

The “Larger View” - Introduction

A New Direction

1. If you have been attending this class, listening to the materials on CD, seeing material on the internet, or reading the handouts that we have produced over the years, you have heard us use the expression the “Larger View” or the “Great Controversy Model” or even the “Great Controversy, Trust, Healing Model.” Do you clearly understand what is implied by these names?
2. It is very easy for people to use language that they understand and assume that everyone else understands. This can lead to a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding. Sometimes, people even use such “code words” so that people who are not “in the know” will not understand what is being said. Religious groups are infamous for using such “code words.” Many of these “code words” are carried over from one language into others and used with a great deal of flourish to produce an air of sophistication and erudition. Some common examples include the words, “justification,” “sanctification,” and “*sola Scriptura*.”
3. It would be good if everyone had the time and the skill to study the Scriptures for themselves and come up with a clear understanding of “all things biblical.” But we know that is not the case and never will be until we have eternal life.
4. Seventh-day Adventists have had some great scholars and theologians over the years. In the early years, the church was led out in theological matters by Ellen White. In recent years some of us have been very much attracted by the teachings of men such as A. Graham Maxwell, Jack Provonsha, and Richard Nies. Those men, and others who have followed them, championed the “Larger View” of God and His character and government that many of us share. But we have found that many who listened to these great men for years never seemed to fully grasp some of the great implications of their teachings.
5. If we are to be understood clearly, we must find better ways to state what we are saying. The committee which, at the urging of the American Bible Society, translated the *Good News Bible* did just such a thing with the Bible. They tried to put everything in the language of ordinary people since they recognized that the Bible was originally written in the languages of ordinary people. Such a translation makes the text clear. But, if you do not agree with the translation, you may believe that the translators are clearly wrong! At least it provides a very useful basis for discussion.
6. We would like to do the same thing with the “Larger View.” As we work our way through Sabbath School lessons and other material that we prepare for use in our classes or for placing on our website, we will try to “spell out” the basic principles of the “Larger View.”
7. None of us believe that we have the final word on such important matters, but we hope to clarify—in the best language we can—how we understand things at the present time. We recognize that if our views of God do not continue to grow, we are worshiping a “graven image.” What we believe now is not good enough for next year.
8. If we are to really respect what our predecessors have taught us, we must keep on working to expand our views of God and improve on those views.
9. This is a daunting task. It is certainly more than any one person can accomplish by himself. So, we invite your participation in this grand undertaking. Each week we will try to add to our understanding of this vast paradigm of truth.