

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

DIALOGUE

E n g l i s h • F r e n c h • P o r t u g u e s e • S p a n i s h



**Knowing God's will
for my life**

**What's this thing
called love?**

**Your health
is in your hands**

**Domestic abuse
has no excuse**

Adventists and longevity



Volume 18



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CONTENTS

ESSAYS

5 Knowing God's will for my life

God provides us with guidance and then allows us to make choices.

by Humberto M. Rasi

9 What's this thing called love?

Understanding the dynamics of attraction and the risks of unwise choices can help you avoid emotional pain and build a lasting marriage relationship.

by Nancy Van Pelt

12 Your health is in your hands

Being informed and making wise lifestyle decisions can significantly reduce your health risks and increase your well-being.

by Esteban S. Poni and Carlos Poni

15 Domestic abuse has no excuse

Civility, ethics, and core Christian principles demand that we take a stand against domestic violence.

by Miguel Angel Núñez

DEPARTMENTS

EDITORIAL

- 3 Where is your passion?
Baraka Muganda

4 LETTERS

Science and the Universe

VIEWPOINT

- 18 Natural disasters: Acts of God
or acts of Satan?
by Herbert E. Douglass

PROFILES

- 20 Lidija Odorcic
by Zvonko Virtic
- 22 Duane Maynard Cady, M.D.
by Nicole Batten

LOGOS

- 24 In God's good time
by Mary H. T. Wong

ACTION REPORT

- 26 Division-wide AMiCUS
Congress in Italy
by Roberto Badenas

OPEN FORUM

- 27 What is the meaning of *kinds*
in Genesis?
by James Gibson

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- 28 Adventist lifestyle and longevity
by Richard Weismeyer

BOOKS

- 30 *El poder terapéutico del perdón*
(Mario Pereyra)
by Nancy J. Carbonell
- 30 *In Passion for the World*
(Floyd Greenleaf)
by John Wesley Taylor V
- 31 *Uncorked!*
The Hidden Hazards of Alcohol
(John F. Ashton
& Ronald S. Laura)
by Peter N. Landless

FIRST PERSON

- 33 In search of the true lighted path
by Ausberto Castro

ET CETERA

- 35 The portrait
Author Unknown

INSERT

Interchange

EDITORIAL

Where is your passion?

A few years ago, I visited a game park in my native Tanzania. One morning, after breakfast, I sat in the hotel lobby waiting for the van to pick me and other tourists to see rare animals in the park. The lobby was full of visitors and game park workers.

It was impressive to observe so much interest and passion about something so mundane as watching rare animals. Everyone was talking about some animal or another. Each described what is peculiar and attractive about his or her favorite animal. They spoke about where the animals spent most of their time, what they ate, to which river they turned to quench their thirst. To add to the impassioned description of the tourists, the game park workers added their own fascinating, if somewhat exaggerated, details. This chit chat went for nearly 30 minutes.

This enthusiasm for animals and the rich knowledge about them astounded me. I was fascinated by their enthusiasm for the animal world. As I got in the van I wondered about the kind of passion that my life should be wrapped in—the passion about Jesus Christ—and I further wondered if people who see me or talk to me sense that I do have a passion for Jesus. The thought hit me like a thunderbolt. How unenthusiastic we Christians can often appear about what should be the central interest and preoccupation of our lives—Jesus. We spend time talking about movies, sports, cars, houses, friends, fashions, classwork, computers, teachers, cell phones, bosses, or current affairs. But Jesus?

We seem to forget what God has done for us. We attend campus revivals or take part in some church functions, and then politely head for our dorms or homes. No difference seems to have been made.

As students and professionals we are so involved in our daily activities that we fail to remember the power of Christ's message. We find ourselves in the same routine. We rarely, if ever, talk about Christ to any one. Worse, no one notices that we are Seventh-day Adventists, ambassadors of His kingdom. We leave the high road of our Christian calling and find ourselves at ease in the comfortable zone of mundane affairs.

Being passionate for Jesus does not mean that we should go around jumping up and down on campus, shouting to every one we meet that we are Christians. But we do need to be excited with a passion for Jesus—His friendship, salvation, and transforming power! Others should see Him in us. Our faces, our hearts, our words should reflect His majesty and His glory. There must be something different about us. If people get excited about their pets, talk about animals, think of them all the time, spend their money on them, should we be any less passionate about Jesus?



Baraka Muganda, Director of the Youth Department of the General Conference and Vice Chair of the AMiCUS Committee

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LETTERS

Captivating articles

As an Adventist student pursuing a degree in business administration at a public university in Kenya, I want to thank AMiCUS and the editors of *Dialogue* for publishing in each issue captivating articles of substance. How can I get more copies to read?

Tony Ndungu
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The editors respond:

Thank you for your positive comments, Tony. You should contact the Youth Department or the Education Department director in your Union and ask them to place you in Dialogue's mailing list. You can also read earlier articles published in the journal by logging unto <http://dialogue.adventist.org>. Enjoy!

Encouragement to live our faith

I am completing my third year in the program of psycho-pedagogy at the University of Formosa, and find in *Dialogue* encouragement to live and share my faith. As Christians, it is our privilege to help those who suffer or are in need. Your personal stories, profiles, and reports give us models on how others serve around the world. Thank you.

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Science and the Universe

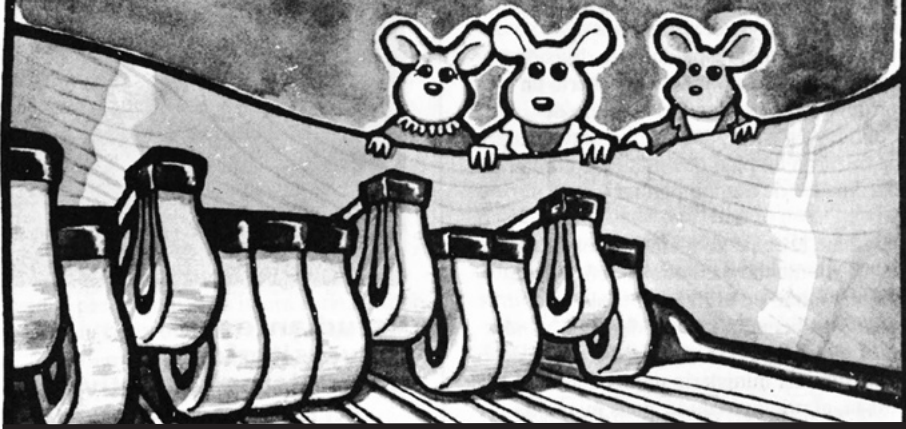
Imagine a family of mice who lived all their lives in a large piano. To them in their piano world came the music of the instrument, filling all the dark spaces with sound and harmony. At first the mice were impressed by it. They drew comfort and wonder from the thought there was someone who made the music—though invisible to them—above, yet close to them. They loved to think of the Great Player whom they could not see.

Then one day a daring mouse climbed up part of the piano and returned very thoughtful. He had found out how the music was made. Wires were the secret—tightly stretched wires of graduated lengths which trembled and vibrated. They must revise all their old beliefs; none but the most conservative could any longer believe in the Unseen Player.

Later another explorer carried the explanation further. Hammers were now the secret, numbers of hammers dancing and leaping on the wires. This was a more complicated theory, but it all went to show that they lived in a purely mechanical and mathematical world. The Unseen Player came to be thought of as a myth.

But the Pianist continued to play.

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Knowing God's will for my life

by Humberto M. Rasi

God provides us with guidance and then allows us to make choices.

Life consists of a series of choices. While some choices are relatively unimportant, others are crucial and have far-reaching consequences. At some point, each of us makes a decision about three important issues. First, we determine the role God and religion will play in our life. Second, we choose a career or profession to earn a living. Third, we decide to marry or not, and who will be our life partner.

As life progresses, we continue making choices: What college or university will I attend, and what degree will I pursue? After earning my degree, where will I work—will I be self-employed or work in a company? Where will I live? How will I spend the money I earn? If I marry, will we have children or not? If so, how many?

Through the centuries, people have used varied methods to make choices. Many consult with experienced friends or trusted counselors. Others check their horoscope, consult palmists, mediums, or others with connections to the occult.

As Christians, we want to obey God when faced with a significant decision. In fact, believers around the world lift their thoughts to God, repeating the words of the Lord's Prayer, which includes an important petition: "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).¹ What do we mean when we thus pray? Let's review what the Bible teaches us about the key subject of God's will.

The meaning of *will*

The word *will* has three basic meanings, which apply to both God and humans.

Will: the ability and power to choose.

God has this ability and has always exercised it. At a certain point in time, He decided to create the universe and populate it with intelligent beings. He also chose to fashion this planet and create Adam and Eve to live on it. Later, He chose Abraham and his descendants to be His special people. He also decided to come to this world as a human being to rescue us from sin by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Creator has given humans the capacity to make choices. This is an important part of being created in God's image. We can obey or disobey God with predictable consequences. (See, for example, Deuteronomy 30:15, 19, 20; Revelation 3:20.) God respects and protects our individual freedom to choose. In fact, he wants us to exercise this ability by making good choices and thus develop our character.

Will: the desire to do something or to achieve an objective. This is why our last testament is called a *will*. We put in writing what we want to happen to us and our possessions when we die.

God, whose character is a perfect blend of mercy and justice, always wants the best for His creatures (Jeremiah 29:11) and is never inclined to do evil (James 1:13). He also wants all human beings to be saved (1 Timothy 2:3, 4) and to grow spiritually (Colossians 1:9, 10).

We humans also have the desire to do things and achieve something. At times, what we want to do is contrary to what we know is right. Because sin has affected our will, we often make selfish and destructive decisions. The apostle Paul was painfully aware of this tendency. He wrote, "What I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do" (Romans 7:15, 18-20).

Will: purpose, determination, or plan. Paul speaks about God's plan to work out "everything in conformity with the purpose of his will" (Ephesians 1:11). His plan of salvation, for example, was drawn up even before the cre-

ation of the world (1 Peter 1:18-20). Christ came to this planet at a precise moment laid out in the great plan of salvation (Galatians 4:4, 5). God knows the day and the hour in which Christ will return to this world in glory (Matthew 24:26, 27). He has designated a day in which He will judge all human beings who have ever lived (Acts 17:31). In some cases, God has revealed parts of His great plan through prophecy. Daniel chapter 2, for example, outlines the world powers controlling human history from the Babylonian empire to the end of time. Revelation 2 and 3 lays out the various stages of Christianity's history.

Human beings also have purposes and plans. However, unlike God, we can't always carry them out because we either lack the necessary resources or because circumstances change in ways we cannot control.

One of the most intriguing topics for Bible-believing Christians to reflect on is how God will achieve His plan according to His sovereign will, while preserving and respecting the free choice of His creatures. All this led Paul to exclaim: "Oh, the depth of riches and the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments and his paths beyond tracing out!" (Romans 11:33).

Does it matter?

So, why is it important to know God's will for our lives?

We need to admit that in our natural condition, we are completely uninterested in knowing God's will. Even when we know what God desires for us, we tend to reject it or to act contrary to it. In other words, we rebel against God.

However, God yearns to change our attitude toward Him—to become our Savior and Friend. He wants us to know, love, and obey Him. That's why God the Holy Spirit constantly speaks to our conscience. He pleads, "My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to my ways" (Proverbs 23:26).

He wants to show us the way back to Him and to guide us in our decisions (Psalm 32: 8, 9). Paul encourages us to become specialists in understanding God's will (Ephesians 5:16, 17). If we choose to obey it, He assures us an eternity in His company (Matthew 7:21; 1 John 2:17).

However, Satan wants to keep us separated from God and in rebellion against Him. Even when we say "Yes" to God, our enemy, Satan, tries to entice us away from Him. This constant testing is called *temptation*. Each day, a drama is played out in our conscience. Through the Holy Spirit, God invites us to align our will with His, while Satan seeks to convince us that God doesn't love us and is instead preventing us from really enjoying "the good life." The longer we persist in obeying God, the weaker the temptations become, because God Himself strengthens our will.

When we understand the fierce and critical battle in which each one of us is engaged, we also understand why God is so interested in our physical and mental health. He doesn't want anything to affect our ability to choose freely and intelligently between obedience and disobedience. That's why He asks us to keep our bodies free from chemical substances that cloud our thinking, and our minds clean of negative influences that reach us through what we read, watch, and listen to. Nothing should prevent us from clearly hearing His gentle voice in our conscience.

Are there conditions?

God has established three basic conditions to know His will for our lives:

Trust: Do I believe that God is loving and just? If we do not trust that God exists and wants the best for us, it is impossible to understand His will (Hebrews 11:6).

Obedience: Have I decided to obey God in everything in which He has already revealed His will? This requires that we uproot from our lives every

Before making a major decision

Here is a summary of steps for knowing God's will in a particular matter and acting on it. They are arranged as a checklist to help alert you to issues that you may need to consider before God makes clear His will to you.³ Be frank in your self-analysis.

