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C O L L E G E A N D U N I V E R S I T Y  
**DIALOGUE**



**Should we  
*always* tell the truth?**

**The riddle  
of migratory birds**

**Straight talk  
about sexual purity**

**Christ's attitude  
toward the poor**

**Ecumenism  
in the new millennium**



Volume 13  
Number

**2**

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## College and University

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around the world.**

## Developing an attitude of gratitude

**C**aught up in the daily routine of work or study, most of us rarely stop to think about our complete dependence on God's goodness and on the kindness of fellow human beings for our existence and well-being. Every day, scores of people touch our lives by performing essential services for us—many of them anonymously. Someone cooks, washes, and keeps our apartment clean. Someone drives the vehicle that takes us to our destination. Someone answers the phone, looks up the information we need, and pays the bills. These and other multiple routine actions keep the fabric of family, school, work, and society together.

Do we take time each day to express our appreciation for God's sustaining power and for these innumerable acts that make life possible—even pleasant?

Recently a friend sent me an electronic message that reminded me of how enormously blessed all of us are, in spite of the limitations, pressures, and disappointments of life. Here is the piece, for your reflection:

"If you have sufficient food for three meals a day, decent clothes to wear, a roof overhead, and a clean place to sleep, you are more blessed than three billion people on this planet.

"If you own a Bible and are able to read it daily for guidance, inspiration, and transforming power, you are blessed because one-third of the world does not have access to one.

"If you can attend a Christian meeting without harassment, arrest, torture, or death, you are more fortunate than two billion people of the world.

"If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the pangs of starvation, or the agony of torture, you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

"If you woke up this morning with more health than illness and with enough energy to think and to do, you are more fortunate than the million who will not survive this week.

"If you have some money saved and some in your wallet that you can use it at will, you are among the world's wealthy people.

"If you believe that Jesus is the Son of God and your Saviour, you are part of a minority among the millions that still don't know or love Him.

"If you walk with your head up, a song in your heart, and a smile on your face because you are truly thankful for what you have freely received, you belong to a minority—many can, but most do not."

The Apostle Paul was one of the towering personalities of the early Christian church—a deep thinker, a man of action, a persuasive speaker, a courageous ambassador for Christ. During his missionary travels through the Mediterranean basin, he often met opposition and suffering for his religious convictions (see 2 Corinthians 11:23-28)—and eventually death. Yet, he counseled fellow Christians: "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, NIV).

Have you, dear reader, developed an attitude of gratitude?

*Humberto M. Rasi*

—Humberto M. Rasi, *Editor-in-chief*

### Old copies, solid content

The Adventist pastor serving our district was able to secure a few back issues of *Dialogue* and made them available to us. These copies have been eagerly read by all the young adults in my area. When someone asks me for something interesting and solid to read, I always recommend *Dialogue*. The journal allows us to connect with Adventist students and professionals all over the world. I pray that, if it is God's will, we will soon have access to current issues of *Dialogue* to satisfy our desire to know, to learn, and to expand our circle of Adventist friends.

**Josvani Borroto C.**

Ciego de Ávila  
CUBA

### Motivation and guidance

I have been a regular reader of *Dialogue* all through my years as a journalism university student. I find the essays, interviews, and reports published in the journal of high professional quality and very important for my Christian life. They have provided me with motivation to remain faithful to my convictions, in spite of the obstacles, and guidance in the many choices I have had to make. God bless you!

**Omar Caizaluisa**

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### How do we get in your mailing list?

By the providence of God, in February 2000, I was given a copy of *Dialogue*. My friend had received an issue printed in 1993. Both of us were really excited to learn about your journal. It has good stuff to read and discuss! I am one of the

# Letters

leaders of the Adventist youth group. More than 40 young adults in my church attend public universities. How do we get our names in the mailing list? We want to be up-to-date in these discussions and to connect with other Adventist university students.

**César Gutiérrez Castillo**  
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*The editors respond:*

*We're delighted that you discovered us, Cesar! Our journal has been circulating around the world for 13 years. In order to help you and your friends catch up and read a recent issue of Dialogue, we will mail to your address several free copies of the latest issue (13:1). The publication of Dialogue is funded jointly by the AMiCUS Committee of the General Conference and by the leaders of the church in each world division. Some of us volunteer time to prepare the journal so that the production cost will remain low. Church leaders wish that every Adventist university student have regular access to a copy in one of the four language editions. To receive future issues of Dialogue you must contact the Youth Ministries or the Education Department director of your conference and have you registered in their mailing list. They, in turn, will make arrangements with their counterparts in the union to receive additional copies to cover your needs. The names of Dialogue regional representatives are listed on page 2 of each issue. Look up those responsible for circulation in the Inter-American division and contact them if neces-*

*sary. Best wishes for your leadership, friendship with God, and for your advanced studies!*

## Encouraged to go forward

Some time ago, thanks to the kindness of a pastor, I read *Dialogue* for the first time. Now I receive it regularly and enjoy its content thoroughly. As an Adventist studying at a public university, I find in its articles and stories encouragement to go forward in faith, lead by God's strong hand. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart!

**Soledad Jitar**  
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## A church that cares

*Dialogue* helps me filter and select from the multiple ideas and pieces of information that daily bombard us not only in our studies but also through the ubiquitous media. I'm encouraged and happy to belong to a church that cares about its youth, and particularly about those who attend public colleges and universities, making this journal available to them free!

**Celeste López**  
ARGENTINA  
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## Another student association

I am pleased to inform readers of *Dialogue* that in April 2000 we organized

the Association of Adventist University Students in Ji-Parana, Roraima, Brazil (AAUJI, in Portuguese). This new organization will strengthen our mutual support and prepare us for campus outreach. We welcome contacts with other student associations around the world. E-mail address: [moreira@pcnet.com.br](mailto:moreira@pcnet.com.br)

**Joao Gomes Moreira,**  
**Adviser**  
Ji-Parana, Roraima  
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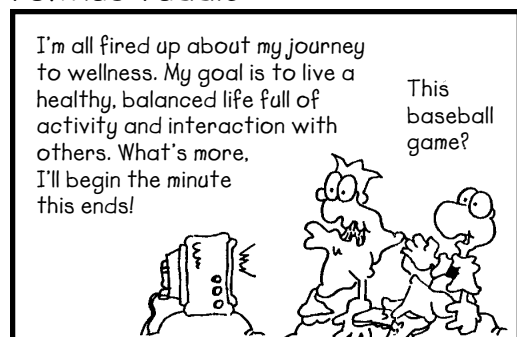
## Significant for Adventist intellectuals

*Dialogue* has become a significant factor in the lives of Adventist intellectuals and professionals in my country. I was especially pleased to read the collection of essays written by several specialists and reprinted under the title *Christianity and Science*. They are stimulating and faith-affirming for Adventist scientists who, like me, are also interested in the science of salvation.

**Williams Pitter**  
Universidad de Zulia  
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*The editors comment: More than 40 essays published in Dialogue have been reprinted in the collection Christianity and Science. Copies of this book can be purchased for US\$10.00, which includes postage for surface mail. For more information, contact Linda Torske. Fax: 301-622-9627. E-mail: [110173.1405@compuserve.com](mailto:110173.1405@compuserve.com)*

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# Should we *always* tell the truth, even when life is at stake?

by Ron du Preez

*Truth telling is a biblical*

*imperative — not just a human*

*option.*

She was a Christian—a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. She believed Jesus loved all people. She wanted to be like Him, and loved nothing more than to live a quiet life and be of loving service to those who needed it most. But it was no ordinary time. Hitler's army was marching across Austria, and his Gestapo was hunting for the Jews. Her love put on wings of compassion and gave shelter to Fritz, a 12-year-old boy. Nothing wrong with that, except he was a Jew. One day, the dreaded Gestapo knocked at her door and confronted her with a direct question: "Mrs. Hasel, do you have Fritz in your house?"

What should she say? Should she tell the truth and let the boy be sacrificed? Or should she mislead these murderers? The life of an innocent child was at stake! What would you say if you were in that situation?

The predicament may seem remote, but everyone is frequently confronted with the temptation to be less than honest: to exaggerate an athletic accomplishment; to submit a "book report" based on merely a fraction of the required reading; to plagiarize material for a research assignment; to utter innuendos intended to impugn another's character; or to doctor numbers to enhance one's status.

To some, this question of truth-telling has become a troubling issue. For example, what should a professor do when a former student who was not very reliable requests a recommendation? To avoid being sued by either side, Robert Thornton suggests a totally ambiguous response. If someone was constantly negative, one could say: "His in-

put was always critical." If the person was best suited for janitorial work, one could state: "If I were you, I wouldn't hesitate to give him sweeping responsibilities." To describe a candidate likely to foul up any project, one could say: "Whatever he undertakes—no matter how small—he will be fired with enthusiasm."<sup>1</sup> William Lutz refers to this form of communication as "doublespeak"—a language that is "designed to make lies sound truthful....to distort reality....[to] make the bad seem good, the negative appear positive."<sup>2</sup> Jerry White astutely observes: "We practice deceit when we lead someone to believe a lie, even though we may be speaking true words."<sup>3</sup>

## **Telling the truth: What does it mean?**

What does it mean to "tell the truth"? As a high school student I understood this phrase in a rather narrow and strictly "literal" sense. I was careful never to utter a lie ("lying lips are an abomination to the Lord," Proverbs 12:22, NKJV<sup>4</sup>), but I had no qualms about misleading someone by a well-timed shrug of the shoulders, or by the question, "How should I know?" Later I learned that the same book that condemned verbal dishonesty also castigated non-verbal deception. A liar is one "who goes about with a corrupt mouth, who winks with his eye, signals with his feet and motions with his fingers, who plots evil with deceit in his heart" (Proverbs 6:12-14, NIV). Sissela Bok notes that this "intentional manipulation of information" can be done "through gesture, through disguise, by means of ac-

tion or inaction, even through silence.”<sup>5</sup>

It is true that the ninth commandment, “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor” (Exodus 20:16, NIV) is legal in nature, specifically forbidding malicious perjury. However, the Bible throughout its pages repeatedly condemns deception in a broad sense, thus indicating that this prohibition should not be limited to merely judicial cases. For example, Leviticus 19:11: “‘You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another.’” Or Zephaniah 3:13, speaking of the remnant: they will “‘speak no lies, nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths.’” Or Paul’s admonition to put away lying (Ephesians 4:25), and speak “the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15). Or John’s emphasis that there will be no liars in the New Earth (Revelation 21:8, 27; 22:15).<sup>6</sup>

### **Absolute honesty: Is it necessary?**

As one reads through the Bible, it becomes evident that the Scriptures insist on total truthfulness and absolute honesty under all circumstances. John Murray states, “The Bible throughout requires veracity; we may *never* lie.”<sup>7</sup> Augustine cautions, “Nor are we to suppose that there is any lie that is not a sin.”<sup>8</sup> And Ellen White warns, “Falsehood and deception of every cast is sin against the God of truth and verity.”<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, truth-telling is not merely an external issue. The Bible says: “Deceit is in the heart” (Proverbs 12:20; cf. 6:14, NIV; 23:7; Jeremiah 17:9). Jesus points out in the Sermon on the Mount that all sin really begins in the mind, before it finds expression in acts (see Matthew 5:21, 22, 27, 28). Therefore, as Bok rightly notes, deception is “that which is done with the intention to mislead”<sup>10</sup> Thus, “an intention to deceive is what constitutes falsehood.”<sup>11</sup>

### **Bible stories: What do they tell?**

Naturally, the question arises: What about all those Bible stories where peo-

ple used deception for so-called worthy causes? Shiphrah and Puah, the two Hebrew midwives, misled the Pharaoh concerning the baby boys they had been commanded to kill (Exodus 1). Rahab lied about hiding two Israelite spies (Joshua 2). Are these stories “examples,... written for our admonition” (1 Corinthians 10:11a; cf. Romans 15:4)? Some have claimed that “it seems difficult to avoid the conclusion that these were God-approved examples of how He wants us to behave in similar moral conflicts.”<sup>12</sup> If that is so, lying to save life is perfectly legitimate, and is morally the right thing to do.<sup>13</sup>

But is this what 1 Corinthians 10:11 is actually saying? The verse is really a summary of the preceding passage, in which Paul reminds the Corinthian Christians, “Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted” (1 Corinthians 10:6). Then Paul selectively enumerates some of these evils, such as idolatry and sexual immorality (vss. 7, 8), together with some of the judgments meted out by God (vss. 8-10). Clearly, then, far from suggesting that people should emulate the actions of Bible characters uncritically, 1 Corinthians 10:11 is calling on all to avoid the transgression of God’s moral requirements, which includes the command to refrain from all deception.

Some have noted that the Bible nowhere directly condemns Rahab or the Hebrew midwives for their falsehoods. However, careful study of the Scriptures reveals that a lack of any direct condemnation of actions is no indication of the rightness of the deeds performed. For example, there is no recorded condemnation of the incest involving Lot’s daughters. Since the older daughter had a son named Moab, who became the ancestor of Ruth, and ultimately of Jesus, should one conclude that this incestuous act was a good thing?

### **God is faithful: He keeps His own**

It is vital to note that, immediately following 1 Corinthians 10:11 comes Paul’s reminder that “God is faithful,” and He “will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (vs. 13). In other words, God will never permit anyone to be in a situation where that person is forced to practice deception; there will always be a morally correct way out of the problem. Ellen White tells us that, though each person is a free moral agent whose loyalty must be tested, “he is never brought into such a position that yielding to evil becomes a matter of necessity. No temptation or trial is permitted to come to him which he is unable to resist.”<sup>14</sup> Indeed, God’s summons is, “that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments” (Deuteronomy 5:29); for, “His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3), and the believer “can do all things through Christ” (Philippians 4:13).

