and he accepted young earth creationism along with the rest of his Adventist peers. However, while working on his Ph.D. in History at UC Berkeley, Numbers critically reassessed his personal beliefs after feeling troubled by the traditional SDA perspectives on geology and biology. Discussions with fellow Adventists who shared his struggle eventually led to a singular evening where he "realized [he] was abandoning the authority of the prophet who founded Adventism, and the authority of Genesis." <sup>1</sup> In spite of this, he did not abandon Mrs. White professionally and hoped to contribute at Adventist universities as a "Christian Historian",<sup>2</sup> first as an assistant



professor at Andrews University and then Loma Linda University. Perhaps not surprisingly, his scholarly interest in Ellen White combined with an unwillingness to invoke the supernatural in his methodology was deemed incompatible with Loma Linda University and he was asked to leave. Numbers then became an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and shortly thereafter published his seminal work "Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White". The impact of this publication on Adventist scholars and leaders cannot be overestimated. Since a summary would be untenable in the space allotted here, we instead point to the rebuttal by the E.G.W. Estate "A Critique of the Book Prophetess of Health"<sup>3</sup> which does protest very much against Numbers' many sources and conclusions.

Numbers became more widely known outside of Adventism for his study of creationism, for which he is considered to be a leading scholar in the field. He has written and edited numerous books on the tension between science and religion, including *God and Nature: A History of the Encounter between Christianity and Science* (1986), *The Creationists* (1992), *Darwinism Comes to America* (1998), and *Galileo Goes to Jail and Other Myths about Science and Religion* (2009). During this time Numbers was awarded numerous honors and appointments: named Hilldale Professor of the History of Science and Medicine, awarded the Sarton Medal for lifetime scholarly achievement, named Terry Lecturer at Yale University, received the CTNS Prize for Outstanding Books in Theology and Natural Sciences, and many others.

Given the circumstances of his departure from Loma Linda University, it was somewhat surprising and perhaps encouraging to see Numbers recently welcomed back to the campus for a panel discussion on scholarship in Adventist studies. This event, which shortly followed publication of "Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet"

(2014) which Numbers co-edited (along with previous SDAF speaker Terrie Aamodt), seems to indicate a new interest in SDA church history by both Adventist and non-Adventist scholars. Numbers' own contribution seems particularly relevant now in that it informs some of the most pressing issues the church faces: how to regard its (female) prophet and how it reconciles the Biblical record with science.

#### References

- 1) [http://www.salon.com/2007/01/02/numbers\\_12](http://www.salon.com/2007/01/02/numbers_12)
- 2) <http://tinyurl.com/kwyfdm>
- 3) <http://tinyurl.com/ksiddwp>

#### Further Reading

- <http://www.pbs.org/faithandreason/transcript/num-frame.html>
- <http://spectrummagazine.org/node/5127>
- <http://tinyurl.com/lshdb7l>

---

## Meet The Speaker

Lunch with Ronald Numbers, following the TSDAC worship service, will be provided at Souplantation:

6171 Mission Gorge Rd  
San Diego, CA 92120  
(619) 280-7087

Donations to SDAF are appreciated.

---

## **2015 Summer Meeting** **Scheduled for July 11, 2015** **Speaker to be announced!**

---

[www.sandiegoadventistforum.org](http://www.sandiegoadventistforum.org)



- Memberships
- Chapter News
- Chapter History
- Make a Donation

- Media Subscriptions
- Media Orders
- Officer Information
- 300 MP3 Downloads