The matter in which I want to know God's will for my life: _____

Step 1: Obedient to God's already revealed will

Have I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior? Yes___ No___
Is there any known and cherished sin in my life? Yes___ No___
Am I obedient to God's will to the extent it has been revealed to me and I understand it? Yes___ No___

Step 2: Ready to obey God's will as He may reveal it to me

Am I willing to follow God's will when He reveals it to me, regardless of what His will is or what it may cost me? Yes___ No___
Am I open to any means He might choose to lead me, whether miraculous or some less dramatic manner? Yes___ No___

Step 3: God's revelation: The cornerstone of guidance

Do I study regularly God's Word? Yes___ No___
Am I familiar with what the Bible really says about the matter for which I am seeking guidance? Yes___ No___

Step 4: Prayer: In dialogue with God

Do I have a daily prayer time when I fellowship with God and surrender my will to His leading? Yes___ No___
Have I specifically asked God regarding the matter for which I'm seeking His guidance? Yes___ No___
Am I ready to continue praying and waiting on God? Yes___ No___

Step 5: The Holy Spirit: Divine Companion

Have I acknowledged the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit in my life? Yes___ No___
Am I ready to allow the Holy Spirit to take total leadership in my life? Yes___ No___

Step 6: Wise counselors

Do I fellowship regularly with other Christians and participate with them in the study of God's Word? Yes___ No___
Am I experiencing a medical or emotional problem that may require professional help before making this decision? Yes___ No___
Should I seek the counsel of an experienced person, such as a minister, church leader, Christian counselor or friend? Yes___ No___

Step 7: Providential circumstances

Have I carefully considered the providential circumstances through which God may be expressing His will in this matter? Yes___ No___

Step 8: Self-evaluation

Am I sufficiently rested and calm to make a decision now? Yes___ No___

Have I evaluated—preferably on paper—the reasons for and against the decision I am considering and the underlying motives? Yes___ No___

Have I considered the way in which this decision may affect my family and other people who are close to me? Yes___ No___

Have I taken into consideration how my talents relate to the options that this decision places before me? Yes___ No___

Have I evaluated the possible effect that this decision may have on my health? Yes___ No___

Have I thought about the effect this decision may have on my spiritual growth, my relationship with God and my witness for Him? Yes___ No___

Have I considered the impact this decision may have on the spiritual life of others? Yes___ No___

Have I had the necessary time to evaluate this matter alone, without unnecessary pressures? Yes___ No___

Prayerfully review all the above points, especially any responses in the right-hand column. These responses may indicate some action you need to take before making a decision.

List the actions you should take:_____

Is there anything else that, in your opinion, God wants you to consider?

Step 9: The decision: To wait or to act

Should I postpone the decision until I have a clearer understanding of God's will in this matter?

Should I take the decision now, but wait a while before acting on it?

I am now aware of God's will in this matter, but I am not sure of His timing; therefore, must I patiently wait His time?

I have had enough time to prayerfully and carefully consider this matter.

What is my decision?_____

Step 10: The stamp of approval: God's peace

Now that I have understood God's will in this matter and made a decision, do I experience an inward peace about my choice? As time passes and I continue to reflect and pray about the decision, do I have the increased assurance from Him that the decision was the right one? If so, proceed!

sin or rebellion of which we are aware. "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened" (Psalm 66:18). But "if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us" (1 John 5:14). Mark Twain once wrote ironically, "What worries me are not the parts of the Bible I don't understand, but those that I understand too well!"

Submission: Am I ready to obey what God may reveal of His will for me? This requires a special attitude, because our natural tendency is to tell Him: "Show me your will for my life, Lord, and then I'll decide whether I'm going to obey it or not!" It's like the prayer a young man is said to have offered: "Lord, I want to serve you as a missionary. I'm ready to go anywhere in the world, as long as the pay is good and the weather's nice!" This attitude is based on the mistaken notions that we know better than God what's best for us, and that He isn't interested in our happiness or eternal salvation.

How do we proceed?

There are five factors that can help us to know God's will—both His desire and His plan—for our life. Let's review them.

1. *The Bible: In the Scriptures, God has revealed His general will (desire and purpose) for all human beings of all times.* The Bible contains more specific instruction about God's will than most of us think. We should study it regularly, both individually and in groups. In the Word of God we find instruction and examples relating to our salvation, our attitude toward God and fellow human beings, family, work, finances, lifestyle, habits, and so on.

Paul says that in the Scriptures we can find all the instruction we need to live a good life and to obtain eternal life (2 Timothy 3:15-17). Christians look to the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3-17) to find the great moral principles that define our relationship to God and to our fellow human beings (Luke 10:27). Once we

accept Christ as our Savior and Friend, we orient our lives by those principles as an expression of our love for Him. Jesus not only provided us with a perfect model of how these commandments are lived in the real world, but also stressed their importance and elaborated on their implications (Matthew chapters 5 to 7).

The Scriptures also reveal the will of God through the lives of men and women, and show the results of living according to His principles or in rebellion against them.

2. *The Holy Spirit: God reveals His will to us through the Holy Spirit speaking to our individual conscience.* The Holy Spirit is God Himself speaking to our will through our conscience (Isaiah 30:21). Of course, our conscience is not always or necessarily God's voice—it is the *means* through which God can speak to our will. Although the Holy Spirit has always acted in human affairs since Creation, after Jesus completed His ministry on this Earth, He assigned a special ministry to the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

There are special times when we can hear the voice of the Spirit speaking to us more clearly and when we are more sensitive to His influence. This occurs when we pray and remain silent awaiting God's response. It can also happen when we study a Bible passage, reflect on it, and ask the Holy Spirit to teach us. In addition, we may hear God's voice when we join fellow Christians in worship, singing, praying, praising, sharing experiences, and listen to the preaching of God's Word.

The Holy Spirit helps us understand spiritual truths (John 16:13) and empowers us to do God's will (see Philippians 2:13; Hebrews 13:20, 21). The Spirit also stimulates our imaginations and helps us conceive of the fulfillment we will experience when we do what God wants us to do. He will also grant us joy as we obey His will (see Psalm 37:3-6).

3. *The providences of life: God helps us to discern His will when we interpret*

wisely the circumstances and events of our life. When we take the initiative and move forward in a certain course of action, God frequently opens or closes doors of opportunity for us. But, as someone said, "God can't steer a parked car." Some examples of these open and closed doors: You apply for admission to three universities and only one grants you admission and a scholarship. You apply for a job in two companies and only one allows you to honor the Sabbath. You meet someone in what appears to be a chance encounter, and the conversation you have helps you to make a decision.

In the Bible we find several cases of circumstantial events that God used to reveal His will. When Joseph's brothers were about to kill him because of their intense envy, a caravan of merchants happened to come by just at the right time and bought him as a slave (Genesis 37:12-28). Years later, when Joseph was prime minister in Egypt, he told his brothers that it was God who, in His providence, had sent Him to that foreign land to preserve his life and the lives of his entire family (Genesis 45:7, 8).

Rebecca brought her flock to drink at the well just as Eliezer, a servant to Abraham, came to the same well after having asked God in prayer to help him find a good spouse for Isaac (Genesis 24:12-46).

Two events in Paul's life show providence in action. On one of his missionary trips it was Paul's intention to preach the gospel in regions of what is today Turkey, but the Holy Spirit prevented him from traveling in that direction twice and instead led him to bring the good news of salvation to Europe (Acts 16:6-10). Later the apostle sensed the need to travel to Rome to bring the gospel to the capital of the vast Roman empire (Acts 19:21). Eventually he did go to Rome to preach the Gospel, not as a free man, but as a prisoner (Acts 23:11; Philippians 1:12, 13).

In each case, we must interpret cir-

cumstantial events by making sure that they align with and do not contradict the general instruction of the Bible and the inner guidance of the Holy Spirit.

4. *Christian counselors: Wise and experienced people can help us to apply the general principles of the Bible to our particular case.* We can greatly benefit from frank conversation with people that know us well (Proverbs 11:14). Obviously, Christian parents may provide this important function (Proverbs 23:22). We can also benefit from the guidance from Christian teachers or mentors whom we know and trust. At times experienced pastors, chaplains, and church leaders may play that important role.² (The apostle Paul listened to wise counselors in Ephesus during the riot and did not go out to the theater, as he planned to do, and this probably saved his life. See Acts 19:30, 31.)

Interaction with these individuals is useful because they can look at our situation with a degree of objectivity. They can ask questions that help us clarify our own thinking, and suggest options we have not considered. Of course, if we are married, we should discuss our plans in depth with our spouse and even with our children, weighing the pros and cons, because in most cases, they will also be affected by the decision we make.

5. *Personal reflection: We evaluate the previous four factors and make the final decision.* At this point, we synthesize what we have learned in the process, possibly preparing a list of options with their positive and negative aspects. We take into consideration the principles found in the Scriptures, the thoughts that the Holy Spirit brings to our mind, the sense of direction we perceive in the events, and the counsel received from people we trust. The accompanying checklist, "Before Making an Important Decision" can help you in the process.

Continued on page 25

What's this thing called love?

by Nancy Van Pelt

Understanding the dynamics of attraction and the risks of unwise choices can help you avoid emotional pain and build a lasting marriage relationship.

Falling in love is one of life's most exciting events in life. Everyone wants to find true love, and when it happens, life takes on new meaning. Sudden energy surges through the lover's system. New enthusiasm provides zest for the most boring tasks. A special chemistry works overtime.

In the early stages of love, time together is filled with exciting adventures and affectionate interludes. Each look and touch, every conversation and kiss takes on special significance. Everything is so right, so good, so perfect. Suddenly, the question appears: *"How do I know if this is the real thing?"*

None of us deliberately sets out to make wrong choices in our love life. We want our relationships to work. At the time we make our decision about who is right for us, we believe we are making the right choice. But more often than we like to admit, that choice turns out to be wrong.

Love is so exhilarating that some people deliberately close their eyes to anything that might spoil the fantasy. Telling the difference between true love and infatuation is tricky, but not impossible. Applying the "test of time"—two full years of dating before marriage—will help.

True love conquers all?

Many relationships fail even before they really begin because couples come with the theory that true love conquers all: "Regardless of what the problem

is, we can beat it. We love each other so much we can make our relationship work. No problem is too big for our love."

Anyone who buys into this theory is not facing reality. If couples having one or more of the following issues insist that they don't matter, such couples live in the risky "love-conquers-all" zone:

- wide age differences
- racial or cultural differences
- religious differences
- lack of education
- lack of financial resources
- a current or previous marriage
- parental disapproval
- disagreement over not wanting children
- a drinking, drug, gambling, or other compulsive habit

Tina and Andre dated for a year. Tina was brought up in a strict religious home while Andre was raised with no religion at all. Before meeting Tina, he had never even been to church. While dating, they discussed their religious differences from time to time, but not in depth. Andre went to church with Tina to make her happy, but never made a commitment to God and Christianity. Because he attended church with her most of the time, Tina thought Andre was accepting her faith, even though he never said anything to confirm this. They got along so well in every other way that both skirted the issue of religion, hoping it would all work out. Neither wanted to rock the boat. Inwardly Tina knew she could never give up her faith, and Andre knew he could never be religious like Tina. Both thought their love for each other could beat all obstacles.

Tina and Andre married but parted ways over issues of faith, church, and spirituality. By avoiding the issue of religious differences prior to marriage, they were really saying, "If we love each other enough, we can overcome the problem. True love can conquer our different religious values." After they were married they found it wasn't

that easy. Andre no longer tried to accommodate Tina's wishes by going to church. Tina tried to love him anyway, but didn't have the spiritual leader in her home she really wanted. She wanted a man who would pray with her about problems, provide spiritual guidance, and be a godly model for their children.

As much in love as you are now, as much as you vow never to allow some of the problems mentioned to separate you, dealing with any of the issues over time will eventually wear out your love and devotion for one another.

Love is strange

During the early stages of falling in love, you will likely experience a wide range of feelings and responses, including intense passion and idealization of your partner—thinking he or she is absolutely "perfect." This romantic phase, what is also called *infatuation*, includes curious emotional and physiological changes—changes that have been laboratory tested, and are 100 percent real! For instance, the sense of being in love makes a female appear more beautiful. Research explains that "men and women who are in love walk more erectly and appear to have grown taller because the spinal column is stretched." All motor responses are intensely activated, making those in love extremely aware of and emotionally receptive to their partners.¹

Eyes appear shinier when you are in love because the production of tears increases. This explains why eyes actually appear to sparkle and why you feel that the world is a brighter, shinier, happier place. Hearts beat faster, which makes people even more susceptible to falling in love.

Energy level also increases. Being in love spurs the production of epinephrine (adrenaline) and gives energy and strength to surmount problems; thus the feeling that you can conquer anything.² Another study on those who thought they were in love showed that this increased adrenaline actu-

ally makes the heart grow fonder. Participants in this project were injected with adrenaline to approximate the aroused state of being in love. It was found that those who had been injected demonstrated more affection than those who did not have the extra spurt of adrenaline by injection. In other words, the state of being in love increases the ability to love.³

Those in love are more open to and accepting of what life has to offer them. They are ready to enjoy life to its fullest. In contrast, those who are not in love present a more negative or closed attitude to others when hurt or angry. Such responses include holding their arms close to their bodies, taking small steps, pursing their lips, and keeping their heads down. They are more apt to withdraw physically and emotionally from others. In response to their withdrawal, others actually withdraw from them. The result is unhappy persons who think others don't like them and never receive the

love and attention they want and need to make them happy.

Some young adults puzzle over why they rarely or never have dates and appear to be rejected by those they meet. In reality, they send out negative reactions that turn others off to them.⁴

Memory improves when one is in love, even if selectively. The person in love possesses an extraordinary ability to remember everything and anything about their object of affection. He may forget his math assignment and she may forget to set her alarm, but neither will forget details about the other.

Those in love want to be physically close to the one they love. If your partner is constantly edging closer, always wanting to be at your side, chances are she is in love with you or thinks she is.

Love affects brain chemistry. One study concluded that once the emotional state has been defined as "love," there is an increase in the brain chemical phenylethylamine that maintains

the emotional level high. Interestingly enough, phenylethylamine is the same chemical compound found in chocolate, a popular gift for those in love.⁵

Love also affects eating habits. Many people experience a loss of appetite in the early stages of love. One young woman told me laughingly that if she could just stay in love forever, she would never have to diet again! Others feel as if they are walking on air or being transported to another world where they are barely conscious of their surroundings.

Lovers may have sweaty hands, butterflies in their stomachs, dilated pupils, and so on. Such physiological effects tend to fade in time. Personally, I am glad to hear this, or I'd be exhausted after years of going through all that every time my Harry walked through the door!