So, what is a Christian to do when faced with a life or death emergency? What did Mrs. Hasel say when asked whether she had Fritz in her house? Trusting in God to bring about the best results, she looked the soldier straight in the eye and said: “As an officer of the German army you know what your responsibility is, and you are welcome to carry it out.” With the culpability of the evil of his action now fully on his shoulders, the Nazi turned on his heel and left that home undisturbed.<sup>15</sup>

Such accounts of uncompromising faith linked with radical obedience can be multiplied. Consider for instance, another World War II story—this one from Poland. Mrs. Knapiuk and her daughter Marion were living in a room when a Jewish girl being chased by German soldiers dashed in and hid under the bed. Now, they were well aware of how dangerous this could be, for in the

adjacent house a bakery owner and his daughter had been arrested and taken to a concentration camp because he had sold bread to a Jew. Mrs. Knapiuk was a woman of great faith, but since things happened so fast, she had had no time to think about what to do. So she sat down at the table, opened her Bible, and started to pray and read. When a German soldier barged in, he immediately recognized what she was reading. He uttered only two words—"good woman"—and promptly left the room.

### Consequences: Are they to be weighed in?

Twentieth-century stories such as these remind one of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and their uncompromising loyalty. While these three Hebrews knew that God had the power to deliver them from the fiery furnace, they informed King Nebuchadnezzar that, even if God chose not to rescue them, they would still remain faithful to Him (Daniel 3:16-18). Commenting on such unswerving allegiance, Ellen White observes: "True Christian principle will not stop to weigh consequences."<sup>16</sup>

That seems to be our problem when confronted with life or death dilemmas—we attempt to project what would happen, if..., and then we make decisions based on these speculations. Erwin Lutzer perceptively states: "We want to be like the Most High, subject to none. But can we calculate the eternal results or the rightness of our actions? We cannot predict even the next five minutes, much less the future."<sup>17</sup> Ellen White counsels: "Christ's ambassadors have nothing to do with consequences. They must perform their duty and leave results with God."<sup>18</sup>

How then should we make moral decisions? In the book of Revelation, Christ states: "Do not be afraid of what will happen to you....But be faithful, even if you have to die. If you are faith-

ful, I will give you the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10, ICB). "In deciding upon any course of action," says Ellen White, "we are not to ask whether we can see that harm will result from it, but whether it is in keeping with the will of God."<sup>19</sup> Chuck Colson is right: "What God wants from His people is obedience, no matter what the circumstances, no matter how unknown the outcome."<sup>20</sup> In short, we must make all moral decisions, not out of fear of the future, but by faith in the Father!

### Jesus: Our ultimate model

Our ultimate model of morality is Jesus Christ. Peter not only points out that we are "to follow in His steps," but specifically notes, "nor was any deceit found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2:21, 22, NASB). To put it more directly, Rahab is not our ethical example. That status must forever be reserved for our sinless Saviour. Indeed, believers "must live as Jesus lived" (1 John 2:6, NCV).

Thus the answer to the initial question, "Should we always tell the truth?" is found in one unequivocal scriptural proclamation: "Never lie to one another" (Colossians 3:9, CJB). For, "lying is of the devil; it is the work of darkness" (See John 8:44).<sup>21</sup> This uncompromising commitment to veracity is possible only "because you have stripped away the old self, with its ways, and you have put on a new self which will progress toward true knowledge the more it is renewed in the image of its Creator" (Colossians 3:9, CJB, 10, NJB). Echoing this perspective of the indispensability of a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ, Ellen White notes that "we cannot speak the truth unless our minds are continually guided by Him who is truth."<sup>22</sup>

Jesus is really the "secret" to this entire issue of truth-telling! For, "those who have the mind of Christ will keep all of God's commandments, irrespective of circumstances."<sup>23</sup>

Ron du Preez (D.Min., Andrews University, Th.D., University of South Africa) teaches theology and ethics at Solusi University, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. He is the author of *Polygamy in the Bible* (Adventist Theological Society, 1998) and of many articles. His e-mail address: dupreez@esamet.zw

### Notes and references

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# The riddle of migratory birds: Another evidence of God's design

by Kyu Bong Lee

*A divine design behind all*

*wonders of nature.*

*"Even the stork in the sky knows her appointed seasons, and the dove, the swift and the thrust observe the time of their migration." —JEREMIAH 8:7, NIV*

Autumn is almost drawing to an end. Winds from the Arctic are gently blowing south, heralding that winter is not far away. Soon the northern lands will freeze, covered by snow. Suddenly you hear a noise in the sky. You look up, and you see a flock of birds flying south—escaping the freezing temperatures and seeking warmer lands. Flocks and streams of birds continue their journey for hundreds of miles. Come spring, the reverse occurs, and the birds fly north to breed and raise their young. The migration is unmistakable, annual, and rhythmic—revealing one of the great wonders of the natural world.

How does one account for such migrations? Why do birds migrate at all? How do they know when it's time to begin the long journey? What guides their flight path and direction? How do they know their destination, and how do they prepare for the trip?<sup>1</sup>

These and other questions have occupied research of scientists for years. Some questions have brought clear answers; others are still being searched out. For a scientist committed to the Christian worldview, the migration of birds is another instance revealing that there is a divine design behind all such wonders of nature.

## **Dispersion of migratory birds**

With birds, migration usually means a two-way journey, an annual round-

trip. Mostly, this occurs with birds in the large lands of the Northern Hemisphere that are covered seasonally with winter's snow and ice. Flocks of birds living in Eurasia and North America cross the Equator to spend the winter season in Africa or South America.

For example, a tagged arctic tern was picked up 90 days later on the coast of southeast Africa, 9,000 miles (14,481 km) away from its northern home. Another tern flew more than 10,000 miles (16,090 km) from Greenland to reach southeast Africa. Still another, ringed on the Arctic coast of Russia, was retaken off Australia, an impressive distance of at least 14,000 miles (22,526 km).

The white-rumped sandpiper makes the same autumn sea hop from maritime Canada to the tip of the Antarctic. Among land birds, the bobolinks navigate 7,000 miles (11,263 km) or more between the clover fields of Canada and the grasslands of Argentina. The most famous migrant in Europe is the widely beloved white stork. Sometimes they ride the thermals to a great height before gliding the 10 miles over water to Africa.

Some sandpipers have been clocked at more than 100 miles (161 km) per hour. Some birds migrate long distances over water and fly as high as 14,000 feet (4,267 m). The highest altitude recorded thus far is 29,500 feet (8,992 m) for geese near northwest India.

## **How birds navigate during the migration**

Most biologists offer four theories, and suggest that birds use one or a combination of these in their navigation over long distances.

*Use of visual landmarks.* This has long been a popular theory. Many birds seem to follow visual clues such as rivers, coastlines, and mountain ranges in order to arrive at the correct destination. However, this idea does not explain how birds keep from getting lost during their very first migration.

*Use of the Sun.* According to this theory, birds, like humans, possess an internal circadian clock that allows them to track the daily light-dark cycle. Along with this internal clock, birds seem to use the Sun's shadows to gain a sense of location. Through the use of these two devices, birds would be able to use the Sun as a compass.

Birds traveling by daytime would orient themselves by the position of the Sun. But on cloudy days when the birds cannot see the Sun at all, how are they able to align themselves properly? They have an internal time clock by which they are ruled. Perhaps this can be explained as a result of God's creation.

*Use of the stars.* Because many birds migrate at night, these nocturnal migrants appear to have learned to use the stars for navigation. Birds can orient themselves in relation to the North Star, and unlike the Sun-compass, this "star-compass" is not time dependant. Young birds seem to use this pattern of rotation to distinguish north from south. This theory is supported by an experiment that was conducted with indigo buntings.<sup>2</sup>

Some birds seem able to use patterns of stars, small clusters of stars, or the Moon to determine what direction they need to fly. A disadvantage of using the stars to navigate is that the North Star cannot be seen in the Southern Hemisphere. Another problem arises on cloudy nights, when the stars cannot be seen.

*Use of the Earth's magnetic field.* Biologists have two different theories on how birds could use the Earth's magnetic field to navigate. One is that birds have certain pigments in their eyes that be-

## Salmon migration: Using magnetic sense?

One of the mysteries of nature is how salmon manage to navigate in the oceans and return to spawn in the very same streams from which they came. It is known that the odor or taste of the particular stream plays a role. Salmon can home-in on the smell of "their" stream if they are sufficiently close to its mouth so that the water has not been diluted to the point where it is unidentifiable.

But how can odor play a part when the fish migrate over thousands of miles in the open ocean and cross ocean currents which destroy any possible "trail" that may lead them back? At any rate, it is known that salmon do not follow meandering paths back "home" to answer the spawning instinct, but travel directly to their spawning grounds by the most direct route when sexual maturity occurs....

What is it that points them in the right direction? Probably there is more than one homing mechanism that fish use to find their way. An olfactory "imprint" is made on smolts as they leave their home stream. This enables them to identify it by smell as they approach it later from the ocean. But to approach the stream mouth from the open sea, at least one other imprint must first be made in order for them to arrive in the general area. It has been shown that some fish are remarkably perceptive of the Sun's azimuth and altitude, and that they are sensitive to the time of day. Under ideal conditions, this would permit a method of determining geographic north. But in a region where overcast conditions predomi-

nate (as they do in the North Pacific and Bering Sea), and because the fish swim at night and move into deeper water during the day, celestial clues are not consistently available. Therefore another means of correcting navigation is probably used. It is strongly suspected that the ability to sense the earth's magnetic field may provide this additional method....

Extrapolating these findings to the migration process, the conjecture is that, after the salmon fry have grown to smolts and entered salt water, chemical and hormonal changes occur which imprint upon the fishes' nervous system a "memory" of its magnetic latitude and longitude at the time that it enters the ocean.

There appear to be two possible ways by which the magnetic field can influence a fish's nervous system. The first is that the ferromagnetic mineral magnetite in the creature's brain may function as a biological compass which is 'set' at the time of entry into the ocean (magnetite occurs across the biologic spectrum from bacteria to dolphins). The information retained is the vertical and horizontal components of the Earth's magnetic field at that point, and the declination of the horizontal component, which is the difference between magnetic and true north, presumably determined by the Sun. These factors taken together provide a combination that is unique for any geographic location.<sup>7</sup>

—LARRY GEDNEY

come weakly magnetic when they absorb light and thus alter certain nerve signals that the eyes send to the brain.<sup>3</sup> A second, and more popular theory, comes from the fact that scientists have detected tiny crystals of magnetite

along the olfactory tract in the brains of some birds.

Biologists still do not know how the birds can sense the position of the magnetite crystals in their heads, and there is little experimental data on the sub-

ject. (Interestingly enough, some researchers say that humans have the ability to sense the magnetic field as well.) Two observations are worth noting. First, with reference to homing pigeons:

“Careful tests with homing pigeons and other birds displaying the ability to judge direction show that the birds are affected by changing magnetic field. . . . If birds are released at places where the earth’s magnetic field is anomalously strong, their homing ability is entirely disrupted. . . .

“Next to, or essentially in, each pigeon skull, [the researchers] have located a tiny piece of tissue 1 mm by 2 mm (about 1/16 in by 1/8 in) that was somewhat magnetic. Searches inside this tissue with an electron microscope revealed the presence of more than ten million tiny crystals each four times as long as wide. Other tests demonstrated that these crystals were magnetite, the iron-oxygen compound of which compass needles are made.”<sup>4</sup>

Second, a research observation on

bird migration from northern Wisconsin to the Amazon:

“How birds find their way from a northern Wisconsin pine tree, south to the Amazon and back again is still not completely understood by science. But a half-century of research is shedding some light on this amazing feat.

“Birds can track the sun, the moon and the stars, using their apparent movement as a compass. Birds also use other senses. They can detect weak magnetic fields with tiny magnetite crystals in their heads. They follow faint odors as does a salmon returning to its birth river from the ocean. They can see polarized light and use barometric pressure. Along with memory and genetic urges to head in a certain direction, birds use a combination of these senses to cross continents and oceans.”<sup>5</sup>

Recently it was discovered that monarch butterflies have an internal magnetic compass that enables them to make their winter journey without the guidance of sunlight.<sup>6</sup> As mentioned in the above paragraphs, it was shown that some fishes and butterflies also use their magnet-detecting senses. (See sidebar, “Salmon migration.”)

Despite all the theories and experiments dealing with bird migration, there is much that is still not understood about how birds determine their position in relation to a fixed goal. The fact is that they continue to migrate on a cyclical and predicable pattern through centuries.

### **What causes birds to migrate?**

What causes birds to migrate? When did the practice of migration begin? Some scientists once suggested that the ice sheets during the Ice Age might have been originally responsible. This idea sounds plausible, but it does not explain migration in many parts of the world that have never been touched by glaciations. Consequently, most ornithologists now reject this theory as a basic cause of migration.

There is no question that the birds

that originated in warm climates spread outward in their search for food. Most Creation scientists have held that the Ice Age existed for hundreds of years in some areas after Noah’s Flood because of change in weather. After the Flood, many birds found food in abundance in higher latitudes but were forced to withdraw when winter came.

What stimulates birds to begin their migration at approximately the same time each year? What internal clock or external stimuli? From a physiological point of view, we know that the endocrine glands—the controls that make male birds sing and females lay eggs—undergo great changes before the nesting season. Other changes occur after the nesting season is over. Most birds migrate during this period.

While evolutionary scientists may have their views, we as Christian scientists can attribute all these magnetic mysteries to God’s design, the same as we do with many other kinds of animal migration. God made birds to adapt themselves to the change in their surroundings. Because birds need extraordinary stamina to travel long distance, these migrants have the ability to store a vast fuel supply in the form of fat, sometimes doubling their weight. Moreover, the greatest wonder of migration is the manner in which birds find the way—their navigation skill. Surely, one can see a supernatural design in all these!

### **Conclusion**

Navigation is the part of migration that has puzzled scientists the most. How birds can find their way with apparent ease over vast distances remains the unsolved riddle of migration. So precisely can they follow their invisible paths that scientists have from time to time suspected that birds possess a special sense unknown to us. At one time they were thought to have a kinesthetic sense, by which they could form patterns of their route through pressures on

## **Lessons in providence and trust**

“The swallow and the crane observe the changes of the seasons. They migrate from one country to another to find a climate suitable to their convenience and happiness, as the Lord designed they should.”<sup>8</sup>

“The birds are teachers of the sweet lesson of trust. Our heavenly Father provides for them; but they must gather the food, they must build their nests and rear their young. Every moment they are exposed to enemies that seek to destroy them. Yet how cheerily they go about their work! how full of joy are their little songs!”<sup>9</sup>

— ELLEN G. WHITE

the inner ear. Another idea was that birds navigate through responses to the Earth's magnetic field, perhaps even to its rotational effects. None of these hypotheses has, however, stood the test of experiment.