Early in the relationship, it is common to think about the loved one constantly. Lana says dreamily, "*I go to sleep thinking about him, and he is the first thought that pops into my mind in the morning. Then I begin another day where he is never out of my thoughts.*" This intense focus on the loved one tends to add even more interest and excitement to the relationship. When away from each other, it is common for a couple in this early romantic phase to anxiously wait for the moment they will see each other again or intensely desire a phone call.

People in this stage talk endlessly about the object of their affection with anyone who will listen. It is possible that the one in love may become so totally immersed in the love relationship that responsibilities are ignored or forgotten. Kurt says, "I'm having trouble concentrating in school, and I can't get my homework done. It piles up and I can't even force myself to tackle assignments that are due. The other day I was at a student body officers' meeting. Someone asked a question. I didn't even know that he was talking to me until everyone laughed."

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Up close and personal: About males

Generally speaking, males fall in love more rapidly than do females. In one study of 250 men and 429 women, researchers measured the “romance quota” of all who were currently in love. More than one quarter of the males said they had fallen seriously in love before the fourth date, while only 15 percent of the females had. In fact, half of the females reported they had not decided if it was genuine love even after 20 dates! The conclusion was that females take more time determining whether they are in love or not.⁶

Males fall in love more rapidly, it is concluded, because they are initially attracted by the physical qualities of a girl. One study determined that males took only *seven seconds* to decide if they wanted to pursue a relationship with a woman. Men rarely feel an urgency to evaluate a woman over time when her looks are appealing. If he likes what he sees and she sets his hormones on fire, he *knows* it's love. Thoughts of her homemaking abilities, how she'll get along with his family, or what kind of mother she'll make, all take a back seat to her looks.

A man is also more likely to conclude it's love when the woman makes him feel good about himself. This satisfies his need for admiration and appreciation. To find real love, then, males must slow down and love a woman patiently and tenderly over a long period of time. One who rushes ahead of a woman's instincts may lose in the end.

Up close and personal: About women

Females look at love differently than males do. Generally women take longer to decide and aren't as willing to declare undying love until they have looked over a man's inner qualities. They are more apt to look for characteristics they desire in a man who will become the father of their children. Women, more so than men, have an

ability to look into the future and visualize what a lifelong relationship with a man would be like.

Women take longer to fall in love because they are more in touch with their feelings. It is easier for them to distinguish between infatuation, with its rush of emotions, and genuine love, which tends to move more slowly. Women definitely feel and enjoy the tingling and palpitations of infatuation, but are more prone to allow their heads to rule their hearts—at least initially.

Women are slower than men to label their feelings “love” but are more relentless in their pursuit of the real thing. Once a girl decides she has found her man, she is likely to become more intensely emotional and romantic. Love now becomes euphoric. Life takes on a special flow. Colors are brighter; she is happier, more beautiful and bubbly than ever before. She may find it difficult to concentrate on anything except her man and dreams of their future together.

Love without limits

Society programs us through the mass media and other forums to believe that love will solve all personal problems. Such a concept leads people down a dangerous path because they expect romance to offer what only Jesus can supply.

Rather than securing all your hopes and dreams on a human being, why not secure yourself first and foremost to someone who will never change? Jesus is always the same, yesterday, today, and forever. Promises He makes, He will keep. You can count on it. His love is completely unconditional. He will always love you, regardless of your appearance, failures, or mistakes. When others fail you, He will be there to love and care about you. He is the only one who loves perfectly.

Jesus is the only one who can supply all your needs, fulfill all your desires, and meet all your expectations. Anchor yourself to Him first, and then you

will be less likely to be disappointed in love and more likely to find a satisfying love on this earth.

Nancy Van Pelt is a certified family life educator. She has authored 28 books, which have been translated into more than 30 languages. This article has been adapted from her book *Smart Love: Straight Talk to Young Adults About Dating, Love and Sex*. See www.heartnhome.com.

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Your health is in your hands

by Esteban S. Poní
and Carlos Poní

Being informed and making wise lifestyle decisions can significantly reduce your health risks and increase your well-being.

The World Health Organization has identified globally 10 risk factors to human health: (1) unsafe water, lack of sanitation and hygiene; (2) indoor smoke from solid fuels; (3) high blood pressure; (4) high cholesterol; (5) tobacco consumption; (6) underweight (emaciation); (7) obesity; (8) alcohol consumption; (9) unsafe sex; and (10) iron deficiency. Together, these account for more than one-third of all deaths worldwide (see Table 1).

Unsafe water, sanitation, and hygiene (mainly through infectious diarrhea) cause 1.7 million deaths a year worldwide. Nine out of 10 deaths occur in children, mostly in developing countries.

Half the world's population (3.1 billion people) is affected by indoor air pollution due to cooking and heating fuel, leading to lower respiratory infections and chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases.

High blood pressure and cholesterol are related to excessive consumption of fatty, sugary, and salty foods. They become even more lethal when combined with tobacco and excessive alcohol consumption. Overall, high blood pressure causes 7 million deaths a year and cholesterol more than 4 million deaths.

Deaths from tobacco use in the year 2000 stood at 5 million people around the world—a jump of one million over the incidence in 1990. Smokers have death rates two to three times higher than non-smokers.

More than one billion adults worldwide are overweight and between 300 and 500 million are clinically obese.

Half a million die annually in North America and Western Europe from obesity-related diseases. In industrialized regions like North America, Europe, and the Asia Pacific, at least one-third of all diseases are caused by tobacco, alcohol, high blood pressure, cholesterol, and obesity. More than three-quarters of cardiovascular diseases—the world's leading cause of death—are connected to tobacco use, high blood pressure, and/or high cholesterol/obesity.

Worldwide, alcohol caused 1.8 million deaths in the year 2001, or 4 percent of the global disease burden; the proportion peaked in the Americas and Europe. Alcohol was the cause of 20 to 30 percent of esophageal cancers, liver diseases, epilepsy, motor vehicle accidents, homicides, and other intentional injuries worldwide.

At least 27 percent of children (<5 yrs old) worldwide are underweight. This condition caused an estimated 3.4 million deaths in 2000, including about 1.8 million in Africa and 1.2 million in Asia. It was a contributing factor for 60 percent of all child deaths in developing countries.

Iron deficiency is the most prevalent nutritional deficiency in the world, affecting an estimated two billion people, and causing almost a million deaths a year. Young children and their mothers are the most commonly and severely affected. Vitamin A deficiency is the leading cause of acquired blindness in children. Iodine deficiency is probably the single most preventable cause of mental retardation and brain damage. Severe zinc deficiency causes short stature and impaired immune function and is a significant cause of respiratory infections, malaria, and diarrhea.

Globally, about 2.9 million deaths are attributable to unsafe sex. Most of these deaths occur in Africa. In addition, during 2001 more than 99 percent of HIV infections prevalent in Africa were attributable to the same behavior. Elsewhere, the proportion of HIV/AIDS deaths attributable to

unsafe sex ranged from 13 percent in East Asia and the Pacific to 94 percent in Central America. Less than 30 years after its appearance, HIV/AIDS is the world's fourth single biggest cause of death (see Table 2). Currently 28 million (70 percent) of the 40 million people with HIV reside in Africa, but the infection is spreading rapidly elsewhere, as well. Life expectancy in sub-Saharan Africa is estimated at 47 years; without AIDS it would be 62.

What you can do to reduce and eliminate risks

Take a proactive stand for life.

Those who do not take a proactive stand against the major risk factors to human health often become victims to disease and early death. "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you shall die" is not a motto for the ones who want to resist illness and enjoy healthful living. When faced with real threat to health, the passive presumption that nothing can be done will do more harm than good. Arguing for a proactive stand means taking a positive step against what contributes to the risk factors to human health. These risks must not be ignored.

Assume a responsible attitude to life. "I don't have it," "I won't get it," "I can take care of myself" are often the expressions of not the strong, but the irresponsible. When it comes to lifestyle habits like the use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs, or when the temptation is irresponsible sex, the really responsible person will say No. Only the person irresponsible to oneself or one's family would say such things, as "I can quit it when I want to" or "I fell a victim to an irresistible attraction." Instead, stand tall and firm. Be responsible. Take every precautions against these health risks, and don't fall a prey to any of them.

Do something positive. Don't assume a nihilist attitude that nothing can be done about the present condition. Great things can happen with small beginnings. Take, for example,

the high risk of poor sanitation or lack of clean water. An entire community can be affected by this. Do something. Write to the local government. Organize self-help campaigns. A community so organized can clean up its neighborhood, provide basic sanitation, and be an example of healthy environment to others.

Do not put off what can be done today. Procrastination is the devil's great tool. Suppose the doctor has told you to quit drinking as your liver is damaged. You must take a stand for your health's sake. Don't justify your behavior: "Tonight is the big party, I want to have some fun one last time. I'll stop tomorrow." That may never happen. If you are a victim of one of these risks of health, take action immediately.

Don't be apathetic. Apathy (i.e., a kind of exclusion through indifference in spite of indubitable evidence) leads a person to self-delusion. Such an individual knows that eating a low-fat diet, high in vegetables, fruits, and fibers, helps to decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease, but he still continues eating greasy foods with few vegetables, fruits or fibers. The result of such apathy is self-delusion, and eventually the person falls victim to ill health.

Interventions to increase wellness in your life

Interventions may be defined broadly as any preventive, curative, or rehabilitative activity where the primary intent is to improve health. Here are some tips for a better style of life:³

Improve your mental health

- Be realistic. Unrealistic people spend time and energy trying to force the world into their ideal picture. Realistic people modify their beliefs if sufficient evidence exists contradicting their viewpoint.

- Behave like an adult. Know who you are, what you are capable of, what roles you can play, and your place among your peers. Assess your strengths and weaknesses without rely-

ing on the opinions of others.

- Develop spiritually. Find beliefs and values that give meaning and purpose to your life as well as transcendent perspectives.

- If you consider suicide or have a history of hallucinations, progressive memory loss, delusions, or incoherent speech, seek professional help. Don't feel embarrassed. Mental illness is an illness like many others, and can be treated.

Make responsible choices about substance use

- Stop or decrease caffeine consumption. Caffeine produces physical dependence *via* physical tolerance—a need for more caffeine for the same level of alertness.

- Stop nicotine and alcohol use. These are highly addictive and dangerous drugs.

- Do not use or self-prescribe any medicine or drug without medical consent or prescription.

Make wise decisions about food and drinks

- Adults should eat a minimum of two servings of fruit per day and three servings of vegetables. (A child's diet requires professional advice, but in general, children after a year can eat "table-food" if the food is healthy and balanced.) Reduce deep-fried food, packaged cookies, crackers, processed snacks, and sweets.

- Reduce or stop regular (non-diet) soda consumption, which is the leading sugar ingestion source.

- Reduce white flour consumption. Unless labeled "whole wheat," the flour is processed (the bran and the germ are removed).

- Reduce the intake of saturated fat (usually present in meat, butter, cheese, palm, and coconut products). This intervention reduces LDL, a bad cholesterol that increases the risk of heart disease.

- Choose moderate amounts of olive, canola, avocado, peanut butter (without added fat), and nuts (including peanuts, almonds, and pistachios).

- Consume products abundant in omega-3 fatty acids (an oil with a set of cardiovascular protective effects). Sources of omega-3 fatty acids include tofu and dark-green leafy vegetables.

- Eat foods rich in minerals. Iron (found in fortified grain products, dark green vegetables, and dried fruits) helps to treat ferropenic anemia, the most prevalent anemia in the world. Calcium (present in milk, yogurt, tofu, fortified orange juice, bread, and green leafy vegetables) helps to ensure adequate bone mass and reduce some muscle cramps during pregnancy. Always get calcium from foods. Only take supplements under medical advice. Zinc is found in whole grains, nuts, legumes, and soy foods. Iodine sources include iodized salt. Vitamin A sources include whole milk; egg yolk, fortified margarines, carotenoids from plants, green vegetables, and yellow fruits and vegetables.

- Consider the advantages of a vegetarian diet. Include a wide variety of plant foods minimally processed and unrefined. A well planned lacto-ovo-vegetarian diet can satisfy all the needs of a balanced nutritional diet. However, it is necessary to keep in

Table 1

Ten leading risk factors and estimated population affected.

Leading risk factors	Affected population (Estimation)
Emaciation	3,400,000
Unsafe sex	2,900,000
High blood pressure	7,000,000
Tobacco consumption	5,000,000
Alcohol consumption	1,800,000
Unsafe water and lack of sanitation and hygiene.	1,700,000
Iron deficiency	1,000,000
Indoor smoke from solid fuels.	3.1 billion peoples exposed
High cholesterol.	4,000,000
Obesity.	500,000

Source: *The World Health Report 2002*—World's population was 6.2 billion in the year 2001.

mind two special considerations. First, people in a transitional diet need to reduce the ingestion of meat, poultry, and fish while progressively increasing the consumption of a balanced mix of vegetables and fruits. (The biblical book of Leviticus, chapter 11, can help you choose the most appropriate animal sources of food in this transition.) Second, vegetarians who want to exclude eggs and milk products from their diet will benefit from periodical medical consultations in order to ensure that the vegetarian diet remains balanced.⁴

- Get adequate vitamin D through 5-15 minutes of exposure to the sun every day. Fortified milk and margarine also help to keep a balance in the vitamin D and calcium metabolism.

Other important lifestyle choices

- Become physically fit through exercise. Fitness is adaptation to the demands of stress. You can exert yourself with moderate-to-vigorous exercise without becoming overly tired. Regular exercise can improve your cardio-respiratory function and increase your metabolism. Exercise increases blood flow to the brain and the production of neurotransmitters. It decreases risk of osteoporosis, improves immune system function, prevents injuries and low-back pain, and improves feelings of wellness and the life span.

- Maintain a normal weight. Your expected normal weight can be calcu-

lated by the Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI=Weight in kilograms divided by Height² in meters (i.e., BMI=Wt/Ht²). In general, a BMI value between 18.5 and 24.9 is the normal range and should be your goal. (A BMI greater than 25 suggests overweight, while a BMI less than 18 suggests underweight or malnutrition.)

- Reduce your cancer risks. Avoid smoking, a leading cause of lung cancer. To prevent colon cancer, exercise regularly, eat a high fiber diet, and maintain within a normal weight. Men over 50 should have regular rectal tests to detect possible prostate problems. Women should have appropriate tests and screening for breast and cervical cancers. Avoid excessive exposure to radiation from the sun, tanning lamps, and tanning-salon beds, as these tend to cause skin cancer. For additional information about cancer prevention and treatment, visit <http://www.cancer.org> and <http://www.yourcancerrisk.harvard.edu>.

- Visit your doctor. Talk honestly to him or her about any physical concern. The following websites can help with a physical program of exercise: <http://orthoinfo.aaos.org>; <http://www.acefitness.org>; <http://www.justmove.org>; <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/paguide>; <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa>.

Protect yourself from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)

- If you are not or have never been

sexually active, or have a mutually monogamous relationship with an uninfected spouse, you are at minimal risk for STDs including HIV infection.

- The best prevention against STDs is sexual abstinence before marriage and faithfulness in marriage.

Be proactive in environmental matters

- Use your power as a citizen to request and demand action from your local authorities regarding public health. The most basic public health action is to keep a clean community. Demand efficient clean water services, waste disposal, sewage, solid waste/garbage, and food inspection.

- Take personal steps in preventing pollution. Set an example. Become a community leader. Defend the environment.

By being informed on these important matters and making wise lifestyle choices you will be able to significantly reduce your health risks and increase your well-being.

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Table 2

Leading causes of mortality by diseases throughout the world, 2002¹

Rank	Cause..... All countries	Total deaths in Thousands.....	% of total
1	Ischemic heart disease.....	7,208.....	12.6 %
2	Cerebrovascular disease.....	5,509.....	9.7%
3	Lower respiratory infections.....	3,884.....	6.8%
4	HIV/AIDS.....	2,777.....	4.9%
5	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.....	2,748.....	4.8%
6	Diarrheal diseases.....	1,798.....	3.2%
7	Tuberculosis.....	1,566.....	2.7%
8	Malaria.....	1,272.....	2.2%
	Cancer of the respiratory tract.....	1,243.....	2.2%
9	Road traffic accidents.....	1,192.....	2.1%
10	Childhood disease.....	1,124.....	2.0%

Source: *The World Health Report 2002*.

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4. If you are a strict vegetarian, your doctor may recommend vitamin supplements to avoid vitamin B₁₂ deficiency. However, cereals, soy beverages, and yeast can provide vitamin B₁₂ to your body, thus delaying or decreasing the need for frequent medical interventions.

Domestic abuse has no excuse

by Miguel Angel Núñez

Civility, ethics, and core Christian principles demand that we take a stand against domestic violence.

Mirjana Lucic was just 16 when she won for her native Croatia the fame of being an internationally recognized tennis player. She was placed 50th in the women's world tennis competition. When she came to compete in the U.S. Open, she played well, and after that, she requested asylum for herself and her mother and siblings. The reason? Her abusive father. Mirjana stated that he "beat me more than you can imagine. Sometimes it was for a lost game or a lost set, or for a bad day. I don't even want to talk about what happened if I lost a tournament."

Fourteen weeks after marrying Paul Gascoigne, the British soccer star and player of the Glasgow Rangers, his wife was photographed coming out of the hospital. She had a broken arm, bruises on her face, a black eye, and cuts on her nose. Many feminist organizations asked for Gascoigne's dismissal from the team. The team management's answer was a case of classical indifference: We hired a soccer player, and have no interest in his family life.

Joe Carollo, the mayor of Miami, spent a day in solitary confinement in jail for beating his wife. He was set free the following day with the condition that he should stay away from his wife and children.

These cases could have gone unreported except for the celebrity status of the people involved. The truth is that millions of people go through similar trials, but their experiences don't get in the news.

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is every act or

series of actions "that make use of abusive force to achieve dominion over another person, attacking their autonomy, integrity, dignity, or freedom."¹ Likewise, an abused woman is "one who receives intentional mistreatment emotionally, physically, and sexually from a man with whom she has an intimate relation."²

To define domestic violence in these terms is to admit that most of the incidents of physical and psychological violence occur within the framework of relationships that are expected to be protective and comforting.

Violence takes on different manifestations. Although violence is often taken to mean physical aggression, it manifests itself in more complicated ways. We talk of abuse when there is:³

Physical violence—the most visible form of violence; its effects are easily seen.

Sexual violence—considered less common because most victims do not talk about it.

Psychological abuse—considered less damaging, although research reveals the contrary. Constant exposure to emotional abuse erodes the personality to the extent that many victims have a very hard time recovering from it.

Destruction of personal property or pets: Many abusers prefer to destroy with malice aforethought objects that are highly valued by their victims, or their pets, knowing that this will produce great pain in the owner.

Whatever the dynamics of violence in an interpersonal relation, they will hinge on the type of abuser, the moment of abuse, the culture in which this takes place, the beliefs and myths surrounding them, etc.

A global reality

It is estimated that 95 percent of the victims of intra-family violence are women.⁴ According to data from the United Nations Fund for Women, one in four women in the world suffer domestic mistreatment, which leads to the chilling figure that at least 300

million women suffer some kind of abuse.⁵ Every 15 seconds there's an incident of domestic violence somewhere on Earth.⁶ This is frightening when we realize that only 10 percent of such victims report their problem.

It is estimated that six out of 10 couples experience some kind of domestic violence. Thus, the existence and pattern of violence does not recognize any cultural or economic variants.

The pattern of violence

Is there any justification for violence? The question is not asked when the victim is a man. In many countries domestic violence against a woman is often considered a private family matter. But sociological honesty must force us to recognize that the problem that in one way or another belongs to all of us.

Many experts on domestic violence hold that women's tolerance of violence perpetuates this kind of behavior. And then there's the longtime idea

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that a woman should be punished when her conduct goes outside the role that society has assigned to her. This implies that the problem of mistreatment of women is not restricted to one geographical area or culture. It's so widely accepted in society that many victims just give up.

This creates a domino effect where new generations reproduce the wrong example, resulting in absence from work, poor performance at school, illness, and "accidents" that end up being paid for by all. There is research showing that children from homes where mothers are systematically abused tend to truancy, drug use, psychological deformity, repetition of violent scenes, and social delinquency.

Sons and daughters from families where the mother was subjected to abuse tend to reproduce the same patterns witnessed in their homes. It's a mistake to assume that what happens inside the home does not affect the home's environment.

Evidence also indicates that women who are victims of physical or psychological abuse will be inhibited from developing normally in society and in the home. Their productivity at work, their role as mothers, their personal development, their qualifications as citizens will all be affected for the rest of their lives until they can stand up to affirm their personal dignity and/or leave the abusive situation.

Myths surrounding domestic abuse

Myths relating to domestic violence are so rooted in certain cultures and patterns of thinking that eradication of abuse becomes almost impossible. It is therefore important to understand and destroy such myths in order to face both individually and corporately the menace of domestic violence. Consider some of these myths.

Domestic violence does not affect many people. In fact, it does. According to statistics from the U.S. Department of Justice, in the United States a woman is attacked every 15 seconds. Attacks

inside the home are one of the principal causes of women's injuries—a higher number than highway accidents or other accidents.⁷ It is estimated that 50 percent of households suffer or have suffered violence within the family.⁸

Ill treatment is the result of a moment's rage. The truth is that abusers are in the habit of abusing. It is not a momentary flash. It's a reiteration of a repeated behavior. Many women victims of aggression report that they have been mistreated repeatedly through the years.

Abuse happens only among the poor and in substandard neighborhoods. This is a widely held misconception. People who use violence against spouses or girlfriends belong to every social and educational strata.⁹ The list of abusers, according to a Boston study, includes doctors, psychologists, lawyers, clergy,¹⁰ and chief executive officers.¹¹ Another study reports that there was a higher level of aggression among couples with college or graduate degrees than among people with lower educational achievements.¹²

Violence is limited to shoves, slaps, or fisticuffs—actions that do not cause serious damage. The fact is that many women have incapacitating injuries, permanent scars, and may even die from encounters with abusive husbands or boyfriends.¹³

It's easy for a woman to flee from abuse. Many women are so psychologically enslaved or codependent with the abuser that they find it difficult to distance themselves from abuse. In fact, one of the sequels of the problem is a psychological damage so deep that it's almost impossible to escape without external assistance.

Most aggressors against women are strangers. Many would like to believe this myth, but the reality is that 95 percent of aggressors belong to the family circle: husbands, fathers, brothers, fathers-in-law, close friends. One report indicates that 70 percent of victims of violence were attacked in their own homes, generally by a spouse or

an intimate friend.¹⁴ A woman is more likely to be murdered by a man with whom she has an affectionate relationship than by a stranger.¹⁵ The home, which should be a haven of safety, becomes in practice a hell on earth for many women and their children who are passive victims of violence.

Domestic violence is the result of some kind of mental illness. This myth allows many to excuse, explain, or tolerate physical and psychological abuse against women. But the fact is that only 10 percent of abusers seem to have some psychopathic disorders.¹⁶

Violence and love cannot coexist in a family. Most episodes occur in cycles. According to Corsi, "love coexists with violence; otherwise there would be no cycle. Generally this is an addictive, dependent, possessive love based on insecurity."¹⁷

Emotional abuse is not so serious as physical abuse. However, the truth is that "continual emotional abuse, even without physical violence, produces very serious consequences in the victim's emotional stability."¹⁸ The problem is that psychological and emotional effects are less visible in the short run, whereas physical damage shows up right away. Actually, it is possible to terrorize a woman and abuse her without resorting to physical violence.¹⁹ The rehabilitation of a person who has received only emotional bruises is as difficult and traumatic as that of one who has been physically attacked.²⁰

Violent conduct is an inherent characteristic of human beings. This is what zoologists, ethologists,²¹ and many investigators rooted in evolutionary thinking have been saying for years. The reality is that "violence is behavior learned from role models in the family and society who define it as a valid resource for conflict resolution. The use of violence is learned in the family, in school, in competitive sports, through the media."²² A learned behavior can be unlearned.

Intra-family violence does not happen in the homes of committed Christians.

Many violent male abusers attend church regularly. Tragically, a sexist interpretation of certain biblical passages leads some men to believe in their pre-eminence over women, and this attitude is the basis for justifying violence against wives.²³

Everybody is aggressive, both men and women. Some men contend that it's an exaggeration to talk of men abusing women, and that women are also the attackers. But that's not quite so. Abuse by men is more common and notorious.²⁴

Women often provoke men to attack them. Most aggressors want to believe this myth.²⁵ Even some women, evidently those who had not been the victims, tend to believe in this. Nevertheless, all the research about violence shows that violent men attack without reference to what women do or say. Aggression in any form, especially physical, cannot be condoned, and verbal defiance by a wife does not in any way constitute a justification for abuse.²⁶

Conclusion

Domestic abuse, particularly against women, is endemic in society, and this inhumane behavior must not go unchecked. Civilized human behavior, as well as other ethical and core Christian principles, require that we take every possible step against abuse.

The Creator never intended that anyone should be treated in a humiliating manner. The Bible says that God "hates him that loves violence" (Psalm 11:5, RSV). The Lord invites married men "to love their wives as their own bodies" (Ephesians 5:28, NIV). The logical assumption is that no normal person wants to attack his/her own body.

No one should remain indifferent to violence against women. The Lord warns those who ignore injustice and mistreatment: "Don't try to disclaim responsibility by saying you didn't know about it. For God, who knows all hearts, knows yours, and he knows

you knew! And he will reward everyone according to his deeds" (Proverbs 24:11,12, TLB).

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VIEWPOINT

Natural disasters: Acts of God or acts of Satan?

by Herbert E. Douglass

From the standpoint of the Cosmic Conflict, God is still in control.

During the past few years, our planet has been experiencing an increasing number of natural disasters—earthquakes, hurricanes, droughts, floods, and a devastating tsunami. Some of these crises, although less dramatic—such as global warming and the related melting of glaciers and ice caps—have raised questions in many minds regarding their causes. Are these events the result of still little understood natural laws? Is their real cause the human abuse of our natural habitat? Believers of many religions have also wondered if these catastrophes are punishments of an angry deity. Bible-believing Christians have pondered about the role that God and Satan play as the ultimate actors in a cosmic drama. Are these calamities pointing toward a culminating event in human history?

In trying to understand the role of God in natural disasters, we must avoid the trap that Satan has encouraged, namely, that last-day disasters are from an angry, insulted God. That is exactly how Satan has been painting God since Eden and even before. Millions on our planet believe this today. However, according to the Bible, we are in the midst of the last hours of the cosmic conflict, the Great Controversy that has plagued the universe since “war arose in heaven” (Revelation 12:7, RSV).*

A look at Bible prophecy

In Revelation we read that toward the end of human history God, through His angels, will be “holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree” (Revelation 7:1). This sounds most ominous. Before the end times, this earth will have seen all kinds of distress affecting the land, the seas, and vegetation. But we have never seen anything yet like what will happen when the winds of destruction are fully released by the holding power of the four angels who get their orders from the Lord Himself!

Why are the winds still being held? God’s people have not all been “sealed” with the approval of God “written on their foreheads” (Revelation 14:1). God’s seal of approval will be placed on those who can rightly represent Him in the world; on those who tell the truth about God and witness to His power—again, exactly what Satan has been resisting for a long, long time. Here are people who are now ready to stand firm through the troubles of the last days as depicted in the closing verses of Revelation 6.