The Bible, however, invites us to study the wonders of nature and to see in them evidences of the handywork of a wise Creator: "Ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you." "Look at the birds of the air,...your heavenly Father feeds them" (Job 12:7, 8; Matthew 6:26, NIV).

So, what we can learn by observing or studying bird migration? First, not all birds migrate. Therefore, migration is not the law of all flying birds. Secondly, birds take more or less the same migratory routes. This selection cannot be by chance. Third, before sin, there would have been no migration, for in the pre-Fall world, there would have been no harsh climate necessitating bird migration.

Consider migration itself and its relation to the Earth's magnetic field and gravity. The magnetic field changes according to the latitude of the Earth and height. The strength of gravity also changes according to latitudes, though we usually say, "gravity is constant". God created the Earth, populated it with all kinds of creatures, and designed each of them to be adapted to its circumstances. Also, the Sun radiates the light and electromagnetic energies to all the creatures. These might be affected by quantum energy even though they may not feel it. God designed the birds to make good use of their tiny variation in energy and also gave them abilities to detect even the smallest amount of gravity and variations in the magnetic field in ways that are unknown to us, and to orient themselves toward this direction. To the extent this happens, migration reveals God's intelligent design and benevolent providence.

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# Straight talk about sexual purity

by Nancy L. Van Pelt

*Your concept of God and your  
value of human dignity must  
show the way.*

Monica was raised in a Christian home with moral principles she held dear. As a young adult she began dating Andrew. He wasn't a Christian, but there were no available Christian fellows to date, so she continued to date him. He was fun, interesting, and polite but had a different agenda than Monica. They were getting into some pretty steamy petting episodes with him pushing hard for more. Monica didn't like this part of their relationship, but in order to have a boyfriend she decided to put up with it and just be careful. It wasn't long before he pushed her farther than she ever dreamed anyone could. Pure disgust haunted her from then on.

Petting is a powerful force. Those who engage in it tend to make up the rules as they move along, because few know the rules. Petting is a step beyond hugging and kissing but not as far as sexual intercourse. This leaves a wide range of body-exploring activities open to question, guess, and negotiation.

When a man begins fondling a woman's body, he is testing the waters. How far will she let me go, he wonders. He enjoys this testing process immensely since it is sexually pleasurable. His mind races with anticipation as he thinks about what lies ahead. At this point he may deliver his best line: "I've never loved anyone the way I love you, Baby." His hormones are pumping, and he is likely to say or do anything to get what he wants.

Her agenda is likely very different. She enjoys the hugging, holding, and kissing. And as she surrenders to his kiss and caress, her emotional need for ro-

mance, love, and emotional security are being met.

Wait a minute!

To engage in such intimacy outside of marriage, simply for the thrill of sexual pleasure, to enjoy the stimulation of the moment, just to make you feel good, is very selfish and self-centered. Likewise to allow someone to fondle your body before marriage, just to feel loved and secure is equally selfish. Particularly is this true in a casual dating relationship where a couple have no plans to marry each other. This cheapens a relationship. The risks are high, and the rewards are low.

Let's clear something up. Petting is not "dirty." Within marriage, petting is a beautiful experience. It is the natural expression of love called foreplay, which leads directly to sexual intercourse. What, then, is the difference between petting and foreplay? Their purpose. Petting is the exploration of a partner's body by two unmarried persons who do not intend for intercourse to occur.

And that's the trouble with petting. It doesn't stand alone. It moves naturally to intercourse. By itself, outside of marriage, it is more frustrating than satisfying. Our bodies were designed and created by God to respond to petting by becoming sexually aroused and desiring intercourse.

When an unmarried couple engage in petting with the intention of not having intercourse, they must constantly be on guard to stop, lest it go too far. Petting, or foreplay, was not designed to stop on command. One who habitually progresses to intimate kissing and petting and then stops, risks the possibility

of sexual malfunction in marriage.

Petting might be likened to crossing a bridge that spans a wide gorge. On one side is intercourse, and on the other no physical expression of love. When petting, you can be a quarter of the way across, halfway or nine-tenths across the bridge. It's so exciting that it's easy to find yourself across the bridge before you realize it.

Crossing the bridge doesn't always happen all at once. But petting is dangerously progressive. Each level of excitement demands the next level. It is a powerful force for those in love who feel the sexual chemistry between them escalating.

### **Pair bonding**

But Christian young people always want to know: What's right and what's wrong before marriage? The unstated question is: "How far can I go and still not sin?" There are many gray areas for which the Bible provides no clear-cut guidelines. However, I have discovered research about pair bonding that lays an excellent foundation for making decisions.

Pair bonding was first reported by secular zoologist Desmond Morris in *Intimate Behavior*. However, it was a lecture by Dr. Donald Joy on pair bonding that opened my eyes to its importance in dating. Pair-bonding encompasses the physical, but also includes emotional, spiritual, and intellectual components.

### **Four stages, twelve steps**

The 12 steps listed here were found to be consistently present in 80 percent of the 500 cultures Morris studied.

#### **Stage 1: No touch.**

*Step 1: Eye to body.* First glance is not sexual look but the look of discovery. First glance takes in size, shape, coloring, age, and personality. Immediately an unconscious grading process begins, rating the person on a scale of low to high desirability. First glance determines

whether or not the relationship progresses.

*Step 2: Eye to eye.* This will frequently occur in a library or office setting. When the eyes meet, there will be a quickening of the heartbeat along with the flush of embarrassment, causing a breaking of the gaze and glancing away. Direct eye contact is reserved for those we know and trust. So two people who see each other for the first time will usually look each other over sequentially rather than simultaneously. Unless the eyes convey a message of interest, the relationship will probably not proceed.

*Step 3: Voice to voice.* At first, the couple's conversation involve small talk such as each other's names, where they live, what they do for a living, the weather. Such small talk, however, permits further observation and analysis. If the couple continue to talk, they can really get to know each other, including opinions, pastimes, hobbies, ideas, likes and dislikes, hopes and dreams for the future. Compatibility can be determined here. A couple should spend many hours at step 3. I recommend as many as 1,000 hours talking on the phone while acquiring skills that will be critical to their relationship and possible marriage later on. Each is exploring his or her inner self and becoming vulnerable—a major task when intimacy is developing. This step cannot and should not be ignored. The relationship needs to be slowed down now, before romantic touch begins. After romantic affection starts, the couple will interact differently.

#### **Stage 2: First touch.**

During the second stage of bonding, the couple spend much time talking, but eye contact remains limited. Touch begins, but none of it is directly sexual. Prolonged hugging or open-mouth kissing would rush the bonding process and awaken sexual responses ahead of schedule.

*Step 4: Hand to hand.* First touch may

be innocent—a handshake, or touching while assisting a woman through a doorway. If she pulls away from his touch, it signals him she is not ready for more. But if his touch is received warmly, the relationship may move to hand holding. Holding hands is evidence of a growing attachment between them. First touch is also a social statement that says, "I have someone who enjoys being with me."

*Step 5: Arm to shoulder.* Soon the thrill of holding hands subsides, and a new plateau is needed to show continued interest. During hand holding, the bodies have not been that close, but arm-to-shoulder pulls the trunks of the bodies into close contact, and the thrill returns. The shoulder embrace says more than holding hands does. It's a gesture of ownership that states, "This relationship is going someplace." There is still limited eye contact and conversation, but closer body contact.

*Step 6: Arm to waist.* The excitement of holding hands and arm-to-shoulder eventually wears thin. So to bring back the thrill, the couple move to arm to waist, which displays more ownership of the body. The arm around the waist clearly signals romantic interest. Notice also that the hands are moving down the body closer to the genitals. You might observe a couple walking down the street, each wearing jeans, in the Step 6 position. Sometimes each will slip a thumb inside the back pocket with the hand resting directly on the buttocks. He knows exactly where his hand is and may be entertaining some interesting thoughts: If I can touch her here outside the clothing, I wonder if I might touch her inside the clothes.

Couples can frequently be observed at this stage of bonding on a school campus, or at a park. Their bodies are close, but they appear to be looking down, talking to their feet. Deep levels of communication develop at this step. Personal disclosures are made. The basic issues of life are discussed and evaluat-

ed. Many personal secrets are shared, and the couple really get to know each other at a deeply personal level.

Values, goals, and beliefs must be scrutinized closely because it is now that decisions about the future of the relationship must be made—whether it should progress or end. Enough personal disclosures have been shared so that compatibility can be evaluated. If serious doubts or questions exist, now is the time to say good-bye. Proceeding to Step 7 or beyond and then separating can leave deep and painful scars because by then the bond is so well formed.

### **Stage 3: Intimate contact.**

At this stage the couple face one another. Although no direct sexual contact occurs, the change in body positions puts sex on a hidden agenda that both become acutely aware of. Any genital contact would bring on intercourse and could scar the formation of a healthy bond, introduce an undercurrent of mistrust, and haunt the pair later should they marry. Communication is different. Until now the couple have been developing their communication skills. Now the verbal exchanges are suspended and eye contact and nonverbal expressions take over.

*Step 7: Face to face.* As the couple move face to face, they cross an important boundary. Each of them must consider carefully whether to stop at this point or proceed. Three types of contact take place at this step: hugging, deep kissing, and prolonged eye contact. Close body contact in this frontal position, combined with open-mouth kissing, bring on strong sexual arousal, particularly when repeated or prolonged. If the couple has taken time to talk through important issues, deep communication can take place with few words. Eye contact becomes long and pronounced. Verbal communication tends to shut down while the couple read each other's faces. An unmarried couple must guard their display of physical af-

fection carefully from now on, as all sexual motors are racing.

*Step 8: Hand to head.* Here one's hand is used to caress the head of the other while kissing or talking. This intimate gesture is reserved for those who have developed a high level of trust. Few people engage in head-touching unless they are in love or are family members. This act, then, denotes emotional closeness, a deep bond of friendship, love, and caring. A couple who wants to protect the sanctity of the bond that has been formed should consider the consequences of proceeding to Step 9. After all other factors in their compatibility have been examined, they should consider marriage or ceasing the bonding process. In other words, the couple should stop seeing one another unless they are definitely planning marriage within the imminent future.

*Step 9: Hand to body.* Now the hands explore the partner's body. Breast fondling becomes important for the male. In the early stages of Step 9 the hands remain outside the clothing. Later the hands will move underneath the clothing but stay above the waist. Step 9 is dangerously progressive and includes back rubs and other caressing. Each time the unmarried couple go to Step 9 they have more trouble stopping at that point. It is usually now that the female recognizes she must call a halt, or it will be too late. This is the point of last return before the protection of marriage is needed.

### **Stage 4: One flesh.**

Ultimate intimacy is achieved as appropriate within a marriage relationship.

*Step 10: Mouth to breast.* Step 10 requires the baring of the female breast and demands utmost privacy. The couple are not only concerned with pleasure and arousal but intend to complete the sex act.

*Step 11: Hand to genital.* The hands drop below the waist. Sexual arousal

and foreplay are well underway in this last and most intimate stage of genital fondling. The dictionary defines virgin as "a person of either sex remaining in a state of chastity." This definition shows that purity has already been lost when unmarried couples reach this point: Touching the genitals of a partner would hardly be considered chaste, pure, or virtuous in any culture. Technically it is only a breath or two away from intercourse.

*Step 12: Genital to genital.* The pair-bonding process escalates to its highest level of sexual desire and is complete with penetration and intercourse. A pair bond is thus formed by progressing through these 12 steps. But the goal should be more than sexual pleasure. The goal of bonding is to develop a strong unbreakable bond of commitment and trust between husband and wife.

### **The results of rushing or skipping steps**

When the 12-step bonding process is rushed, several harmful things can happen.

1. When steps are skipped or rushed, the bond is weakened and tends to break or become deformed. This happens because the couple did not take time to talk through the important issues—values, goals, and beliefs—prior to becoming physically involved. Once the sexual motors get turned on, people forget other aspects of relationship building. It is easier and faster to get to know each other physically than emotionally, socially, and spiritually. This is probably the greatest contributor to rising divorce statistics.

2. After a couple break up, the tendency is to accelerate the steps with the next partner. Each level of sexual excitement is so immediately rewarding it becomes nearly impossible to be satisfied with lower levels. The long-term conse-

*Continued on page 25.*

*Dialogue 13:2 2001*

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# He had compassion on them: Christ's attitude toward the poor

by **Walter Douglas**

*"The world will be convinced,  
not by what the pulpit teaches,  
but by what the church lives.  
The minister in the desk  
announces the theory of the  
gospel; the practical piety of  
the church demonstrates its  
power."*

**T**he most distinctive teaching about Christianity is that God stepped out of the divine and entered into the human experience totally and completely. In the process, Jesus showed the world that human beings can be holy by their practical compassion for the poor, the oppressed, the powerless, the outcasts, and the foreigners.

The Gospels reveal the compelling truth that Jesus was touched by human needs and responded to them by acts of mercy. Often, He called attention to the needs and concerns of the poor and despised. He had a particular interest in reaching out to them and sharing the good news of salvation. But Jesus also responded to their physical needs, frequently before addressing spiritual needs. He challenged those who had means to look after the poor as their duty. He said they provide us an opportunity for doing good; they are a test of our fitness for the kingdom (see Matthew 25:31-46).

## **Jesus' concern for the poor**

Jesus' empathy for the poor is revealed again and again in the New Testament. He told the story of a rich man who thought he had a crisis because he had inadequate storage for his crops. His concern was expressed in a statement of anxiety: "What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops" (Luke 12:17).<sup>\*</sup> While this prosperous man was contemplating building bigger barns to store his abundant crop, he seemed completely oblivious to the needs of the poor. But Jesus pointed to the real crisis in his life: selfishness and greed. He could have solved his problem by simply recogniz-

ing his duty to the poor. He needed to learn the lesson that Jesus so clearly taught: We are blessed to be a blessing to others; we are privileged to serve others. Jesus called the man a fool, and He taught where true wisdom lies—in helping those in need.

Another example of Jesus' deep concern for the poor is His dialogue with the rich young ruler. This man was not only economically powerful, but he had religious and political influence as well. Evidently, his wealth and influence did not satisfy the deep longings of his heart. So he approached Jesus with a sincere intent to seek eternal life. Jesus seemed to have a serious interest in him and, in answer to his question, told him: "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor....Then come, follow me." But this requirement for discipleship was too demanding—at least so he thought. It was too high a price to pay to follow Jesus. So this rich young ruler "went away sad" (Mark 10:21, 22).

Among the many lessons we may draw from this story, at least one is clear: Jesus repeatedly demonstrated concern for the poor. They seemed always to be on His mind, a part of His conversation. He began His public ministry by reading what the prophet Isaiah had foretold about the Messiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovering of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18, 19).

Jesus was conscious that His messiahship included caring for the poor and

needy. For instance, when John was languishing in prison and doubts began to arise in His mind about Jesus and His claim to messiahship, he sent some of his disciples to check out Jesus. On meeting Jesus they asked Him: "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" Jesus' response was simple. "Go back and report to John," he replied, "what you hear and see. The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor" (Matthew 11:3-5). Jesus' works of compassion testified of His messiahship.

The followers of Christ must show by their works how they fulfill their responsibility to the poor and needy; not by lofty words concerning poverty, but by ordinary deeds that ease their suffering and pain. In other words, our duty to the poor goes beyond what we say to embrace what we do. In fact, "true worship consists in working together with Christ. Prayers, exhortations, and talk are cheap fruits, which are frequently tied on; but fruits that are manifested in good works, in caring for the needy, the fatherless, and widows are genuine, and grow naturally upon a good tree."<sup>1</sup>

### Love in action

The Apostle John says: "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in

truth" (1 John 3:17).

"Many," wrote Ellen White, "can be reached only through acts of disinterested kindness. Their physical wants must first be relieved. As they see evidence of our unselfish love, it will be easier for them to believe in the love of Christ."<sup>2</sup> While it may be true that the church or the individual Christian cannot eliminate poverty and sickness from this planet, we are to fulfil our Christian duty and social responsibility to the less fortunate by being responsive to the effects of poverty, sickness, and injustice in people's lives. The Bible affirms that improving the conditions of the poor involves religious, social, and economic changes.

Viv Grigg was speaking in a subdued and almost reverential tone to a group of 20 visionary young adults of college and university age about the challenge of poverty and how young Christians should relate to this challenge as an opportunity for reflecting the compassion, care, and concern of Jesus. "Poverty," said Viv, "is the issue of our time. And among the specters of poverty, few can match the sprawling megacities of the Third World. Urban migration is the largest mass migration in the world today. Rural dwellers are swarming into these megacities whose population doubles every ten years. By the year 2000 one-third of the world's population will live in these cities, and 40 percent will live in slum and squatted areas."<sup>3</sup>

Viv then proceeded to challenge that group of idealistic youth to embrace their social responsibility as a call from God. He encouraged them to consider where they might have started and the journey they have traveled; how in their own background and experience they may have personally encountered poverty or are related to people they knew as poor. He then told them that since they were not victims of poverty and injustice, they should take seriously their position of privilege and work for the less fortunate. They were blessed so

they in turn could bless the world, and particularly the suffering world.

Speaking with deep conviction, Viv concluded his meeting with this appeal: "God is calling, looking for men and women who will hear His voice and speak His message to people in these cities. God wants to break us down to be grains of wheat that die to ourselves and give our lives to the poor."<sup>4</sup>

### Moving beyond words

"I have compassion on these people, they...have nothing to eat," said Jesus (Mark 8:2). The persistent challenge poverty presents to Christ's followers is to move beyond speaking the truth about love, compassion, and concern, to living the truth in deeds of compassion and acts of kindness. We must find concrete ways to relieve the burdens of the poor and needy. We must see them as people with whom we are all one in God. We cannot truly "praise God from whom all blessings flow" and ignore the reality of a world of human suffering and misery. God's blessings must flow through us in ways that will make a difference in the life of those in need.

The Apostle James said, "Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (James 2:15-17).

That is a call to action. Ellen White's reminder is appropriate: "Many who profess His name have lost sight of the fact that Christians are to represent Christ. Unless there is practical self-sacrifice for the good of others, in the family circle, in the neighborhood, in the church, and wherever we may be, then whatever our profession we are not Christians....When we see human beings in distress, whether through affliction or through sin, we shall never say, This does not concern me."<sup>5</sup>

"We need not go to Nazareth, to Capernaum, or to Bethany, in order to walk in the steps of Jesus. We shall find His footprints beside the sickbed, in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great cities and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation. In doing as Jesus did when on earth, we shall walk in His steps."<sup>6</sup>

The most public face God puts before us, the picture of God that greets us everywhere in Scripture, is that of a compassionate and caring God who always exercises a preferential option for the poor, the downtrodden, and the marginalized. We have the assurance from Scripture and Ellen White that more people will be persuaded to follow Christ by our kindness, compassion, and commitment to the needs of those who are homeless, hungry, and naked than by our lofty ideas about proper doctrines, which do not touch peoples lives in practical ways (see Isaiah 58; Matthew 25:31-46; James 2).

### **The gospel and social responsibility**

The linkage between the gospel and social responsibility is clearly represented in Christ's ministry and in both Old and New Testaments. Where the ravages of poverty, injustice, and oppression are clearly present, the Word of God insists that a faith that speaks only to the spiritual needs of the people but fails to demonstrate its compassion through practical help will be viewed as false worship (see Isaiah 58). Indeed, as Gandhi once said, "We must live in our lives the change we want to see in the world."

A truly believing Christ-follower cannot treat with equanimity the material inequalities and the manifestation of power and privilege that wound so many and lead to the spiritual impoverishment of others. The gospel invites the Christ-follower and the church into solidarity with all who suffer, in order that together we might receive, embody, and share the good news of Jesus in ways that enhance life for all. As Cheryl Sanders puts it, "The kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world is a realm where all are filled and fed and free. One is qualified to enter that kingdom by exercising good stewardship of life itself, by ministering life out of the abundance one receives as a divine trust from God. And the gospel declares that eternal life is the reward of those who

cherish life. Those who feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, take in the stranger, clothe the naked and visit the sick and incarcerated become identified with the inbreeding of God's kingdom in this world and move with God in the realm of human affairs. To disobey this biblical mandate is to deny allegiance to the kingdom and the King."<sup>6</sup>

In light of the frightening stories of hungry children around the world, the Christians cannot say, "This does not concern us." We cannot be defensive in dealing with the persistent challenge of poverty. It is not a government program or problem. A generation ago, the U.S. federal and state government had taken over most social-welfare programs, and the idealists of the nation believed that the war on poverty could be won by tax-supported civil servants. But something was missing, something that was essential to success, and something that government workers and programs could never provide—faith. Faith in God proved to be essential to programs that were successful in getting people off drugs and alcohol, and out of a life of poverty.

Our society has tried to depersonalize poverty by talking in terms of programs and organizations and structures. But poverty is personal. It is people who are poor. These are the people that Jesus talked about over and over in His teaching and preaching. He had compassion on them and challenged us to see it as our duty to be a blessing to them. As such, a Christ-follower cannot exclude himself or herself from involvement in this human predicament. We cannot claim that it is not our fault that these people are poor. We may discover that they live in poverty because some of us live in comfort. Poverty is a human crisis. And for those who are blessed and privileged, to ignore it constitutes a contradiction between confession and conduct.

The church and the Christ-follower must answer the question "Am I my

brother's/sister's keeper?" The suffering of our fellow human beings causes us pain. We may try to hide it, deny it, cover it up, or reason it away, but still the suffering and pain of others cannot leave us completely unmoved. Our Christian faith reinforces that. How can I call myself a Christ-follower when I do not care for my fellow humans? How can I represent the reign of God and not care deeply and practically about the people who are included in His kingdom?

In the Word of God, the Christ-follower's social responsibility to the poor and needy is not secondary to preaching the gospel, nor is it optional. It is very much an integral part of the whole gospel story. For truly we see in the face of the poor the face of Christ: "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40).

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### **Notes and references**

\*All Bible quotations are from the New International Version, unless noted otherwise.

1. Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times* (February 17, 1887).
2. ———, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1948), 6:83.
3. Jenni M. Graig, *Servants Among the Poor* (Manila, Philippines: OMF Literature, 1998), p. 27.
4. Ibid.
5. Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn.), p. 504.
6. Cheryl Sanders, *Ministry at the Margins*, p. 28.
7. Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (January 20, 1903).
8. ———, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 640.

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# The story of the Adventist Church on postal stamps

by the editors<sup>1</sup>

From Madagascar to Canada is a long way. But the two countries stand connected with the amazing story of the Seventh-day Adventist Church appearing on a postage stamp. The island republic off the eastern coast of Africa was the first country to feature the Adventist Church and its work on a stamp issued on February 20, 1967. Canada became the most recent one to place the Adventist logo on a stamp, commemorating the largest assembly of a religious international conference, when the General Conference held its 57<sup>th</sup> session in Toronto in the summer of 2000. In between, 17 other stamps have been issued around the world by countries as varied as Samoa, Pitcairn Island, Malawi, Bahamas, Cook Islands, and Uruguay,<sup>2</sup> marking the significance of the Adventist Church to these countries' community, ethos, and history.

What's in a stamp? The meaning of a stamp has changed a great deal, ever since it first made its debut in 1840 in England as a means of delivering mail prepaid. Today, it's more than a deliverer of communication. It has become a means of commemorating great events, outstanding personalities, historic occasions, the beauty of nature, or the challenge of the skies. It has also become a trumpet of proclamation—of human dignity, national freedom, the significance of the electoral ballot, human rights, national achievements, mission to the poor, or the care of the environment.

Two Adventist stamp collectors and enthusiasts, Barry W. Bussey, who took

the initiative for the Canadian stamp,<sup>3</sup> and Robert Roach, foremost authority on Adventist stamps and the founding president of the University Stamp Club,<sup>4</sup> see in stamps a proclamation potential for who Adventists are. For example, our commitment to global mission goes back to almost the beginnings of our history. One symbol of such a commitment is the famous *Pitcairn* boat that sailed from the United States to the South Pacific island in 1890. The boat was memorialized by a colorful stamp issued by the Pitcairn Island on July 22, 1975. Another mission-related commemorative was issued by Papua New Guinea in 1981, by putting Adventist aviation on a stamp, proclaiming to the world our enduring commitment to cross every terrain and mountain in the interest of sharing the good news of God's love and care. In 1996, Uruguay marked the centennial of our work in that country by issuing a stamp with the familiar Adventist icon: three angels with trumpets proclaiming the everlasting gospel.

Such stories can be repeated. But Canada Post's issue featuring the Seventh-day Adventist Church by name is the first one by a major Western country honoring the church and its commitment to human well-being. This issue of *Dialogue*, by featuring an album of Adventist stamps, looks forward to such possibilities in other countries—particularly where Adventists are strong in their educational, health-care, and community services.

Do you want to see your church featured on a stamp in your country? Bus-

sey outlines some first steps for you to take:<sup>5</sup>

*Pray about it.* "It is one thing for us to be excited about a project but not until you have the blessing of the Lord will the project be truly successful."

*Choose a subject.* "The subject must be something that affects the country in general."

*Strategize.* "You will want a large spectrum of support—politicians, leaders of service clubs, leaders of other church denominations, development agencies, etc. Encourage them to write your country's stamp issuing agency supporting your stamp idea."

*Be persistent.*<sup>6</sup>

## Notes and references

1. The editors acknowledge the valuable assistance of Robert Roach in the preparation of this article.
2. A set of 18 stamps issued by 11 countries in honor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, its history and mission, can be acquired for US\$20.00. Contact: Robert Roach: P. O. Box 1177; Loma Linda, California 92354; U.S.A. You can find information on how you can become a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Philatelic Society International at the website, [www.tagnet.org/stamps](http://www.tagnet.org/stamps).
3. See Barry W. Bussey, *Seeking God's Stamp of Approval: The Inside Story* (Oshawa: Maracle Press, 2000) for a full story of Adventists on stamps.
4. See his book *Postmarks and Pioneers: S.D.A. History & Stamps* available on the web: [www.tagnet.org/stamps](http://www.tagnet.org/stamps)
5. See Bussey, pp. 81-83. See also "Milton Murray, A man, a dream, and a postage stamp," *Dialogue* 10:3 (1998), p. 35.
6. The Russian philatelic journal announced that the Adventist Church in Ryazan will be featured in a series of stamps to be issued in mid-2001.

## Why bother praying?

by Don Driver

**I** believe in God and seek to live a Christian life. Although I was taught that prayer is an important factor in our relationship with God, I wonder if it is really necessary. The Bible teaches that He is all-knowing, loving, and always ready to give what is best for us. Why then should we pray?

Once I was discussing spiritual issues with an intelligent, articulate young man. Suddenly he startled me with an outburst. "This whole idea of prayer is foolishness!" He knew about prayer and what the Bible said about it. Yet I wanted to probe him a bit. "What do you mean prayer is foolish?" I asked. "Well," he said, "prayer doesn't affect God in any way. The Bible says that 'God is the same yesterday and today and forever.' So anything you say to Him will not change Him. God knows everything anyway. He says, for example, 'Before they call I will answer.' What good does praying do if He already knows? It's a waste of time."

Makes sense, right? Wrong, and here's why.