And what about those winds? They are the works of Satan about to be released from the restraining hand of God. All this can best be understood in light of the Cosmic Conflict. It is the replay of the Book of Job, but on a colossal scale: fire from the sky burning up sheep and Job’s servants, roaming bandits killing at will, a great wind destroying a house and killing his children. (See Job, chapters 1 and 2.) Satan is unbelievably evil! And he is

still the same today as in Job’s day.

Satan’s role

Satan’s studied strategy has always been to confuse, bewilder, deceive, and destroy the peace of this world. He has been “a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44). Why? In order to drain all hope and trust from Earth’s billions that a more powerful Person, faithful and true, runs the universe!

But where is God? God, within the purposes of the Great Controversy, permits this final barrage of deceit and distress, not only on one man called Job but now on the whole planet. All that Job finally knew about what was behind the catastrophes he and his family were enduring—including fire raining from the sky and a devastating wind—God told Him later. But until then, it was a very dark time. Job only knew later that God had been challenged by Satan. Satan was furious that Job had been so blessed with a large family and remarkable prosperity. He accused God of playing favorites—that the reason Job was so dutiful in his worshipful obedience was because God had built a “hedge” around him to bribe him into obedience (Job 1:8-12; 2:3-7).

And then we listen to the amateur theologians who came to explain to Job why he had experienced these horrible disasters (Job 2:11-13). What we read in the following chapters of the book are the various reasons that many people today still use to explain awful calamities. Either Job is hiding deep secrets of evil habits and God is punishing Him, or God responds only to the upright and ignores those who suffer calamities because He is a just God, or God is so righteous and just that He can only vent wrath against the wicked, or that Job is receiving less punishment than he deserves.

We hear so many echoes of Job’s three “friends” today, on the internet, in media articles, and from many pulpits.

The apostle Paul stated it clearly:

Satan is “the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient” (Ephesians 2:2).² He is more than a myth! He is God’s great antagonist, doing all he can to distract, demoralize, and destroy men and women. And for reasons that God knows, He will gradually withdraw the restraining power that He has been exerting over Satan’s murderous plans.³

Jesus’ view of the future

Of course, this planet has always had earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, typhoons, and famines. Some of the worst of these on record happened long years ago, with far greater damage than we have experienced in the last few years, even though we have greater populations in these same areas today.

During the final days of Jesus’ ministry on earth, His followers asked Him about signs of the end of time and of His promised return. Among other pointers, Jesus told them: “You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains” (Matthew 24:6-8).

In other words, the world will always have wars, earthquakes, pestilences, and disasters. But there are specific signs that He outlined in Matthew 24 and 25, such as the gospel going to the entire world, and then He would return (24:14). He compared the last days of Planet Earth to the last days before Noah entered the ark (24:37-39). He likened His delayed return to the delay in the bridegroom’s appearance at his wedding (25:5).

Detecting the difference

As we reflect on the disasters of recent years, we notice a difference with those of the past. On a graph, we would draw this upsurge in frequency

and intensity as an exponential curve with an upward slope that rises sharply in contrast to a predicted increase that follows a predicted straight line up.

Can anyone deny that hurricanes, floods, famines, pestilences, bankruptcies, moral degradation, depletion of water aquifers, escalating energy consumption, and similar realities are increasing with astonishing speed?⁴ Most people live with the sense that everything is in disarray compared to the life we lived even a few decades ago. There seems to be no way to turn back the clock. The escalator, either down or up, seems to go faster every day. And everyone has the lurking feeling that they can’t get off that escalator. This sense is heightened when the latest disaster is broadcast through the global media and sent to our computers.⁵

An Adventist perspective

For more than 150 years, Seventh-day Adventists have been proclaiming to the world that human history is steadily moving toward its culmination, as predicted by God Himself in the Scriptures. We are encouraged by noting that millions of fellow-Christians have also begun focusing their attention and hope on the soon coming of Jesus. In addition, there are now dozens of Internet websites devoted to last-day events. The “Left Behind” best-selling book series plus their “Left Behind” movies more than amplifies the sense of something awful about to happen.

However, based on our understanding of Bible prophecy, we don’t believe that Christians will be rescued in a secret Rapture or that Israel is a key figure in last-day events. Nor do we look for an Armageddon where modern armies fight it on the Plains of Esdraelon.

Optimists are right: The world will not end in either a whimper or a bang. World nuclear powers will not incinerate the earth; we will not drown or be suffocated in our own garbage,

nor shrivel up in mass starvation.

And pessimists are also right: This world may soon have all the vaccines needed for all the physical challenges we face today, but there will be no vaccine for the rising tsunamis of moral garbage that permeates modern life, especially in the “enlightened” Western world. All the GPS devices and gasless cars will not drown out the increasing hatred that plague communities as well as between nations.

Conclusion

It is beyond human knowledge to understand the precise interaction of human, natural, and supernatural factors causing the increasing disasters our world experiences. For the Bible believer, however, some things are certain: Satan seeks to destroy as many people as he can by any means available to him. Ultimately, truth will triumph, and God and His loyalists will be vindicated. In the end, He will make all things right. We live in the waning days of Earth’s history. Each day is precious and unrepeatable.

“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming” (2 Peter 3:9-12).

Are you, am I ready?

Herbert E. Douglass (Th.D., Pacific School of Theology) has served as teacher, college president, and editor. He is the author of 16 books,

Continued on page 23

PROFILES



In March 2005, when Dr. Lidija Odorčić was named Pediatrician of the Year in Slovenia, it was the second time the honor had gone to an Adventist since this national recognition was established ten years ago. The distinction is awarded by one of the national health magazines that asks people to call in or send the name of their most favorite doctor to a local radio station or a newspaper. The campaign takes place in the first quarter of each year, at the end of which the winner is announced. In 2005, Dr. Odorčić got the most votes from a list of 1,535 named doctors.

"This recognition," says the doctor, "is not a professional award. Rather it is a recognition for good communication with patients." One campaign organizer comments, "This recognition is an expression of thanks and respect for good work, self-sacrifice, kindness, and philanthropy."

When Dr. Odorčić and her doctor-husband moved 20 years ago into Kočevje, a small town with a population of 12,000, there were no Adventists around. Thanks to their positive impact on the community, an Adventist church was established there in June 2002. Slovenia, with its two

Lidija Odorčić

Dialogue with an Adventist family doctor in Slovenia

million inhabitants, has more than 500 Adventists worshipping in 13 churches.

■ *Please, tell us something about yourself, your family and your work.*

I'm a physician who cares for about 1,800 people, mostly children and youth. Together with my husband, who is a family medicine practitioner, we run a clinic in Kočevje. We have two sons. The older is in college, studying philosophy, and the younger is still in the secondary school.

Kočevje is a small town, 60 km southward from Ljubljana, the Slovenian capital. It's located on the edge of a dense forest where you can still meet bears, lynxes, other wild animals, and plenty of deer. Working 60 km away from the nearest hospital is very challenging.

■ *Let's begin with your childhood days.*

I was born in Delnice, Croatia, when it was still a part of the Communist state of Yugoslavia. My grandparents were already Seventh-day Adventists. However, as we grew up, political authorities always viewed religious commitment negatively. It could mean an obstacle in education or in any kind of professional promotion. That's why as a little girl I wanted to become an independent dressmaker; that way I could keep my Sabbath. My younger sister and I grew up in a warm and pleasant home, well cared for by our kind and devoted parents.

I began my education in a music school. Four years later, our local church lost its organist and I was appointed to take her place. When I was in third grade, I had this strong feeling that I should become a physi-

cian. I clearly remember the circumstances surrounding that decision. Our family was visiting a relative who had recently returned from hospital. She was complaining about how harsh the nurses and physicians were. I felt deeply for her, and I decided: "OK, I'll become a physician, but a kind and gentle one."

After the elementary school I went to an Adventist institution with a secondary school and a theological training center in Maruševac, Croatia. The school operated in an old 17th century castle. There were plenty of young people, all Christians. There was music as well. So once again I had the opportunity to take my musical classes.

■ *How did you get into medical school?*

While I was in the secondary school, I devoted most of my time to music and less to science. Because of a low grade in science, I was not selected by the medical school in Zagreb. So I ended up at the Academy of Music, but a brush with an impolite piano teacher turned me sour, and I kept praying that somehow doors will open for entry into medicine.

And God did open doors. By a sheer miracle I was accepted into the medical school. It was still in the days of the old regime, and from time to time there were classes and examinations on Saturdays. With prayer and some diplomatic skills I managed to get my Sabbath privilege. But in the third year of study, I faced a real hurdle. The pathological anatomy class had practice every day of the week. Each day had a special program, and if you missed one day, you could make up for it on the same day of the next week.

That meant a serious problem for me: I could never make up my Saturday laboratory session without breaking the Sabbath. I spoke to the professor in charge, asking for an exception because of my faith. She was not only unwilling to allow any exemption, but was harsh and insulting against my faith, my church, and me. The teacher was a very influential person, a former partisan soldier and a fierce Communist. Although disappointed, I continued to study and participate in all other classes so well that when the finals came, I passed the examination successfully.

■ *Then what?*

When we finished our medical education, my husband and I accepted a job in Slovenia. The region where we settled did not have an Adventist presence. The nearest church was some 45 km away. It was good-bye to choir, singing groups, Sabbath school, youth and other church activities.

For many years my husband and I worked with Adventist church leaders, holding health and lifestyle seminars in many churches throughout the territory of our conference. Finally we decided to hold one such seminar in our town also. Soon we were able to have a church with ten members and as many friends.

■ *You both practiced in government medical units. Your husband was director in one such institution. How come you started your private clinic?*

With the break-up of Yugoslavia, new borders emerged, and also new opportunities and freedom. First, my husband started a private clinic, and later I followed him.

I enjoy my work very much. When I see the joy on my patients' faces, the victory over their problems and their trust and cooperation in therapeutic measures, it makes me happy. In my office I also meet many babies and children who are brought in for their regular check-ups, vaccinations, and

developmental tests. Working with children is always a joy!

■ *If when you were young someone would have told you, that you would be named Pediatrician of the Year in Slovenia, what would you have thought?*

Impossible! That would have been my reaction. As an independent physician, I am subject to frequent inspections and supervisions. That is not the case with my colleagues in public institutions. I have to be very cautious in prescribing medicines, while at the same time being careful about protecting my patients' rights. A person playing by the rules cannot be popular. So I was really surprised that the choice fell on me in a competition.

■ *What do you consider as significant principles in your professional practice?*

I believe the gospel provides us with some basic principles that are applicable to any profession. As a Christian I must not discriminate between persons. I must respect the integrity and privacy of all those I work with. I must show support and understanding wherever needed, and I must carry on my task with honesty, truth, and love. With such guiding principles, we can all succeed in what we do.

■ *What is the religious situation in Slovenia? What about the Seventh-day Adventist Church?*

During the 16th and 17th centuries Slovenia was a Protestant country, but after those years it became mostly Catholic. In recent times, strong secular and New Age influences are on the rise. But there are still people who are searching for the truth. The Adventist Church, though small in number, is very active. I am sure that with God's help and by the involvement of young people who are now in charge, our church will experience greater influence and growth.

■ *What would your counsel be to Adventist young people on the threshold*

of starting a career?

Priority is what makes the difference between us as Christians and the rest of the world. The path before us isn't a bed of roses; it is rocky, tough, and often a climb. But leaning on God and His promises, we can make it. My counsel is the same as Solomon's and continues to be my motto: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5, 6, KJV).

Interview by Zvonko Vrtič

Zvonko Vrtič is the editor of Slovenian church paper *Adventistični pregled*. His email address: advent.pregled@siol.net.

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PROFILES



Duane Maynard Cady, M.D., is a husband, father, grandfather, church member, and surgeon. Since July 2005, he is also the chair of the board of the American Medical Association (AMA), holding the top elected position in this influential 250,000-member professional organization that shapes health-care services for 300 million

Duane Maynard Cady, M.D.

Dialogue with an Adventist physician and chair of the American Medical Association

Americans. The AMA is the oldest and most influential medical organization in the United States.

Dr. Cady, who has been involved with the AMA since 1966, received a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Atlantic Union College and a medical degree from Loma Linda University's School of Medicine. He completed his residency at the State University of New York, Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse. Dr. Cady is also a former captain of the U.S. Army Medical Corps and served as an army surgeon in Vietnam.

Dr. Cady has worked as medical staff president, chair of the department of surgery, and member of the board of trustees at St. Joseph's Hospital in Syracuse, New York. He is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons, a diplomat of the National Board of Medical Examiners, and a member of Alpha Omega Alpha National Honor Society. He has also served as chair of the New York State Medicaid Managed Care Advisory Council and was a member of the governor's Task Force on Hospital Reimbursement Reform.

Over the years, Dr. Cady has used his leadership skills to serve the Adventist Church. He has helped pastors present smoking-cessation programs in the community, served on the church board and finance committee, and been chairman of the Parkview Junior Academy Board. Dr. Cady currently serves on the board of trustees at Atlantic Union College, where he is heading the college's \$25-million capital campaign for the development of the institution.

As head of the AMA, Dr. Cady

spends much of his time in councils, commissions, health-care policy development sessions, and comparing notes with congressional leaders. Once his AMA term expires in 2007, Dr. Cady plans to retire from organized medicine after a career spanning more than 40 years.

■ *You first became involved in the AMA in 1966 shortly after beginning your surgery practice. What led you to get involved with this professional organization? And how has it shaped your career?*

I wouldn't say that AMA has shaped my career, but it has added another dimension to it and rounded it out. It has also given me the opportunity to meet all kinds of people. Most physicians join professional organizations for the contacts and the benefits they derive, such as group insurance; but I have always felt that being involved in professional organizations, such as AMA, is part of my obligation as a doctor. Although I joined AMA in 1966, I was involved primarily with my state and county medical associations for most of the time until 1992. It was then that I got really involved with AMA.