First, in the Bible, God says we should pray. "I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer" (1 Timothy 2:8).<sup>1</sup> "Pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Philippians 4:6). Prayer impacts the quality of our lives. As Ellen White writes so beautifully, "Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us

receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him."<sup>2</sup>

Second, Jesus, our example, prayed. If prayer doesn't make any difference, why was Jesus praying—sometimes all night, and at Gethsemane to the point of shedding blood as sweat? Was He not aware of His Father's plans and purposes? The prayer of Jesus shows that prayer is more than asking for something—it is being in constant communion and fellowship with God. It also reveals that only by dependence on God can one receive strength and power to complete one's mission and purpose in life. Prayers in Gethsemane and on the Cross are prime examples.

Third, we ought to pray for each other. Jesus once said to Peter, "I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail" (Luke 22:32). Jesus knew that Peter would deny Him thrice, but He also knew that there is power in intercessory prayer and that it is important that the person involved should know he is being prayed for. So intercession is another important aspect of a Christian's prayer life. "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16).

Of course, prayer includes placing our needs before God. Daniel prayed, fully aware that God knows everything. Paul prayed continually for himself, his mission, and his congregations, even though he knew that they are all in God's hands. Prayer is not so much to inform God of our needs, so He works on things our way, but to connect with His mind and heart. We can then begin to think His thoughts and understand His way, bringing our praying into harmony with His

will.

So why do I bother praying? Because God wants me to, Jesus modeled it, the apostles practiced it, and it connects me to the mind and heart of God.

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### Notes and references:

1. All Bible passages are quoted from the New International Version.
2. Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1956), p. 93.

## Dialogue for you, free!

If you are a Seventh-day Adventist student attending a non-Adventist college or university, the Church has a plan that will allow you to receive *Dialogue* free while you remain a student. (Those who are no longer students can subscribe to *Dialogue*, using the coupon on page 11.) Contact the director of the Education Department or the Youth Department in your Union and request that you be placed in their distribution network for the journal. Include your full name, address, college or university you are attending, the degree you are pursuing, and the name of the local church of which you are a member. You may also write to our regional representatives at the address provided on page 2, with a copy of your letter sent to the Union directors listed above. If these communications fail to produce results, contact us via e-mail: 104472.1154@compuserve.com



## Gloria Diokno

*Dialogue with a university lecturer and researcher from the Philippines*

**G**loria Diokno is a social scientist, a university lecturer, and a researcher. For nearly 35 years, Dr. Diokno has been an outstanding educator committed and dedicated to the development of communication and the search for improved technology that could restore quality to the forests and farmlands as well as promote equitable utilization of natural resources. Currently, she is serving as the research social scientist at the Forest Research Institute at the University of the Philippines, Los Banos.

Born in the Philippines, Diokno graduated from the Adventist University of the Philippines (then Philippine Union College) with a major in English. Her notable academic achievements earned her full scholarships to pursue her master's and doctoral degrees at the University of the Philippines, Los Banos in 1971 and 1978.

Greatly influenced by her foster parents who became Adventists in the early 1950s, Dr. Diokno joined the Adventist Church in 1954. Her great desire to improve Adventist education and to serve the church inspired her to actively participate in management committees, boards of trustees, and union executive committees of the North Philippine Union Mission, Adventist University of the Philippines, and Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies.

With the organization of women's ministries in the Adventist Church in 1995, Dr. Diokno caught the vision of leading and inspiring other women to "arise, shine, and serve." Since 1997 she has been the president of the Women's Association of South-Central Luzon Mission in the Philippines.

Gloria Diokno is married to Joseph Ramos Diokno, a merchant marine, and they have a son who is serving in the Philippines government. Her love for the Lord and her passion to share Christ with her students and colleagues continues to inspire many members, especially women, to follow the Lord as she has done.

■ *Dr. Diokno, how did you become interested in choosing a career in teaching and research?*

I believe my foster parents had the greatest influence on my career choice. When I was 10 years old, my foster parents adopted me into their family. Both Mom and Dad were church school teachers for a while, then one joined the public school system while the other continued to teach in the Adventist system. They loved their work and I am sure it has rubbed off on me, too.

Though they did not persuade me to be a teacher, they served as good models for me during those important years of my life.

■ *Would you tell us something about your profession?*

I have been a lecturer in English and social sciences for many years at one of the Philippine state universities. I teach courses in journalism and writing as well as research methodology in the social sciences. In addition, I serve as the editor of a regional publication, as well as two international ones in the areas of research, global communication, and social science. Currently, I am shouldering more responsibility as a researcher in social science at the university.

■ *What kind of research do you conduct?*

I do quite a bit of research for the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau, which is under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the Philippines. For example, the government is trying to relocate to other areas of the country the farmers who use slash-and-burn techniques that are depleting the land by burning their crops. I do surveys to identify ways to help them deal with conservation practices, and new technology to package green charcoal.

■ *Tell us about your Adventist background.*

My mother was an Adventist, but she passed away when I was still quite young. Then through providence, I was adopted by Christian parents. Some years later, they accepted the Adventist faith, and I was baptized along with

them. My foster parents kept the Adventist truth faithfully and they were committed to giving me a Christian education. I have been an Adventist for the past 46 years.

■ *Does teaching in a public university create problems for you as an Adventist?*

Not at all. I don't have Sabbath problems because we are on a five-day week schedule at the university. The only minor problem is the scheduling of social functions on Friday evenings or Saturdays. But because the university knows that I keep the Sabbath from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown, my administrators and colleagues respect my belief and practice. In fact, they try to find the best time to accommodate me and even try to respect my food preferences.

■ *How do you share your faith with your colleagues and students?*

Generally I am on the lookout for good discount books to buy. I give them as presents to my colleagues and students. Some of these books include, *The Book That Cannot Be Destroyed*, *I Love You*, *Energized*, *The Great Controversy*, and *Steps to Christ*. I also invite them to my church during Special Visitors' Day. I give my students Voice of Prophecy lessons. I invite them to enjoy singing with me some great hymns from our Church Hymnal.

■ *What brings you the most satisfaction in your work at the university?*

One thing that really gives me great joy and satisfaction is to note that some of my colleagues and students look up to me as a model for healthful living. I talk to them about the harmful effects of eating between meals, drinking coffee or tea, and eating rich, fatty foods. So now when we have meetings or classes, they stop serving food between meals. Instead of coffee or soft drinks, they serve water. I feel good when they ask me about the NEWSTART concept—an acronym that stands for the basic natu-

ral remedies: Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunlight, Temperance, Air, Rest, Trust in God. I help to give seminars based on those health principles.

■ *In what capacities have you served the Adventist Church as a lay professional?*

I have conducted seminars at conventions, retreats, and other church-related meetings. I have also served as a member of school boards, management committees, and on division, union and mission executive boards for many years now. I am happy to be of service to the Adventist Church even though I don't work for the denomination.

■ *When did you first get involved in women's ministries?*

I believe it was when I was nominated as the women's ministries coordinator of my local church in Calamba. Then the following year the women's ministries director of the mission called a mission-wide meeting of all the WM coordinators of the various churches to help us organize into a women's association. It was then that I was elected as the president of the Women's Association of South-Central Luzon Mission. Simultaneously, I was also elected as the president of the Women's Association of the Laguna Province and subsequently that of the local district.

■ *What kind of activities do you get involved in with the other women in your association?*

I organize women's retreats, fellowships, and leadership training seminars for personal growth and nurture. For outreach activities, we have started a regular prison ministry which is in its fourth year of operation. We teach the inmates Voice of Prophecy lessons each week. Then, when there are some who wish to be baptized, we ask the local pastor or elder to complete the process. I am also working with the women members in planning for mission-wide evangelistic campaigns.

■ *Does your involvement in women ministries evangelistic work conflict with your teaching profession?*

Not at all. In fact, it complements my work in the social sciences area. We do participate in projects called Women and Development (WAD). I help out in the area of health when I introduce the women to NEWSTART. Another area that I assist in is teaching women practical livelihood skills such as making soap, sewing, etc. The type of lectures I give during the evangelistic meetings can also be used when I am teaching.

■ *What advice would you like to give to our Adventist students studying in public universities?*

Remember to stand firm and practice a consistent Adventist lifestyle. Don't conceal your faith, but instead be brave to practice your Adventist beliefs and values. Do your best to share your faith. God will bless you.

## **Interview by Linda Mei-Lin Koh**

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## Barry C. Black

*Dialogue with an Adventist chaplain in the U.S. Navy*

**I**n October 2000, when the USS Cole was crippled by a terrorist attack in Yemen, Rear Admiral Barry Black traveled to the Cole's home port in Norfolk, Virginia, to participate in the memorial service for the 17 victims of the blast. U.S. President Bill Clinton was the featured speaker at the service.

In July 1999, when the remains of John F. Kennedy, Jr. and his wife, Carolyn Bessette, were buried at sea off the coast of Massachusetts, Chaplain Black was on hand to help the deceaseds' families cope with their grief.

That Black would be ministering to famous and powerful people would have seemed a distant fantasy when he was growing up in essentially a single-parent home in a low-income section of Baltimore, Maryland, in the 1950s and 60s.

Yet Barry Black's life is not so much a story of good fortune as one of Christian commitment, family and church support, mentoring, and providential openings. God nudged Black into situations where he would develop physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually; where he could break down prejudice and take a stand for Christianity in general and Adventism in particular.

Today Barry Black is the Chief of Naval Chaplains. An Adventist and the highest-ranking chaplain in the U.S. Navy, Black oversees the chaplaincy ministries of Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Jewish faiths in the U.S. Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine—about 1,400 individuals in all. He lives in the historic Washington Navy Yard and has his office in the Navy Annex, just a stone's throw from the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Black and his wife Brenda have three sons: Barry II, Brendan, and Bradford.

Black attended Oakwood College, Andrews University, North Carolina Central University, Eastern Baptist Seminary, Salve University, and the United States International University. He has earned Master's degrees in divinity, counseling, and management, and doctorates in ministry and psychology.

■ *When did you begin feeling God's call to the ministry?*

I have always known—though I have not always been excited about it—that I was called to preach. My mother said I was trying to preach before I could talk. It has really never had a rival in my affection. But I knew that preachers didn't make much money, and, as a result, I ran from it, like Jonah, trying to head in the opposite direction. I changed my major many times at Oakwood College, trying to run from this calling.

■ *What other options did you consider?*

Medicine, law, or something where I thought I could make some money. But Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven" caught up with me, and finally in my junior year I threw up my hands and said, "I yield." It was the best decision I could have possibly made. It has been for me a blessed opportunity and a most fulfilled vocation.

Henry David Thoreau once said, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." I feel so fortunate to look

forward to getting out of bed in the morning, and for the past 24 years of being able to go to a job that I am genuinely excited about, to perform a wonderful ministry that I never dreamed possible.

■ *What events put you on the path toward military chaplaincy?*

The thing that sparked my interest in the military ministry was, I loved working with young people. About five sailors, Seventh-day Adventists, who were stationed in Norfolk, Virginia, would drive five hours, one way, 10 hours round trip, each weekend to hear me preach. And many times they would be in uniform. That was my first link: I wanted to work with young people.

I said to those young men, "Why are you guys driving 10 hours on the weekends to attend church?"

They said, "We want to be faithful in our worship."

I said, "Why don't you attend one of the chapels? Or one of the churches in the Norfolk area?"

They said, "Well, in the chapel we've never seen an African-American chaplain." That piqued my interest—my second link.

Around that time, Clark Smith, who was head of what was then called the National Service Organization of the General Conference, sent out a letter saying that the church was interested in pastors who would be willing to serve in the military. I read the letter and my interest, with the other two components, came together.

■ *What did you experience as a military*

*chaplain that you couldn't have experienced as a parish pastor?*

When I went to chaplains' school, the pluralistic context of the training and the ministry exhilarated me. I had never had an opportunity to interact with a rabbi. I had never met a Roman Catholic priest or associated with pastors from the various Protestant traditions. I found that exciting: iron sharpening iron, sharing ideas, demythologizing some of the notions they had about what we believe.

They called the rabbis and me "the four rabbis" because we always had special dietary considerations. That was wonderful bonding that occurred between me and my three Jewish friends.

■ *Talk about witnessing opportunities!*

I'm preaching to a roomful of non-Adventists. They know who I am, and they're listening to me preach. Three years into my military ministry I was selected to be a chaplain at the United States Naval Academy. I was the second person of color to serve in that capacity. I was the first Adventist. Imagine 2,500 midshipmen packing a chapel Sunday after Sunday and having the opportunity to speak to these very bright young people about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

■ *How specific can you be in terms of our distinct Adventist doctrines in a setting like that?*

We have an awful lot in common with other traditions. If you look at the Apostolic Creed, we could give assent to every aspect of that. There's an awful lot to be declared that is vivifying, without getting into the more distinctive doctrines. Moreover, the pulpit provided a springboard for questions, for Bible studies.

During one deployment, we had a Bible study every day when we were underway, and I simply used *Bible Readings for the Home*. I would publicize the title and men would say, "How do you have the time to come up with all these different titles and all these studies?" (I never told them my secret, of course.)

When I got to the more testing truths, because they already knew I was a Seventh-day Adventist, I would say, "You all are not ready for this. You can't handle it."

By the time they were threatening to throw me overboard if I didn't tell them, I would get into the more distinctive Bible truths regarding the state of the dead, the Sabbath, etc. Interesting enough, I often found the state of the dead to be a greater hurdle than the Sabbath. At the end of one six-month deployment, we baptized 40 members of our Bible study group who had basically, for six months, been exposed to the doctrines of the Adventist Church.

■ *We don't generally encourage young people to volunteer for military service. How do you view your overall experience as a military chaplain?*

Military service provides a model of pluralism, a model for pluralistic ministry. Before entering the military, I never pastored or baptized anyone who was not African-American, and I never participated in the ordinance of humility with anyone who was not African-American. I probably would not have gotten that opportunity in pluralistic ministry in other contexts. I think it's a model in pluralism. The civilian sector could learn an awful lot from "cooperation without compromise," which is the motto of so many of the chaplains of the services.

■ *Yet the military, as an institution, uses violence and force to accomplish its purposes. How have you personally come to understand this issue?*

In Romans 13 we have the biblical principle of God using worldly powers to do His will on earth. There is a role for governmental authority, and God can use the military in many ways to fulfill His ultimate purposes.

We have to admit that warfare is an anomaly to the human experience, as is the taking of life. Yet I have to ask my-

self as a clergy person, Where do I want to be? My choice is to be in a situation where I can help people prepare to meet their God. Ellen White has written that Satan incites nations to war to divert people from the work of preparation to stand in the day of God. I want to be in a position to steal back a few of those souls.

■ *How do you stay focused and balance the demands of service for God and service for country?*

What I bring to this position is a genuine hunger after God. When I was a child, I would go into the church by myself and kneel in prayer. I don't know too many children who would do something like that. God honors that.

I have a thirst for knowledge and learning. Servant leadership involves listening—because before you can serve, you have to hear the needs, and then serve to meet those needs. I have that capacity. I've been a lifelong learner, and I think God honored that and said, "This is an instrument that I can use to truly serve the chaplain corps right now."

I also think God has blessed me with a special ability to communicate. The chief chaplain's office is to some extent what Theodore Roosevelt described the presidency to be: It is a bully pulpit. The ability to communicate a vision and to get people excited about it is critical.

Then I've been blessed to have the kinds of experiences in terms of where I've been assigned. As I've already hinted, God has been preparing this all along, so that I bring the kind of knowledge base that's required for making the tough decisions and for not being intimidated by these very senior people whom I'm called to advise.

## Interview by Stephen Chavez

*Stephen Chavez is an assistant editor of the Adventist Review. His e-mail address: chavezsg@gc.adventist.org*

# Living with certainty in times of trouble

by Carole Ferch-Johnson

**S**tories of tragedy and tribulation, trouble and trial, punctuate the pages of Scripture. From Joseph to Jeremiah and from Job to John the Baptist, these stories talk about trouble affecting God's followers. Even the Messiah, the hope of Israel, whose promise and presence permeates the Bible, is described as a suffering servant—a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3).

So, it is not surprising that the Scripture speaks of “day of trouble,” “time” or “times of trouble” more than 20 times. Throughout these references to times of trouble, the Bible tells a particular story. Its theme is: “A time of trouble such as never was.” This story begins with the fortunes of a woman called “the desired one, the beloved” who was summarily rejected by her husband and continues with the adventures of a little girl called Myrtle.

In many languages it's common to name girls after familiar flowers: Daisy. Rose. Violet. Heather. Margaret. Myrtle was the pink-and-white blossom adorning the shrub whose branches were used to build booths during the Feast of Tabernacles. But the Myrtle of our story appears at a low point in Jewish history. Life hadn't been easy for her. If she had ever heard the soothing voice of a mother or known her gentle embrace, it hadn't been for long. Robbed of both mother and father, she had no ever-present parent to delight in her childish chatter or rejoice in her every advance. But loss, separation, and grief were familiar enough to this child of woe.

The future also would have been bleak for Myrtle had it not been for her

older cousin, Mordecai. He took her into his house and assumed the role of surrogate father while she grew to young womanhood under his roof. Little did either of them know at the time that one day she would be appointed by the Lord God of Israel to lead His people through a time of trouble such as never was.

In due course, Myrtle (Hadassah) became Esther, queen of the Medo-Persian empire stretching from Northern Sudan to India. Historians tell us that her husband Xerxes was not quite up to the administrative demands of his empire. Dependent on the wisdom of others, he tended to grab counsel from any available source. Then he would put it into practice with little analysis or deliberation. Thus the king fell prey to the wily machinations of Haman, a favored official who led him to send out a decree and to determine the date when it would be carried out. By this decree not only Esther's cousin, Mordecai, by whom Haman felt slighted, but also all Jews throughout the 127 provinces of the empire were to be put to death.

## A daring mission

Jews had suffered before. Egyptian slavery was atrocious. A ruthless Pharaoh reduced Israel to a band of servile and ignorant slaves. Chased by his chariots to the brink of the sea, they were almost destroyed, but they survived. They endured Babylonian captivity. Their possessions were pillaged and burnt, their temple and city destroyed, and their land occupied by another power. Yet they lived on. But there was nothing in their past to quite equal the

severity of Haman's plot. It was ethnic cleansing—the systematic extermination of an entire nation, a genocide from which there would be no recovery.

Encouraged by Mordecai, Esther rises to the defense of her people and sets out on a highly dangerous rescue mission.

There are many uncertainties. She must stand alone in the presence of the emperor. There will be no mediator, no advocate to act on her behalf. Has she done everything possible to prepare for this moment? Will she be able to succeed? She knows she is his chosen bride. With his own hands he has already placed a crown on her head and given her a place by his throne at his right hand, but will the king accept her on this occasion? Filled with foreboding, Esther struggles with doubt and inner conflict. It is her time of trouble such as never was. She knows she can survive only if her defense is stronger than the greatest challenge. She gathers her resources:

1. Potential direct access to the king.
2. Personal support from cousin Mordecai.
3. Community support and prayers from the fasting Jews.
4. Her own faith in the God of Israel.

So, Esther goes forth to meet the king. She walks the distance to the royal audience chamber with measured step—the hope of Israel welling in her heart and the tenets of her faith coursing through her brain. “The salvation of the righteous comes from the Lord; he is their stronghold in time of trouble” (Psalm 37:39).\* “The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him” (Nahum 1:7).

"Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights" (Habakkuk 3:17-19).

When the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter.

### Victory for God's people

The plot ends in resounding victory for Esther and the people of God. Their fear gives way to fanfare and their fast is turned into feasting. An annual festival is established, riveting the triumph forever in the memory of Israel.

But there is something missing in this book. Where is the chapter telling us that the man of God, the prophet, strode into the citadel at Susa wearing leather thongs and a camel hair cloak? Where is his piercing gaze and bony finger pointing directly at the king? Where is the record of his message that begins, "Thus saith the Lord..." Where is the record of the vision Xerxes had when he couldn't sleep? Is there no great image and a stone cut out without hands for him—not even a little image?

Where was God while His people experienced "a time of trouble such as never was"? Curiously, there is no mention of Him at all anywhere throughout the 10 chapters of the Book of Esther. It's really not so surprising, for God always appears hidden in times of trouble and His presence seems withdrawn. The deeper the trouble, the less we are able to see Him. The greater the trial, the more we struggle to trust the Lord and to believe in His unfailing provision.

It would appear as if Esther and the Jews of her time had no special divine intervention to help them during their

greatest trial. They had to rely by faith on their history, the record of God's dealings with them in the past and on their heritage, the divine provisions that they could rely on in the present. These would always be available to God's people during centuries of apparent non-intervention and divine silence. The Book of Esther is in the Bible to encourage us to this end.

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\* All Bible passages are quoted from the New International Version.

## Truth?

*Continued from page 7.*

14. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 332.
15. Dr. Gerhard F. Hasel shared this story at an Adventist Theological Society meeting in November 1994.
16. Ellen G. White, *The Sanctified Life* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1937), p. 39.
17. Erwin Lutzer, *The Necessity of Ethical Absolutes* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1981), p. 75.
18. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1950), pp. 609, 610.
19. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 634.
20. Chuck Colson, *Loving God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1983), p. 36.
21. Murray, p. 128.
22. Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1956), p. 68.
23. White, *The Sanctified Life*, p. 67.

## Straight talk...

*Continued from page 14.*

quence of uninhibited sexual freedom is difficulty settling down to one partner after multiple matings.

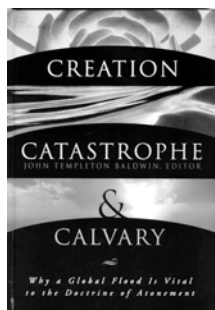
3. A sexually experienced person will tend to rush a new partner to intercourse. A person who is used to proceeding through all 12 steps of sexual arousal without stopping will find it difficult to slow the process or stop at Steps 7, 8, or 9.

Now that the 12 pair-bonding steps have been outlined, we can better determine what is appropriate for each stage of dating. Your values committed to God, along with how much you value yourself, dictate your choices. As you map out your intentions, remember that everyone crossing the boundary from Step 6 or 7 risks the trauma that follows a divorce due to the intensity of the bond. Steps 9 to 12 have no place in a relationship prior to the wedding ceremony.

### An invitation to sexual purity

God's plan for our lives is perfect and has never changed. Sexual intimacy for married people is God's special design for procreation and our enjoyment. This is the only lifestyle that offers complete happiness. In the eyes of the world, the choice to remain sexually pure prior to marriage may seem unrealistic, but the facts supporting such a choice remain in your favor. Your sexuality might be considered a gift from God marked, "For greatest enjoyment, do not open till married."

*Nancy Van Pelt is a family-life professional and seminar presenter who has authored more than 20 books and many articles on relationships. Mrs. Van Pelt's E-mail: vanpelt5@juno.com Her website: heartnhome.com*



## **Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary: Why a Global Flood Is Vital to the Doctrine of Atonement,**

*Edited by John T. Baldwin. (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 2000; 219 pp., hardbound).*

Reviewed by Leonard Brand.

**I**s the biblical account of Creation tenable? Can you really believe in the catastrophe of the Flood as recorded in Genesis? Is acceptance of these biblical narratives as factual important for the salvation experience unfolded on the cross? Or do we need to modify the biblical proclamation to accommodate other positions advocated by evolutionary science? If so, what are the consequences to Christian faith? If not, will we as Bible-believing Christians be subject to intellectual ridicule and embarrassment?

These and other vital questions connected with biblical origins and the Calvary event are examined by eight outstanding Seventh-day Adventist theologians and scientists in this work edited by John Baldwin, a professor of theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, in Berrien Springs, Michigan, U.S.A.

The first four essays discuss the credibility of a worldview built on the biblical record of origins, including a literal seven-day Creation and a global Flood. In the process, the authors show that the two accounts of Creation recorded in Genesis 1 and 2 are not contradictory, but integrative and complementary, and that the biblical and archeological evidence demand a case for a universal Flood.

Chapter five marshals evidence to challenge the conventional scientific case for millions of years of time required for the formation of geological wonders, such as the Grand Canyon. Chapter seven is a companion chapter that discusses modern scientific problems for Darwinian evolution. These two essays conclude that available data can be interpreted to support a literal reading of Genesis.

Chapters six and eight present the central message of the book: How a belief in a seven-day creation and the global Flood is related to an evangelical understanding of the atonement. If humans emerged near the end of 540 million years of evolution (as asserted by theistic evolution), then the death and survival of the fittest seen throughout the fossil record were not the result of sin, but part of God's plan. This means that humans are evolving toward a higher level, and thus the Fall and the plan of salvation are irrelevant. Hence the implications of evolution—theistic or otherwise—are enormous and damaging to the most important Christian beliefs: the

relevancy of the Cross.

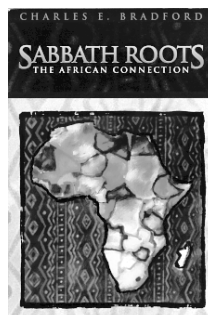
However, if we accept the biblical narrative of the Flood, then we can account for the fossil record as being formed during that global geological catastrophe. Consequently, the human fall, sin, death, and the need for salvation make sense.

Some arguments used in this book seem weak, or even incorrect, but these involve somewhat minor points and are not critical to the main issues addressed. The relation between the interpretation of the fossil record and Christian beliefs is a vital point that is worthy of our careful attention. A book written by one author could have addressed this critical point more efficiently, but on the other hand, the diverse approaches of several authors brings a greater variety of viewpoints to bear on the central issue. The essayists—John Baldwin, Gerhard Hasel, Randall Younker, Richard Davidson, Ariel Roth, Norman Gulley, Ed Zinke, Martin Hanna—bring to the book scholarship, credibility, and faith affirmation that we so badly need in these days of doubt and uncertainty regarding the opening pages of the Bible.

*Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary* is worth reading by anyone interested in the relation between faith and science.

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*Leonard Brand (Ph.D., Cornell University) teaches biology and paleontology at Loma Linda University and is active in paleontology research. He is also the author of Faith, Reason, and Earth History (Andrews University Press, 1997).*



## **Sabbath Roots: The African Connection,**

*by Charles E. Bradford (Silver Spring, Maryland: General Conference Ministerial Association, 1999; 234 pp., softbound).*

Reviewed by Joan Francis.

**C**harles E. Bradford, former president of the North American Division and a dynamic Seventh-day Adventist preacher, has bequeathed to the Adventist world a unique book tracking "Sabbath consciousness" in Africa. He wrote the book to demonstrate how the Sabbath, often overlooked in Western culture, has always been significant to worshippers in African countries. Additionally, it establishes for Africans and Africans in the Diaspora the knowledge that they have a great legacy of Sabbath observance.

The preacher's tone is dominant in Bradford's chronicling of a forgotten history in a long neglected land. The stage is set with an analysis of the globalness and the function of the Sab-

bath. This is followed with the development and spread of the Sabbath in the world from biblical time with emphasis on Egypt and Ethiopia. According to the author, "Africa has no Sunday tradition" (p. 104). Evidence of how the Sabbath was preserved in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa is the core of the book. The author shows that in many African countries the word for Sunday has Sabbath linguistic connections.

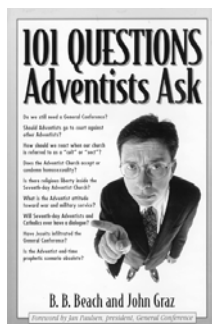
Bradford asserts that Sabbathkeeping in Africa declined as a result of the triple forces of the Muslims, Orthodox Christianity, and politicians, but a nucleus remained true to it. The intriguing final section of the book explains the dramatic rise in Sabbath observance in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in central Africa, Kenya and Liberia. The phenomenal number of persons who were led by "the Spirit" to keep the Sabbath is remarkable, although the connection between this and the ancient Sabbath tradition is not clear.

The author is at his best describing the results of the intersection of religion, culture, and politics. He uses a wide range of sources, including oral tradition and the traditional research from Africa. However, sometimes the sentences are long and difficult to follow. Although written simply, it is difficult to skim because of the many long quotations and the packed information that is included in just over 200 pages.