■ *What is the most important issue that you have dealt with in the area of medical care?*

The number one public issue I have dealt with, and continue to deal with, is how to provide health insurance to the uninsured. There are more than 45 million uninsured people in America—a fact that has indisputable economic and social consequences.

The second most important issue

is tort reform—or medical liability reform. Our nation's medical liability system is broken. Skyrocketing medical liability premiums—\$200,000 a year or more in some high-risk specialties—are forcing physicians to limit services, retire early, or move to a state with reforms where liability insurance premiums are more stable. The crisis is threatening access to care for patients in states without liability reforms.

■ *Do you think it is important for Adventists to be involved in advocacy and stay informed about social and political issues?*

The Bible says, “Render...to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s.” I do think we have a responsibility to be involved, even if it is just at the most basic level of voting. How involved you get depends upon the individual. It is all part of good citizenship.

■ *You have said your “mission” in life is health care. Can you explain?*

Taking care of patients isn’t just my goal as a doctor, but it is my personal mission. Some physicians look at it differently and often allow other priorities to get in the way of taking care of patients. I believe that medicine is a “calling”—even for the non-Christian.

■ *Do you have opportunities to share your faith even as you carry on your work?*

Yes, through the people and groups I meet and interact with. My fellow AMA board members know that I am a Christian as well. I also lead out in church programs in the community.

■ *How do you maintain a balance between your spiritual life and your busy schedule?*

My personal devotion time each day is an important part of that. I also believe that being active in my church is an integral part of my spiritual life—fellowship, leading out in

Sabbath school, being a church elder are all part of that.

■ *When you were a student and pursuing your medical studies, what challenges did you face?*

The sheer volume of material one has to learn is the biggest challenge for most medical students. It has become even more difficult now because today, there is much more information to learn. When I was a student, I studied every night, except Friday, and for hours. That can be difficult when you are married or have kids. Many medical students find it very challenging to keep up their family life. The divorce rate is very high among medical students.

■ *What advice would you give to a young Adventist pursuing a career as a doctor?*

First, make sure you do as well as you can in medical school and learn all you can in your postgraduate residency training. Always remember that medicine is a life-long learning experience. Second, pick a field or specialty that you are actually interested in and will enjoy. Don’t select it just because it pays the most money. You are going to be doing this for the next 40 years, so you better enjoy it. Third, stick with it despite the challenges. The medical field is hard and demanding, and it can be stressful, but to me it also is the most satisfying.

Interview by Nicole Batten.

Nicole Batten is the publicity director at Pacific Press in Nampa, Idaho. You can reach Dr. Duane Cady by writing the American Medical Association, 515 N. State Street, Chicago, Illinois 60610, U.S.A. To learn more about the AMA, visit their website at www.ama-assn.org.

Natural disasters

Continued from page 19

including *Messenger of the Lord* (Pacific Press, 1998) and *God at Risk* (Amazing Facts, 2004). His email: herbdouglass@sbcglobal.net.

REFERENCES

*Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references in this article are from the New International Version.

1. Ellen G. White’s comments are significant: “Angels are belting the world, refusing Satan his claims to supremacy, made because of the vast multitude of his adherents. We hear not the voices, we see not with the natural sight the work of these angels, but their hands are linked about the world, and with sleepless vigilance they are keeping the armies of Satan at bay till the sealing of God’s people shall be accomplished” (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1980], vol. 7, p. 967).
2. “Satan is working in the atmosphere; he is poisoning the atmosphere, and here we are dependent upon God for our lives—our present and eternal life. And being in the position that we are, we need to be wide awake, wholly devoted, wholly converted, wholly consecrated to God. But we seem to sit as though we were paralyzed. God of heaven, wake us up!” (Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1980], Book 2, p. 51).
3. “Satan works through the elements also to garner his harvest of unprepared souls. He has studied the secrets of the laboratories of nature, and he uses all his power to control the elements as far as God allows.... He will bring disease and disaster, until populous cities are reduced to ruin and desolation. Even now he is at work. In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hail-storms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous. Destruction will be upon both man and beast” (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* [Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1911], pp. 589, 590).
4. “I have been shown that the Spirit of the Lord is being withdrawn from the earth. God’s keeping power will soon be refused to all who continue to disregard His commandments... Iniquity is becoming so common a thing that it no longer shocks the senses as it once did” (Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events* [Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1992], p. 27).
5. “When God’s restraining hand is removed, the destroyer begins his work” (*ibid.*, p. 111).

LOGOS

In God's good time

Hope deferred often gives God the opportunity to work out a better plan for us.

by Mary H.T. Wong

Anger and frustration marked my reaction as I took the call of my real estate agent. For almost the 20th time, my husband and I had lost out in our bid for a house of my liking, and two years had slipped by since we started house hunting. We must have looked at a hundred houses since our return to the area.

Having been holed up in highrise buildings in the mission field, we were determined to find a house with a big yard and a view of the mountains or a body of water. For this reason, each time we were taken to see a house, our first inclination was to look out the windows, to see if we could see any mountains. Just a glimpse of the mountains in the horizon would do. True, we were taken to look at houses located at the foot of the mountains or the slopes of the mountains, but either the price was beyond our budget, or the houses did not meet our criteria even though they offered a beautiful view.

Then there was the recent trend that frustrated us beyond measure. Although it had been the buyer's market since we first came to the area, and there were often predictions that the bubble would burst and prices of houses would plunge, the market continued to be hot. Several times we thought we had found the ideal house and made an offer, only to have someone else outbid us. Those were the times when I cried out to God in

bitterness and hit Him with the questions: "Why, God? Don't you care for my needs?"

We had just about given up in despair when the unexpected happened. Told of a house for sale, we drove to the address given. However, it was another house with a "For Sale" sign in the next street that caught our attention. Behind it, less than half a mile away, rose a whole chain of mountains, and in the horizon we could see other mountain ranges. We had our mountain view from all angles. We got the house even though our offer was not the highest.

Now each day, as we revel in the breathtakingly beautiful view of the mountains and thrill at the splendor of the sunrise and sunset etched against them, we continue to be amazed that, although we had initially asked to have only a glimpse of the mountain, God has provided us with a view of the whole range of mountains within close proximity. Certainly God has answered our prayers in a way beyond our expectation. We can now look back and understand why He had allowed us to experience the disappointment of not getting the other houses. It was not because He didn't care for our needs, but because He had in mind a house that would give us more than what we expected and asked for. He just needed to work things out in His own good time!

Joseph:

A new turn after a long wait

After this experience, I now read two biblical accounts with new understanding. First, I see youthful Joseph bound and thrust roughly into the caravan bearing him away from the sheltered life of a much-loved son to a life of bondage. As his anguished eyes scanned the hills for the least sign of deliverance, his pleas for help seemed only to bounce back from a brazen sky. Engulfed in despair, he found himself in Egypt, a slave to Potiphar. He could only drown his sorrow in hard work. His master appreciated his industry and trustworthiness and elevated his status. Then just when everything was going well, his mistress' snare brought about the reversal of his fortune and landed him in prison.

In prison, Joseph continued to turn to God as the source of his strength and did his best under the circumstances. Then deliverance came from unexpected quarters. His accurate interpretation of the dreams for the butler and baker led to the release of the former. His only request was for the butler to tell Pharaoh about him and his plight. However, days dragged by, and nothing happened. As he continued to languish in prison in the prime of his life, he must have thrown a thousand "Why's" heavenward.

Then what was that? Heavy pounding on the door of his cell. The guards had come for him with great urgency. Fear gripped him. Was he being hustled out for execution? He was totally unprepared for the honors that followed his interpretation of the dreams of Pharaoh. As he rode around in the chariots, second in command to Pharaoh, it finally dawned on him why God had given the butler temporary amnesia. Had he told Pharaoh about Joseph immediately after his release, would his interpretation of Pharaoh's dream have made the impact it did? In His wisdom, God had allowed Joseph to wait so that His plan could be carried out in a way that far exceeded his

wildest dreams.

Moses: Tragedy and triumph

Next I see young prince Moses strutting from the palace of Pharaoh, bursting with the vision of a mission he had been impressed with since childhood—the deliverance of his people from bondage in Egypt. Unfortunately, carried away by misguided zeal, he took an impulsive course of action that thrust him from the palace into the bleak wilderness. With frustrations and despair, he stumbled his way through rock-strewn paths behind flocks of bleating sheep instead of the multitude of Israelites he had dreamed of leading into freedom. Looking up at the towering mountains that shut him off from the world he had known, he must have cried out “Why, God? Have you deserted me?”

Forty years later, just when he was resigned to spending the rest of his life as a humble shepherd in the desert, God called to him out of the burning bush and outlined his mission—to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. By then his wilderness sojourn had eroded his confidence to carry out his mission. However, prodded by God and with promise of help and support from his older brother, he accepted the call.

In Egypt, in spite of the initial bitter rejection by the Israelites and thwarted by the unbending will of Pharaoh, he finally was able to stage the great and spectacular exodus. But how he chafed under the burden of leading such a multitude of rebellious and stiff-necked people! Relief flooded him when they finally arrived at the border of Canaan. He would soon be relieved of his thankless job, but, overcome by fear, the people refused to go in to take the promised land and were punished to wander in the wilderness for forty years. We can see Moses once more crying out, “Why, God?”

Forty years crawled by, and Moses again found himself approaching the border of Canaan. Once again his dream was frustrated. For what might

appear to be a minor deviation from carrying out of God’s orders at Kadesh, he was again barred from entering the promised land. He had to be satisfied with only a glimpse of the land of milk and honey on the other side of Jordan. Without complaint, Moses submitted to God’s will. What surprise awaited him when he awoke to find himself in the heavenly Canaan!

As Solomon has so aptly put it, “Hope deferred makes the heart sick” (Proverbs 13: 12, NIV). However, in the light of my own experience and that of Joseph and Moses, I would like to add that “hope deferred” often times gives God the opportunity to work out a better plan for us. All we need to do is to submit ourselves to His will and allow Him to work things out in His own good time.

Mary H.T.Wong (Ph.D., Michigan State University) is an English teacher and a free-lance writer residing in San Jose, California, U.S.A.

God’s will

Continued from page 8

This is essential, because we shouldn’t place too much confidence in our own opinion, which frequently is partial and limited. The Bible’s advice is clear: “Lean not on your own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5). “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death” (Proverbs 16:25). Yet, ultimately, the decision should be ours. We must own our choice, be as comfortable as we can with it, and then proceed.

In spite of having taken these steps, it is possible that we may still make mistakes and wrong choices. But God is patient with us (Psalm 103:13, 14). We should ask for forgiveness, retrace our steps, and start anew.

Conclusion

During His ministry, Jesus repeated a basic story with variations. It’s the parable of a man who owned a farm. Before an extended absence, the man asks his trusted servant to take care of business while he is away. When he returns, the owner asks for a report of how his servant has handled his responsibility. In a similar vein, He told the story of a rich man who entrusts parts of his fortune to several employees and after some time asks them for a report.

The essential message is the same: God has entrusted us with life, talents, opportunities, and options. He encourages us to act with faithfulness and prudence. He provides us with guidance and then allows us to make choices. He rejoices whenever we make wise decisions and is eager to help us regain our footing whenever we make a bad choice.

God wants us to make good decisions. His promise is certain: “For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end” (Psalm 48:14). Whenever we face an important decision, we may pray with David: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23, 24).

Humberto M. Rasi (Ph.D., Stanford University) is the founder and editor-in-chief of *Dialogue*.

REFERENCES

1. All Bible references in this article are from the New International Version.
2. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White has provided inspired and compelling guidance in many aspects of the Christian life, based on the principles of Scripture. Through the years, Adventists have consulted her writings and found trustworthy counsel for making wise decisions.
3. Adapted from Dwight L. Carlson, *Living God’s Will*, pp.153-156.

ACTION REPORT



Division-wide AMiCUS Congress in Italy

by Roberto Bandenas

About 550 university students and scholars from more than 20 European countries gathered in Lido di Jesolo, near Venice (Italy), October 28-31, 2005, for the third Euro-Africa Division International Student Congress.

The event was organized and sponsored by the Division Education and Youth Departments, under the shared leadership of Roberto Badenas and Corrado Cozzi, within the framework

of AMiCUS (Adventist Ministry to/with College and University Students).

The theme of the Congress—"Incredible Faith: Is It Reasonable to Believe in God in the 21st Century?"—challenged both the mind and the spirit of the participants. The presenters included Humberto Rasi (*Dialogue* editor-in-chief) on "Mental Filters for Thinking Christians"; Mart de Groot (astronomer) on "From Creation to Evolution and Back"; Jacques Sauvagnat (paleontologist) on "Is Faith in Evolution Credible?"; and Fernando Canale (philosopher and theologian) on "Is Bible Faith Credible for Postmodern Minds?"

The AMiCUS conferences, held periodically, seek (1) to help students expand their minds on current issues related to faith and science within a Christian worldview; (2) to provide an enriching spiritual experience while facing intellectually challenging questions; and (3) to provide the context for fellowship and interaction within an international group of Adventist students and scholars.

The participants rated the conference as "highly satisfactory." Typical

reactions can be summarized in what Corinna Schweitzer, management assistant, ADRA Switzerland, noted: "I very much liked the contact with so many young and motivated people. The most important point for me is to never stop asking questions in order to better understand the greatness of God! God has given us great potential and we are to make the best out of that for Him."

Miguel Nunes, who studies aerospace engineering in Portugal, stated, "The lectures were extremely interesting and made me think on these topics in new ways. The question that brought us to the meeting, 'Is it reasonable to believe in God in the 21st Century?' was very well answered—Yes, it is!"