The book shatters the myth that Christianity is a recent arrival in Africa, and shows how the Sabbath was preserved throughout time. It should spark research on the history of the Sabbath in particular countries. It's a book that should be read by all who believe in the historical continuum of the seventh-day Sabbath.

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**101 Questions Adventists Ask,**  
by B. B. Beach and John Graz (Nampa,  
Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 2000; 138  
pp.; hardback).

Reviewed by Mario Riveros.

basic understanding of the Adventist worldview, with particular emphasis on how the church views the future and final events.

The first section stresses the fact that Seventh-day Adventists "operate one worldwide church, doctrinally and organizationally," and that their "church is a movement embracing all peoples" and committed to global mission. The unity of structure does not affect the distribution of leadership responsibilities among a large number of men and women across cultures around the world.

The authors are experienced church leaders who have devoted their lives to interfacing with the ecclesiastic and secular world, while carrying on an effective ministry. No wonder they insist that the church project itself in "proper ethical practice in conducting public evangelism" and at the same time maintain "truthfulness, transparency and fairness vis-a-vis other religious bodies." Beach and Graz affirm the right of Seventh-day Adventists to proselytize, provided that proselytism is understood as the full and faithful proclamation of the gospel. As for the church's stand in regard to politics, social causes, and moral issues, these topics are discussed within the bounds of biblical principles and common sense.

On religious liberty, the authors emphasize that it "is *the* fundamental human right." They review the general world situation as relates to religious freedom, identifying trouble spots and providing counsel on how to promote and defend religious liberty. Further, they explore the area of relations with other churches, with particular reference to the ecumenical movement. They portray Seventh-day Adventists as open to dialogue with other churches, while remaining essentially uninvolved in the prevalent current of ecumenism. They say that this is because the church is unwilling to surrender biblical principle and doctrine for the sake of so-called unity.

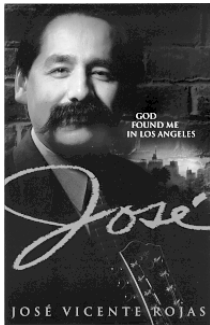
The book closes with a strong backing to mainstream Adventist interpretation of biblical eschatology, while at the same time urging a cautious, non-sensationalist approach to the identification of final events.

Some of the questions dealt with might have benefited from a more elaborate treatment, yet the authors are to be commended for having managed to pack so many well-balanced and thought-provoking answers in so few pages.

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Mario Riveros (Doctor en Teología, Universidad Peruana Unión) is director of the Graduate Division of the School of Theology, Peruvian Union University.

This is a book every thoughtful Seventh-day Adventist should read. The 101 questions cover a wide range of inquiries on the identity, nature, and character of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the way it relates to society, government, and other churches. The book also deals with the



**José: God Found Me  
in Los Angeles,**

*by José Vicente Rojas (Hagerstown,  
Maryland: Review and Herald Publ. Assn.,  
1999; 150 pp.; paperback).*

Reviewed by  
Lourdes E. Morales-Gudmundsson.

the power of God to do the impossible. The book, written in a conversational style, offers a refreshing, moving, and humorous account of one person's journey to fulfill his (and God's) mission in life.

You won't want to miss it.

*Lourdes E. Morales-Gudmundsson (Ph.D., Brown University) teaches Spanish language and literature at La Sierra University. Her mailing address: 4700 Pierce Street; Riverside, California 92515; U.S.A.*

**T**riumph over tragedy. Victory in the face of heavy odds. The power of love against the pull of despair. Put those elements together, draw the contours of the story of a young man struggling in the concrete jungles of a city, and you have a heartwarming and inspiring autobiography of José Vicente Rojas. This is not simply a story, but the making of a strong spiritual leader.

José's journey begins with his conflictive childhood in East Los Angeles: his father's alcoholism and abuse, racial prejudice and bigotry, issues of identity and self-esteem. In José's dealings with these challenges, the reader begins to see a pattern that will characterize the rest of his life: a timely and loving mentor and his own indomitable faith in God and human potential.

During José's formative years, his mother surfaces as a strong, guiding light, nurturing his creativity while quietly modeling spiritual strength and leadership. After their conversion to Adventism, his family life is placed on an even keel, with a loving father having overcome alcoholism. José now launches into a journey of improbable experiences and encounters that have him giving his first sermon at age 16 and pastoring his own church at 18.

The book underscores the importance of significant mentors in the lives of youth. José's mentors teach him the importance of prayer. They polish off his identity issues. They set high standards for him to reach as a student. They encourage him to trust God and use his talents. And they see him through a turning-point experience that threatens to derail his calling.

José's brother and "hero," Gerry, died the victim of a homicide. His brother's death made José purpose in his heart "never again to allow myself the carelessness of doing only 'little things' for the powerless." He dedicated the next few years for working with "armed and angry kids" in Fresno, California. Eventually, the "mission field" experience in Fresno became the catalyst for his current youth work that has gained national attention.

What comes across most compellingly in this book is the man himself. José has an incredible capacity to love and forgive people and an invincible and almost childlike faith in

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by Vernon B. Parmenter

## Adventist Volunteer Service: Are you ready for adventure?

**A**re you ready for real adventure? If so, then the Adventist Volunteer Service program is what you're looking for. Many have already testified that serving as an Adventist volunteer has been a life-changing experience for them and for those whose lives have been touched through their service and witness.

There are so many stories I could tell you. I think of Bob Robbins who went to the tiny little island of Pohnpei to work in our school there. He gave Bible studies in the nearby Correctional Facility in his spare time and, within four months, four prisoners responded to the gospel invitation. They were brought in chains to the Adventist church to be baptized. I could take you to Kazakhstan (and many other places) and show you a new church with approximately sixty members attending each Sabbath. And it all happened because Adventist volunteers cared enough to leave the comforts of home to go and teach these people how to speak English.

The Church has always been blessed with volunteers who have been willing to take on the world. Adventist student missionaries have been serving overseas for more than thirty years. But it was only about four years ago that the General Conference established the Adventist Volunteer Center (AVC).

The supreme objective of AVC is to coordinate the needs of the world field with the availability of volunteers who are anxious to meet those needs. We figure that multiplying the work force in this way will save the church money. Better still, the work of spreading the gospel to the whole world will be com-

pleted more rapidly. We are confident that it is part of God's plan for church members to unite with the ministers in this work and that through the power of the Holy Spirit the end will come quickly.

The AVC has established a web page as the main hub of its operation where hundreds of positions are added regularly for people of all ages, qualifications, gifts and talents. If you visit <http://volunteers.gc.adventist.org> you will quickly discover how you can become a part of the great army of young people and older folks who are going overseas to experience one of the biggest adventures of their lives. You can select the country you want to go to, the task or profession that best suits you and the time you want to go. Then simply fill in the application form right there on the screen. There are all kinds of needs: college/school deans, language teachers, maintenance workers, cooks, youth pastors, teachers, accountants, nurses, doctors, computer specialists, aircraft and motor mechanics, ADRA workers, secretaries, and the list goes on and on.

Before you fill in your application form make sure you look at the financial arrangements for each vacancy. You will notice that some positions provide significant benefits while others offer very little or nothing at all. If you do not have the funds to support yourself for a particular position, you can look to your home church and your friends to assist you in fund-raising. Also, before you resign from your job or take a year off from studies, make sure that your appointment is confirmed and

check to see how long it will take to get a visa.

Many of our mission territories have urgent needs that are not being met because they do not have the funds to support an invitation for personnel. What a difference it will make to our mission fields if volunteers are able to offer their services in the truest sense of the word.

Whatever you do, don't put it off. Begin that adventure of a lifetime now. *"The Lord calls for volunteers who will take their stand firmly on His side, and will pledge themselves to unite with Jesus of Nazareth in doing the very work that needs to be done now, just now."* (Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 488).

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## Ecumenism in the new millennium

by Bert B. Beach

*Will the euphoria of the past be sustained? A reality check*

Seventy-five years ago, William Temple, the then archbishop of Canterbury, called the ecumenical movement “the great new fact of our era.” However, with the passing of time, ecumenism has not only become no longer *new*, but less original and vital. It reached a high point around 1970. There was a certain euphoria in the wake of the Vatican Council II. Organic unity of the churches was seen as a real possibility. The Roman Catholic Church was expected soon to join the World Council of Churches. Several significant unions of churches and dialogues between churches were flourishing.

Most observers of the ecumenical scene consider the 1912 International Missionary Conference in Edinburgh as the “cradle” of the ecumenical movement. Out of this beginning developed three independent (though interrelated) ecumenical streams: (1) the International Missionary Council, (2) Faith and Order Commission (theology), and (3) Life and Work Movement (socio-economic issues). These came together in 1948 and 1961 to form the World Council of Churches (WCC), with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. The WCC began in 1948 with 147 churches and now has more than 330 member churches, mostly national churches. There have been eight assemblies, the last being in Harare, Zimbabwe, in December 1998.

In the formative years of the ecumenical movement, the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) stayed away and was generally hostile toward the WCC. Indeed, there were several warnings from both the pope and the Holy Office regarding ecumenical relations. Then, in a rather

dramatic move, the RCC reversed itself and in 1964 accepted ecumenism at Vatican Council II. One year later, another breakthrough occurred when the Vatican Council accepted the concept of religious liberty. These two radical modifications of past policy are interrelated: It is hard to envision ecumenism without at least some form of religious liberty. Today Rome plays a leading role in the ecumenical movement and is the church most involved in inter-confessional dialogues and ecumenical institutes. In some ways, this is to be expected, since it is by far the largest Christian church.

But the great ecumenical question that now confronts us is: How real and how strong is the ecumenical movement today, as we face the uncertain years of the new millennium? It's time for a reality check.

### **Reality check 1: Illusion of organic unity**

Reality is finally setting in in the ecumenical movement. Today most ecumenists appear to realize that worldwide organic unity of Christian churches is an illusion. Furthermore, the RCC will not join the WCC as it is presently constituted. While there have been many successful dialogues among theologians, there has been relatively little interest in organic unity among the churches themselves, and only a very modest effect on church life and doctrine.

### **Reality check 2: Decline**

Another aspect of reality in the new millennium is that so-called “mainline” churches—those churches most seen as involved with the WCC—have been de-

clining. It might be more correct to call them, at least some of them, “old-line” or “sideline” churches, especially in regard to significant membership losses in certain countries.

Church growth now largely belongs to the conservative Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Baptists, and Seventh-day Adventists. These churches tend generally to be hesitant about or even downright hostile toward ecumenism.

### **Reality check 3: The danger of fundamentalism**

As we enter the new century, it has become more and more clear that growing religious fundamentalism or extremism is a force to be reckoned with. In some ways, it is a reaction to both ecumenism and secularization. Fundamentalism is dangerous for religious liberty because its zealots are not only sure that they possess the truth, but feel the obligation to impose it on others. Nationalism is another contemporary trend. And when nationalism unites with religious fundamentalism, as is the case today in various countries, they form an explosive mixture that is inimical, not to say destructive, to both freedom of religion and ecumenism. Indeed, there exists in certain parts of the world the real danger of not only ethnic, but also “religious cleansing.”

### **Reality check 4: Organic vs. visible unity**

The dream of “organic unity” among churches is now being replaced in WCC circles by the vision of “visible unity,” focusing on three essentials: (1) accep-

tance of one another's baptism, (2) intercommunion (acceptance of one another's eucharistic service), and (3) mutual recognition of each church's ordained ministry. In this connection, it needs to be said that while Seventh-day Adventists practice open communion, they accept only believers' baptism by immersion as valid. Though recognizing that ministers of other churches that lift up Christ are "shepherds of the flock" and are involved in God's plan for the evangelization of the world, the Adventist Church does not simply recognize ministerial ordination from other religious bodies, particularly the concept of "priesthood" with all its historical and theological connotations.

#### **Reality check 5: Rome's ecumenical consensus**

The ecumenical consensus within the RCC at present is to seek at least a measure of agreement in five major areas: (1) the relationship between Scripture and tradition; (2) the eucharist as a memorial sacrifice involving the real presence of Christ; (3) the three-fold ordination of deacon, priest, and bishop in apostolic succession; (4) the magisterium or teaching authority of pope and bishops, including papal universal primacy; and (5) the role of the Virgin Mary as mother and intercessor.

It is here that a vast theological hurdle rises. Protestants and Catholics are still far apart on many points, though not as far as they appeared to be in the past, as was recently indicated by the statement of agreement between the RCC and the Lutheran World Federation in regard to justification by faith. In fact, there has been an astonishing rapprochement between conservative evangelicals and Roman Catholics. While this convergence should not be exaggerated, and the doctrinal gulf is still large, it must be recognized that there is increasing cooperation along socio-political lines, especially in regard to abortion, marriage, and family values.

#### **Reality check 6: The problem of proselytism**

One issue with ecumenical implications that is increasingly coming to the fore is proselytism. A once good word, *proselytism* has been given pejorative connotations in recent years. In the past it referred essentially to converting a person from one belief to another, which is precisely what evangelism is all about. Today it is often used in reference to corrupt witness—that is, using coercion or material inducements or spreading false information in order to gain converts. Some individuals go so far as to use the word "proselytism" to cover any evangelism among individuals already baptized, no matter whether they have a living connection with Christ and a Christian church.

It is better to speak about "false proselytism" when referring to wrong methods in evangelism. Otherwise there is the danger of condemning evangelism in general, at least in many parts of the world. Such a stance is unacceptable because witness and evangelism are a divine mandate to Christians. Furthermore, the right to teach and disseminate one's religion is recognized today as a human right. So is the right to receive religious information and change one's religion. Evangelism becomes false proselytism when a person or group make false statements and accusations, when cajolery takes place and material inducements are given as incentives to change or keep a religion, and when strife, hatred, antagonistic competition or ridicule are fomented. The Seventh-day Adventist Church rejects outright such tactics.

#### **Reality check 7: Crisis**

Currently the WCC is in crisis—financial and ideological. For example, the Eastern Orthodox representatives are stating that they will probably leave the WCC if a radical reorganization of the council does not take place. The change they are asking for is substantial. They

want a much greater say in the activities of the council, and object to deciding interchurch relations by majority vote. They prefer that decisions be taken by *consensus*. Some Orthodox leaders have even suggested the creation of a second chamber (like many parliaments have) and proposed that representation be by four families of churches: Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Reformed, and Free. On the other hand, the Orthodox churches make a rather small financial contribution to the WCC.

As already indicated, the RCC has no plans to join the WCC and become one church among over 300. How could it? Rome is much more powerful and influential than Geneva, where the WCC headquarters are located! One gets increasingly the impression that perhaps the WCC needs the RCC to jumpstart the currently feeble ecumenical engine.

It is always dangerous to prophesy, especially about the future! However, a few things seem clear. Seventh-day Adventists have traditionally attributed important apocalyptic roles to both the United States of America and the Papacy. There is now only one truly political super-power—the United States—and one truly religio-political super-power—the Papacy, the Roman Catholic Church.

In this connection, to use a sports' term, the World Council of Churches is really playing in the "minor leagues." The growing geopolitical role of Rome is self-evident. Increasingly, the Pope is being seen as a virtual spokesperson for Christianity and, perhaps, for world religions. Even Muslims have now called him "Holy Father." The eschatological prophetic scenario is moving into place.

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## Expand Your Friendship Network

**A**dventist college/university students and professionals, readers of *Dialogue*, interested in exchanging correspondence with colleagues in other parts of the world.

**Kwaku Akuoko Afram:** 25; male; single; studying political science and sociology; interests: music and sports; correspondence in English. Address: University of Ghana; Commonwealth Hall, Room K-35; Legon; GHANA. E-mail: kaafram@hotmail.com

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**Petra Antoine:** 31; female; single; studying toward a diploma in accounting; interests: youth activities and learning about other cultures; correspondence in English. Address: Belle Vue Post Office; Vieux Forte; SAINT LUCIA, West Indies.

**Armalyne S. Argcahan:** 19; female; single; studying toward a degree in English and planning to become a teacher; hobbies: classical music and reading; correspondence in English or Tagalog. Address: Adventist University of the Philippines; P.O. Box 1834; Manila; 1099 PHILIPPINES.

**Marcelo Armi:** 21; male; single; completing a degree in theology; interests: swimming, volleyball, and using the internet; correspondence in English, Portuguese, or Spanish. Address: Caixa Postal 18; IAENE; Cachoeira, Bahia; 44300-000 BRAZIL. E-mail: marceloarmi@ig.com.br

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**Kenneth Jo Deles:** 24; male; single; completed a degree in accountancy; hobbies: collecting stamps and postcards, travel, computers, and outdoor activities; correspondence in English. Address: Bacolod Sanitarium and Hospital; P.O. Box 309; 6100 PHILIPPINES. E-mail: Khennjo@usa.net

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If you are an Adventist college/university student or professional and wish to be listed here, send us your name and postal address, indicating your age, sex, marital status, current field of studies or degree obtained, college/university you are attending or from which you graduated, hobbies or interests, and language(s) in which you would like to correspond. Provide also your e-mail address. Send your letter to *Dialogue Interchange*: 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600, U.S.A. Please type or print clearly. You can also use e-mail: 104472.1154@compuserve.com We will list only those who provide all the information requested above. The journal cannot assume responsibility for the accuracy of the information submitted or for the content of the correspondence that may ensue.

## Advance in Cuba

by Pedro Torres

In October 2000 the Cuban Federation of Adventist University Students and Professionals (ACUPA in Spanish) formally organized three regional centers and made significant strides toward a comprehensive program of activities across the island. As part of the organization process, Humberto Rasi, Julieta Rasi, and Enrique Becerra, representing the General Conference AMiCUS Committee, and Carlos Steger from the South American Geoscience Research Institute presented engaging devotionals and lectures on the Gospel and culture, contemporary trends in theology, Creation versus evolution, and related topics.

Accompanied by the visitors, we first traveled to Holguín, in the East Cuban Conference, where 120 attendees elected their regional ACUPA leaders and actively participated in discussions, singing, prayer, and planning ways of living and sharing their Christian convictions. The delegates elected Jorge Rodríguez as president of the regional center (Address: 3a # 103 entre Hermanos Marín y R. Sánchez; Veguita de Galo; Santiago de Cuba; 90100 Cuba).

Our second stop was in Camagüey, in the Central Cuban Conference, where more than 40 Adventist students and professionals met at a historic site—the colonial villa of Amalia Simoni, wife of Ignacio Agramonte, a respected leader of Cuban independence. The members elected as president of the regional ACUPA center Lumey Moral (Address: Av. Libertad # 268; La Caridad, Camagüey; 70300 Cuba).

The tour culminated in the Western Cuban Conference, near Havana, with



"Empowered to Serve" was the theme of the ACUPA meeting held near Havana.

an attendance of more than 250. Enthusiasm for the event was such that, in spite of limited public transportation on the second day of the meeting, students came by bicycle or on foot to participate in the discussions and enjoy the fellowship. The regional ACUPA leadership elected during the meeting has maintained a lively program of activities. President: Florencio Bueno (e-mail address: jcmnet@jcce.org.cu).

During the visit of AMiCUS representatives, an agreement was reached to print in Cuba the Spanish edition of *Dialogue* in order to facilitate a wider distribution of the journal among members of ACUPA. The visitors also met with members of the musical group "Creación," which consists of students and faculty from the National School of Arts and the Superior Institute of Arts. In addition to performing several pieces, the musicians reported on how, beginning with only two young Adventists,

the group has grown to 27 baptized members that are studying the Bible with 30 colleagues and fellow students. See related story.

The visit of our international representatives left a lasting memory and invigorated our ministry with and for Adventist university students and professionals in Cuba. Our Christian convictions were strengthened and, in the midst of limitations and obstacles, we will continue to work, pray, and prepare for the glorious return of Christ to this earth.

We welcome contacts with Adventists in other parts of the world!

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Pedro Torres is Youth Ministries Department director for the Cuban Union and sponsor of ACUPA (e-mail address: [uciasd@ip.etcscu.cu](mailto:uciasd@ip.etcscu.cu)).

# Witnessing for Christ through music

by Omar Rojas

In 1993 I was a young teacher of percussion at the National School of Music in Havana, Cuba. The world of popular music beckoned, with opportunities for money, prestige, and international tours. That year my older brother, a merchant marine engineer, shared with me and my fiancée Manyú his new-found faith in Christ and his Adventist convictions.

In early 1996, after a series of in-depth studies and difficult choices, I joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Marianao through baptism. Together with Manyú, now my wife, we accepted the challenge of presenting Christ's love and teachings to our col-

leagues and students in the School of Music.

Soon seven students from the school embraced the Adventist faith. With them we organized an instrumental group that we named "Creación," with the purpose of glorifying God and witnessing for His majesty, mercy, and beauty through music. Because of our limited resources, we use borrowed and refurbished instruments to perform in regional and national meetings organized by the Cuban Adventist Church and in other venues.

From the beginning we encountered obstacles in our mission. Although all the students that belong to "Creación" have been carefully selected for their superior musical talent, they come from modest homes and reside in the dormitories of the school, with conflicting schedules and menus that are not in harmony with our health principles. Our group does not have a suitable place to practice. We do not own a vehicle to transport our instruments to performances. So we carry them in buses, on bicycles, or on foot. In addition, we all experience the pressure of our colleagues, some of whom do not yet understand the depth of our Christian commitment.

Yet God has continued to prosper our witnessing initiatives in the midst of difficulties. First, eight students and last year twelve young artists, including one concert pianist, joined the Adventist Church and our musical group. We are now 27 musicians and singers, brought together by God's mercy and grace. His love keeps us united and shines through us to others. My wife has brought her

parents and sister to accept Jesus as their personal Saviour. I continue to teach percussion in the School of Music. "Creación" is well known for the quality of its performances, the strong Christian convictions of its members, and our passion to attract others to the love of Christ.\*

*\* Readers willing to donate musical instruments to "Creación" or contribute funds to acquire instruments for the group should contact Elder Pedro Torres (E-mail: uciasd@ip.etcusa.cu) or the editors of Dialogue.*

## Adventist Writer Wins Awards

Enrique Zainz, a Cuban writer, received two awards during the recent International Book Fair held in Havana: His book *Indagaciones* (1999) was selected as one of the ten best Cuban books of the year and *Angustia y Poesía de Virgilio Piñera* was awarded the Alejo Carpentier prize for outstanding essays. Mr. Zainz, a member of the National Association of Cuban Writers, joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church three years ago and attends one of our congregations in Havana. Although his literary production does not deal directly with religious topics, the biblical-Christian values he has embraced constitute the foundation of his writings.

## Attention, Adventist Professionals

If you hold a master's degree or its equivalent in any field, we encourage you to join the Adventist Professionals' Network (APN). Sponsored by the Adventist Church, this global electronic registry assists participant institutions and agencies in locating consultants with expertise, volunteers for short mission assignments, and candidates for positions in teaching, administration, or research. Enter your professional information directly in the APN website:

<http://apn.adventist.org>

Encourage other qualified Adventist professionals to register!



## MADAGASCAR

(1967) was the first country to issue a stamp featuring the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The set, which included two other religious buildings, portrayed the outstanding architecture of the Adventist church in Tanambao, Tamatave, dedicated in 1958.



# Adventists on Stamps

*A collection of postal stamps featuring Adventist motifs, in the order of their release. Some of the stamps have been enlarged to enhance appreciation of their design.*

## NORFOLK ISLAND

(1968). This stamp commemorates the visit of the *Pitcairn* to the Norfolk Island to the Norfolk Island in 1891. Some of the descendants of the *HMS Bounty* mutineers who had settled on Pitcairn were moved to Norfolk due to overpopulation. However, they were homesick and many of them returned to their home island.



**SAMOA** (1970). Western Samoa issued four stamps in a set, featuring the work of Christian denominations. One of the stamps portrays the Adventist Sanatorium in Apia, which opened in 1895 with two Adventist physicians who had arrived on the *Pitcairn*.



**PITCAIRN ISLANDS** (1975). The schooner *Pitcairn* left Oakland, California, on October 20, 1890, and arrived in the main island on November 25, as part of a missionary outreach led by John Tay. After Bible studies, the entire population joined the Adventist Church through baptism.



**PITCAIRN ISLANDS** (1977). This stamp is one of a set of 11 that depict various aspects of life on the main island. There have been four successive Adventist church buildings in the island's history. The latest one, portrayed on this stamp, was erected in 1954.

**TONGA** (1979). These “friendly isles” were visited by the *Pitcairn* in 1895. The stamp commemorates the impact of Christianity, featuring church buildings of four denominations. The Adventist church is seen on the bottom right. (Illustration not from an original.)



**MALAWI** (1980). The Adventist mission in Malamulo is one of the best-known outreach programs established by our church in Africa. This Adventist church building was featured along with three others for a Christmas series.



**PAPUA NEW GUINEA** (1981). This young nation issued a series of five stamps depicting missionary planes of various Christian churches. The Adventist plane featured here was donated by *The Quiet Hour* radio program of Redlands, California, for mission service.



**NORFOLK ISLAND** (1981). An attractive Adventist church on the island is one of four churches depicted in this Christmas series. The Norfolk Island is a mission field supported by the Greater Sydney Conference in Australia.



**BAHAMAS** (1982). This Caribbean island nation issued a Christmas set of five postage stamps. The series included an impressive view of the Centreville Seventh-day Adventist Church.



**PITCAIRN ISLANDS** (1986). John Tay pioneered Adventist mission by traveling in 1886 to Pitcairn, where he met the descendants of the mutineers of the *HMS Bounty*. His two-week stay prepared the way for the building of the *Pitcairn*, a schooner that changed the island's history.



**PITCAIRN ISLANDS** (1986). The missionary schooner *Pitcairn* in full sail. This four-stamp series also features above the main design of the four successive Adventist church buildings erected on the island, with their respective dates.



**PITCAIRN ISLANDS** (1986). This is the first postal stamp that depicts a Seventh-day Adventist baptism, as conducted by Adventists around the world. The baptism featured here took place on Bounty Bay.

**PITCAIRN ISLANDS** (1986). A boatload of Pitcairn islanders sing the farewell song to the crew and passengers of a freighter that is departing Pitcairn. The islanders are famous for this musical ritual, that is performed when ships bring merchandise to this isolated island.

**COOK ISLANDS** (1990). Four missionary societies active on these islands, located in the South Pacific, were honored on a set of stamps. Dr. J. E. Caldwell, an Adventist pioneer, established a small hospital at Avarua.



**URUGUAY** (1996). This Spanish-speaking nation commemorated the centennial of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the country by depicting the three angels of Revelation 14 surrounding the globe. The star marks the location of the country in South America.



**PITCAIRN ISLANDS** (1999). This stamp is one of a series of four honoring education on the island. The name of Hattie Andre, a missionary Adventist teacher in 1893, is mentioned among those who served in Pitcairn. Years later she was a dean of women at Pacific Union College.



**BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS** (1999). The Seventh-day Adventist church building depicted on this stamp was dedicated in 1982 and is located on Fat Hogs Bay.



**CANADA** (2000). The 57th world session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was held in Toronto. This commemorative stamp features the Adventist logo — the Bible, the Cross, and the stripes representing the Holy Spirit. The Canadian Rockies can be seen in the background.

*Dialogue* acknowledges the generosity of Robert A. Roach in providing the stamps, the commemorative envelope, and the commentaries included in this supplement. In 1948, Mr. Roach launched "Envelopes With a Purpose" (see sample at right) as an effective way of attracting attention to the many institutions and activities sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The three most important philatelic societies for Adventists interested in this educational hobby are:

- Seventh-day Adventist Philatelic Society International
- Pitcairn Island Study Group
- American Topical Association

For more information on stamps and "Envelopes With a Purpose," contact Robert A. Roach: P.O. Box 1177; Loma Linda, California 92354; U.S.A. Telephone: 909-825-7536. Web site: [www.tagnet.org/stamps](http://www.tagnet.org/stamps)