Another participant—Nicoleta Clarisa Turtoi, a medical school graduate from Romania—was almost ecstatic in her reaction: "Inspired idea, beautiful area, wonderful people, topics of great interest, captivating presentations by true professionals, tricky questions and specific answers, and opportunity to fellowship with students of different cultures. But most of all, a reminder of our calling to spread the aroma of Christ among our non-Christian colleagues."

Well, that's what the conference tried to do: To catch "the aroma of Christ," and then to spread it abroad. The next international AMiCUS meeting for the Euro-Africa Division is scheduled for 2008. For more information visit <http://www.amicus.euroafrica.org>.

Send us your group's report

Leaders of Adventist university student associations are invited to send a brief report of their group's activities and one or two digital photos for publication in *Dialogue*. Include all relevant information about the student group, describe its main activities, challenges, and plans, and list the name, position, and email address of the report's author. Send them to Humberto M. Rasi (h.rasi@adelphia.net) and to Esther Rodriguez (rodrigueze@gc.adventist.org). Thank you!

Roberto Badenas (Th.D., Andrews University) is director of the Education Department and *Dialogue* representative for the Euro-Africa Division, with headquarters in Bern, Switzerland. His email address: Roberto.badenas@euroafrica.org.

OPEN FORUM

What is the meaning of *kinds* in Genesis?

I have been discussing with my colleagues the meaning of the words kind and kinds that are mentioned in the Creation narrative of Genesis 1:21, 24, and 25. How are we to understand these terms in a modern context? How do they relate to current terms and classifications in biology?

In order to better address this inquiry, the comments will be offered as answers to four related questions.

1. What does “according to their kinds” mean? The Hebrew word translated as “kind” is *min*, which has the sense of a “kind,” as when one sorts out a collection of objects into various categories. The phrase “according to its kind” and similar phrases are used in three contexts. The different contexts are found in Genesis 1; Genesis 6 and 7; Leviticus 11; and Deuteronomy 14. The contexts may be illustrated by the following texts. In Genesis 1:21, we are told that God created creatures “according to their kinds.”* In Genesis 6:20, the text states that animals entered the ark “according to their kinds.” In Leviticus 11:14, the unclean birds include the falcon “according to its kind.”

None of these texts is referring in any way to reproduction, or to whether “kinds” can or cannot change. Instead, it appears that phrases such as “according to its kind” is describing a diversity that is included in a single term such as aquatic creatures, creeping things, falcons, etc. For example, Genesis 1:21 refers to aquatic creatures “according to their kinds.” The text could as well be translated “all kinds of creatures that live in the water” (TEV).

2. Does the reference to “kinds” indicate that the created “kinds” could not change, but were fixed? No. In reality, the Bible predicts that

species will change. One of the results of sin was the curse on plants, producing thorns and thistles. How could thorns and thistles be the result of the curse if they had been part of the original creation? The fact that they represent a change is evidence that plants have changed since the creation. The curse on the serpent shows that animals can also change. How could crawling on the belly be a curse if the serpent were created crawling on its belly? Isaiah 65:25 suggests that God intends that wolves should not eat lambs, nor that lions be predators, but that all of creation live in peaceful harmony. The existence of parasites and flightless birds are further evidence that species can change.

3. Can species change so much that new species may be produced?

The Bible does not address this question, but it can be explored empirically. First, we must define what a “species” is. The most common definition of a species is “a group of interbreeding, or potentially interbreeding, populations.” There are many examples of populations that are virtually indistinguishable, yet do not interbreed. For example, the European shrew, a tiny mammal, appears similar in all parts of its range, but detailed studies revealed a number of non-interbreeding populations. Such non-interbreeding populations are classified as different species, whether or not a non-expert can tell them apart. Such examples strongly indicate that new species have been produced.

Species confined to a single, small region provide additional evidence that new species can be produced. This is especially noticeable on islands. Many islands have species that are found nowhere else. Examples include

the marine iguana of the Galapagos Islands, the Hawaiian finches, and the babirusa pig of Celebes Island. In each case, the most reasonable explanation for the restriction of such species to their respective islands is that they have changed in isolation, from an original colonization by an ancestor that would be classified in a different species.

Then, does the text mean that species can change without limit as in the evolutionary theory? No. The text clearly states that God created diversity from the beginning. Diversity is part of the original creation, with further diversification afterward. There are many independently created lineages, some of which may have only one or a few species, while other lineages may include many species. (A “lineage” consists of an originally created “kind” and all its descendants.)

4. Can we use some taxonomic category to identify the separately created lineages? No. Taxonomic categories are subjectively constructed for the convenience of taxonomists. There is no direct relationship between any taxonomic category and the originally created lineages. Identifying the members of different lineages is one of the goals of creation research.

* Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible texts in this article are quoted from the Revised Standard Version.

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Adventist lifestyle and longevity

by Richard Weismeyer

Is Adventist lifestyle worth the price? Some may not think so, but a feature article in the November 2005 issue of *National Geographic* magazine takes the opposite stance.

The article, "The Secrets of Living Longer" by Dan Buettner featured several individuals enrolled in Loma Linda University's Adventist Health Study II and extolled the Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle, in which vegetarianism plays a prominent role.

The writer/photographer team of Buettner and David McLain traveled to Okinawa, Japan, Sardinia, Italy, and Loma Linda, California, to interview numerous individuals, who, according to the article, "live longer, healthier lives than just about anyone else on Earth."

In the column, "From the Editor," the magazine's chief editor Chris Johns wrote: "We yearn to live if not forever, then at least for a very long time.... Historical figures, like the Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de Leon, searched for the fountain of youth, convinced that it held the secret to staying young."

"Perhaps he was on to something: The Seventh-day Adventists of Loma Linda, California, who rank among America's longevity all-stars, promote drinking at least five glasses of water a day. Can we drink, eat, or exercise our way to a longer life? Answers, complex but fascinating, can be found in our article. In the meantime, start your own quest for longevity by easing up on the grump quotient. You, and everyone around you, just might live longer."

Buettner made several trips to Loma Linda, interviewing a number of individuals about their lifestyle.

Loma Linda resident and long-time Loma Linda University church member Marge Jetton, age 101, was featured prominently in the article, as was Gary Fraser, M.D., Ph.D., a cardiologist at Loma Linda University Medical Center and professor of epidemiology and biostatistics in the School of Public Health. Fraser is the principal investigator for the Adventist Health Study II.

Photographer David McLain spent several days in Loma Linda taking hundreds of photographs. In his view, Adventists "have a religion that reinforces positive, healthy behaviors." "If you are a devout Seventh-day Adventist," he added, "you are a vegetarian, non-smoker, non-drinker, who takes a Sabbath every Saturday, where for one whole day you have to just unplug." His photographs included a two-page spread featuring Jetton filling up her automobile with fuel at a self-serve station. Since the article appeared in *National Geographic*, Mrs. Jetton has sold her automobile. She says, "Where I live now, I'm within walking distance of everything, so don't need to drive. Besides, with the cost of fuel nowadays, I'm saving a lot of money."

Others pictured in the article are Ellsworth E. Wareham, M.D., emeritus professor of surgery at Loma Linda University School of Medicine, who at age 91 still assists with heart surgery; and Scott Smith, former associate pastor at the Loma Linda University church, and now a first-year student at Loma Linda University School of Dentistry. Pastor Smith is pictured baptizing an academy student at the Loma Linda University church.

In his article, Buettner wrote that

from 1976 to 1988, the National Institutes of Health "funded a study of 34,000 California Adventists to see whether their health-oriented lifestyle affected their life expectancy and the risk of heart disease and cancer." The study found that consuming beans, soy milk, fruits, tomatoes, and other vegetables lowered the risk of developing certain types of cancer.

Buettner added: "In the end, the study reached a stunning conclusion, says Gary Fraser of Loma Linda University: The average Adventist lived four to 10 years longer than the average Californian. That makes the Adventists one of the nation's most convincing cultures of longevity."

The article also presented a brief history of the Seventh-day Adventist health message, noting that the Adventist Church expressly "forbids smoking, alcohol consumption, and eating biblically unclean foods, such as pork." It also discourages "the consumption of other meat, rich foods, caffeinated drinks, and 'stimulating' condiments and spices."

Buettner concluded his article with one last question, noting that after interviewing more than 50 centenarians on three continents, "I've found every one likeable; there hasn't been a grumpy group in the bunch. What's the secret to a century of congeniality?"

"Well, I like to talk to people," she [Jetton] says. "I look at strangers as friends I haven't met yet." She pauses to rethink her answer. "Then again, people may look at me and wonder, Why doesn't that woman keep her mouth shut?"

Since Buettner's article appeared in mid-October, the Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle has been the subject of several television newscasts in North America. On Sunday, October 30, 2005, ABC Television's *World News Tonight* featured interviews with Adventist Health Study principal investigator Fraser and *National*

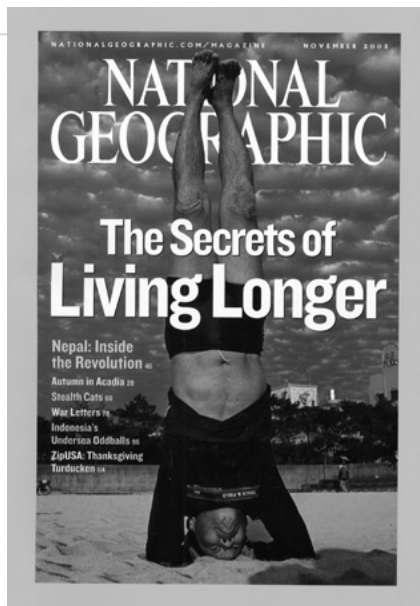
Geographic magazine article subject Jetton. A few days later, ABC's *Good Morning America* television program featured the Adventist Health Study.

And on Wednesday, November 16, CNN television featured several Loma Linda residents in the program "Anderson Cooper 360." Among those featured was Loma Linda's longevity star Marge Jetton. She said that her "secret" of longevity are "exercise, eating wisely, and loving the Lord."

In his commentary, Anderson Cooper noted that Loma Linda, California, "of all places," was one of the centers of the hardiest, longest-lived people in North America. CNN cameras and reporter Gary Tuchman followed Jetton on her daily activities including exercising, riding a stationary bicycle, and power walking.

During the interview, Jetton mentioned that her earliest memory was of the great 1906 San Francisco earthquake. "I was two years old and I remember that the water was splashing out of the horse trough. I wondered if they would have anything left to drink."

Asked about her mental agility at age 101, Jetton credits her faith in Christ and in the Bible as having much to do with it. "I'm a Seventh-day Adventist, and faith in Jesus and the Bible helped a lot."



When asked by reporter Tuchman what she thought about being 101 years of age, Jetton said, "I marvel at it."

The Anderson Cooper 360 report also interviewed Loma Linda University church senior pastor Dr. Randy Roberts, who stated, "Our bodies belong to God. We only have one while we are here on earth."

Another individual interviewed for the program was Loma Linda resident and musician Minnie Iversen Wood, a voice and piano teacher in the area. One of the younger individuals inter-

viewed in the longevity program, Minnie, 97, still teaches voice and piano lessons.

Dan Buettner, interviewed on the Anderson Cooper program, said that the Seventh-day Adventist purpose of life gave them "an enthusiasm for life—something that propelled them into their older years."

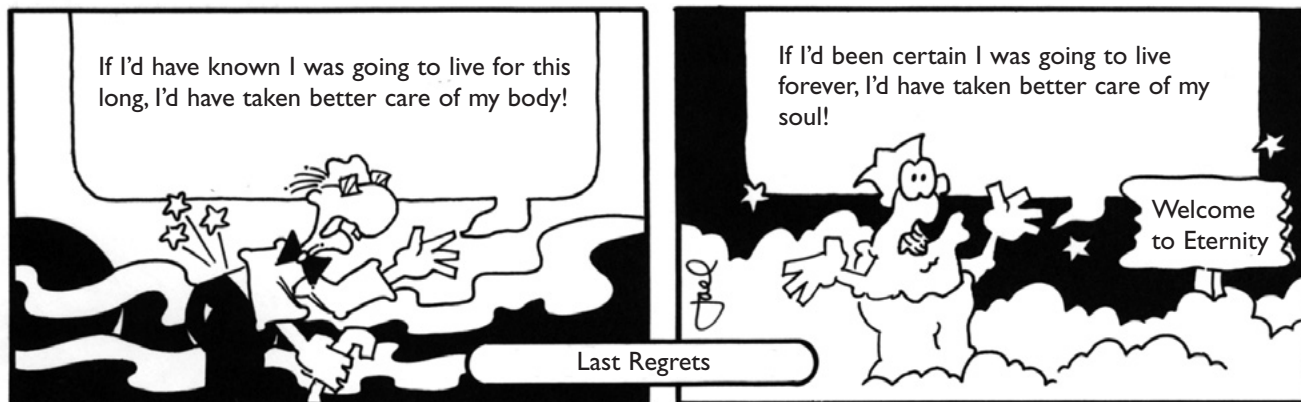
Also interviewed for the program was School of Medicine dean Dr. H. Roger Hadley. He noted that when "you combine one's faith with a good healthful diet and exercise program—that will contribute to a healthy lifestyle and longevity."

As a result of the national attention given to longevity and the Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle, Buettner has been commissioned to write a book on the longevity subject. A book authored by Adventist Health study investigator Gary E. Fraser titled *Diet, Life Expectancy, and Chronic Disease*, was published in 2003 by Oxford University Press and is available at many bookstores or through Amazon.com.

Richard Weismeyer is director of information for the Loma Linda University Adventist Health Sciences Center. His email address: rweismeyer@llu.edu.



Pontius' Puddle



BOOKS



El poder terapéutico del perdón,

by Mario Pereyra (Ñaña, Perú:
Ediciones de la Universidad Peruana
Unión, 2004; 225 pp.; paperback).

Reviewed by Nancy J. Carbonell

Is it possible to forgive someone who has deeply hurt you? Do you find it difficult to forgive yourself for choices you have made? If you have faced such questions, then Dr. Mario Pereyra's book, *El poder terapéutico del perdón* (The Therapeutic Power of Forgiveness), is for you. Dr. Pereyra, a trained clinical psychologist, packages in this book his thoughtful findings from years of research and practice in the area of reparation and forgiveness. His clinical expertise is evident throughout the book, and culminates in step by step guides on how to replace hatred, anger, and bitterness with healing forgiveness.

The author divides the book into three main parts, and captivates the reader with fascinating stories and practical case studies from his experience as a psychologist. In the first part, Dr. Pereyra presents the challenges and limits of forgiveness, reviews historical and conceptual beliefs of prominent leaders, and draws readers to a common starting point by leading them to reflect on the meaning of forgiveness.

In the second part, the author presents the healing properties of forgiveness, describes the major models of therapy used in the treatment leading to forgiveness, and shares with us steps outlining his own model of psycho-social-spiritual forgiveness. His model is unique in that it acknowledges the difference between the kind of forgiveness needed for those who are victims (i.e., a need to forgive someone who has hurt you), and for those who are the wrongdoers (i.e., a need to forgive oneself).

In the third part, the author applies his model to victims and victimizers (biblical and non-biblical), highlighting the therapeutic techniques suggested for those looking to forgive. The book ends by discussing in an analytical and insightful way, the religious, political, and psychological conflicts and biblical truths uncovered by Christ in the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 8:2-11).

From his vast experience in dealing with issues related to forgiveness, Dr. Pereyra discusses this multifaceted concept in an easy to understand way, making sure to address what forgiveness is and what it is not. His writing style takes into account the scholarly nature of the topic and the easy-to-

understand need of his readers. The later is especially noted in the many true-to-life stories the author tells to convey the physical, mental, and spiritual benefits forgiveness can bring. Although I appreciated the practical steps and techniques shared, it should be said that the four phases and 22 steps of Dr. Pereyra's model may seem, at first, overwhelming. But only at first.

I highly recommended this book to anyone who is in need of freeing oneself or others from the bitterness that an unforgiving spirit can bring.

Nancy J. Carbonell (Ph.D., Andrews University) is an associate professor in the Educational and Counseling Psychology Department of Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, U.S.A. She also has maintained a part-time private practice as a licensed psychologist for the past 14 years. Her email: carbonel@andrews.edu



In Passion for the World: A History of Seventh-day Adventist Education,

by Floyd Greenleaf (Boise, Idaho: Pacific
Press Publ. Assn., 2005; soft cover).

Reviewed by John Wesley Taylor V

"Stir me, O stir me, Lord, I care not how; But stir my heart in passion for the world." These poetic lines, penned by Adventist educator Homer Salisbury, serve as the frame for Floyd Greenleaf's comprehensive and captivating history of Seventh-day Adventist education, *In Passion for the World*.

Dr. Greenleaf, an eminent and well-published historian, has written such works as *The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Andrews University Press, 1992) and *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (co-author, Pacific Press, 2000). In this latest work, commissioned by the General Conference Education Department, Greenleaf brings a unique blend of scholarship and insight to the narrative of the birth and development of Adventist education.

For example, did you know that:

- The arrest of Manuel Camacho, the principal of the first Adventist school in Peru, led to profound changes in the national constitution.
- One individual, W. W. Prescott, served simultaneously as president of Battle Creek College, Union College, and

Walla Walla College in the United States.

- The opening of the Zaoski Theological Seminary was headline news on national television in the former Soviet Union.
- Adventist education broke ground in Korea by offering education for girls.
- The first Adventist school established among non-Christians, Solusi, was built on a vast 12,000-acre tract of land.

That is just a taste of the intriguing, and sometimes little-known, history of Adventist education—a movement which has grown from Martha Byington's church school for five New York families in 1853 to one of the largest private educational systems in the world, with more than 6,700 schools and nearly 1.5 million students. It is a story of conviction, commitment, and struggle; a saga of faith and purpose.

Greenleaf has structured the book in three major sections, representing three distinct periods of Adventist education:

The Beginning Years (chapters 1-9) cover the origins of Adventist education from 1872 to 1920—a period in which the first generation of schools appeared and church leaders took the initial steps toward organizing an educational system.

The Interim Years (chapters 10-14) deal with a time of geopolitical turbulence spanning 1920 to 1945, focused on the training schools—a phase of notable expansion and solidification, and of wrestling with key identity issues.

The Years of Fulfillment and Challenge (chapters 15-20), from 1945 to the end of the 20th century, was a period of spectacular growth as well as of struggle—an era of degree-granting institutions and graduate education, a shift from colleges to universities.

Having read the book cover to cover, I am struck by its truly global approach, its vivid language, and the balanced representation of various educational levels, specific institutions, and the overall system. While its view is largely positive, the book also includes a candid look at the gripping issues that have confronted Adventist education. Entire chapters, for example, explore the debate regarding institutional accreditation, graduate education, academic freedom, and the relation to governmental financial aid. A further strength is the manner in which the book discusses Adventist education within the broader context of the historical and socio-political milieu in which it developed.

In addition to the fascinating, behind-the-scenes narrative, *In Passion for the World* presents a wealth of historic photos, firsthand accounts, and archival material previously unpublished. It includes, for example, an entire chapter that chronicles the development of Adventist education in countries governed by radical socialist regimes—a story never before documented to this extent. Recent developments, such as the Institute for Christian Teaching, APN, and yes, *Dialogue*, also emerge.

While of special interest to educators, historians, and those involved in evangelism and church growth, *In Passion for the World* will stir anyone seeking to deepen their roots and be inspired by the marvelous ways in which God has guided the development of the Adventist Church. It will nurture the flame in your own heart as you trace that single thread that “weaves its way through the tapestry of Adventist schools—the conviction to reach the hearts as well as the minds of the people of the world” (p. 11). That passion still lives!

John Wesley Taylor V (Ph.D., Andrews University; Ed.D., University of Virginia) continues to participate in the evolving history of Adventist education, currently serving as professor of educational philosophy and research at Southern Adventist University. His e-mail address is jwvtv@southern.edu.



Uncorked!
The Hidden Hazards of Alcohol,
by John F. Ashton and Ronald S. Laura
(Warburton, Australia: Signs Publishing
Co., 2004; paperback).

Reviewed by Peter N. Landless

Uncorked! by John Ashton and Ronald Laura is an excellent overview on the toxicology of alcohol and the physiological effects of drinking. The book provides important perspectives on the dangers inherent in drinking. The apparent beneficial effects of alcohol are accurately addressed, leading the authors to conclude: “The balance of harm and benefit does not weigh in favor of making a recommendation to the public to drink in order to prevent coronary heart disease. Instead, other much safer dietary recommendations can be made” (p.13).

The book is thoroughly researched and has an index. The references are listed and current, ranging from news journals and the internet to textbooks and peer-reviewed journals.

The authors introduce the reader to the beverage in its various forms. Right at the start the book emphasizes the importance of recognizing our responsibility as a total society and the adopting of a “duty-of-care” attitude in combating the harms related to alcohol. They challenge governments to play their role in regulation, highlighting that these entities have the clout to control and manage the process “if they have the will” (p. 18).

Throughout the book, the authors address important and often neglected social issues candidly and sensitively. The physical and emotional costs of fetal alcohol syndrome are discussed in detail. The enticement of young women to drink more is revealed. The message regarding the effects of alcohol on the fetus is summarized in the chapter title: "Pregnant women never drink alone" (p. 21). This reinforces both responsibility and accountability.

The discussion of the growing problem of alcohol use among teenagers reveals alarming facts. Statistics show that current alcohol-awareness education programs have failed, and according to one report "the average weekly consumption by young people in the 14-24 age group has doubled in the

past 10 years" (p. 37). The book deals with the relationship of alcohol and unsafe sex, and devotes an entire chapter to the problem of drinking and date rape.

The authors further show that alcohol is a major factor in domestic violence, and make a convincing call to understand and respect the emotional needs of women. The same candid approach is evident in the chapter on alcohol and the family.

The closing chapters of the book describe our duty of care in dealing with the problems relating to alcohol, and with strategies for living with alcohol. Having made a strong case for choosing not to drink alcohol, this outstanding work encourages the choice to protect the precious gift of life.

The book is a "must-read" for pastors, teachers and students—and anyone willing to see the true picture related to alcohol consumption.

Peter N. Landless is a physician with specialties in family practice, internal medicine, and cardiology. He serves as the executive director of the International Commission for the Prevention of Alcoholism and drug dependency (ICPA). The ICPA works in 70 countries throughout the world, and its key focus is prevention through advocacy, education, and positive relationships. His email: landlessp@gc.adventist.org.



Loma Linda University

PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE AND ORIGINS

BIOL or GEOL 475 4 quarter units

March 27 – June 8, 2006

Taught by Leonard Brand, Ph.D.

Professor of Biology and Paleontology

This web-based course is an introduction to the scientific process, and the application of this knowledge to understanding the concepts of creation and evolution and earth history in a biblical framework. The goal in the class is for students to be prepared to evaluate the issues in this topic, to be encouraged in their faith in Scripture while understanding and appreciating the positive contributions that science makes.

The tuition charge covers 4 units of tuition plus the textbook, *Faith, Reason and Earth History*, by Leonard Brand. Scholarships are available to cover much of the usual LLU tuition charge. For further information on the course and the available scholarships contact Dr. Brand at lbrand@llu.edu.

Guidelines for Contributors

College and University Dialogue, published three times a year in four parallel language editions, is addressed to Seventh-day Adventists involved in post-secondary education either as students or teachers, and also to Adventist professionals and campus chaplains around the world.

The editors are interested in well written articles, interviews, and reports consistent with *Dialogue's* objectives:

1. To nurture an intelligent, living faith
2. To deepen commitment to Christ, the Bible, and Adventist global mission
3. To articulate a biblical approach to contemporary issues
4. To offer ideas and models of Christian service and outreach.

Dialogue usually assigns articles, interviews, and reports to specific authors for publication. Prospective authors are urged (a) to examine previous issues of our journal, (b) to carefully consider these guidelines, and (c) to submit an abstract and personal background before developing a proposed article. Unsolicited submissions will not be returned.

Check our website:

<http://dialogue.adventist.org>

FIRST PERSON

In search of the true lighted path

by Ausberto Castro

Call it a serendipity. Call it just an accident. To me, it is a sheer miracle. Thirty-five years ago, while living in a small town of the Peruvian Andes, I was searching through my father's old papers. Just why, and why then, I cannot say with certainty. Perhaps that's part of the miracle. Among those papers I found an enrollment card for the *Voice of Hope* Bible correspondence course. Was this an answer to a deep and longing desire gnawing at my heart for months? I filled out the card and dropped it in the mail. Three months later, I received the first two lessons. That was all the jump start I needed to start my spiritual engine. I studied each lesson as carefully as I could. New vistas of truth opened before me and gripped my soul.

Meanwhile, I completed my secondary school in 1975 at the top of my class, and traveled to the coastal city of Trujillo to begin advanced studies at a public university. I went to study engineering, but chose mathematics instead. Although I had not worked with computers, I dreamt about learning all I could about their operation. At the time, my fellow university students were very involved in political action both on and off campus. I slowly became part of political discussions and was elected by the leftist group to represent my class before the faculty council.

I survived in precarious financial circumstances, since my parents had very limited resources, lived far away, and could not help me even for basic necessities. Prompted by circumstances and in order to remain in school, I worked first as a carpenter and then in a pharmacy to continue with my studies.

In the leftist group, I was considered a serious student of political theory and a young man with a bright future. Among my main assignments was serving as liaison with the municipal employees' labor union, the largest in the city at the time. By 1977, I was already taking part in secret conversations sponsored by the budding radical group called *Sendero Luminoso* (The Lighted Path) on techniques of urban and rural warfare. The plan was to launch, in the near future, "a true revolution of the Peruvian proletariat to free the country from imperialism."

My ideals of justice and my political naiveté were leading me toward a dangerous future. About the same time, I was finishing the correspondence course that dealt with Bible prophecy. The amazing accuracy of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation brought coherence and clarity to my mind grappling with troubling social and political issues. The study of prophecy led me to question the materialistic theories advanced by Marx, Lenin, Mao, and the evolutionary concepts of Darwin. I continued to read voraciously world history, the sciences, economics, and religion. Finally I began to question some of the statements made by my university professors. I also decided to talk with my "comrades" about my growing convictions about what I discovered in the Bible. Naturally, they were concerned about the influence my critical questions and statements were having on my classmates and teachers. Just about that time, I finished the last available course from the *Voice of Hope* and received by mail an attractive card inviting me to meet a person at a specif-

ic address in town in order to continue my study of the Scriptures.

Finding the way

A few weeks later, a classmate at the university invited me to visit her church the following Saturday. Since I was the only person in her class who had not visited her congregation, I accepted. Early Saturday morning, I searched for her church in the city but could not find it. On Monday morning, my classmate complained that I had not followed through on accepting her invitation. When I explained to her what had happened, she told me that I had looked for the church in the wrong block, and gave me more specific directions.

The next Sabbath morning, as I prepared to leave, I remembered the card I had received from the *Voice of Hope* and soon discovered that the address was the very same my friend had given me. I took the card with me, and when I arrived at the Central Adventist church, my friend was waiting for me. I asked her if she knew a man by the name of Rodrigo Gutiérrez. She was surprised by my question, so I showed her the card, and she told me he was her pastor! A few minutes later, we were introduced and we made a midweek appointment.

When the pastor visited me, he was surprised by the number of *Voice of Hope* Bible diplomas I had earned through the years. During a second meeting a week later, he asked me many questions about my religious convictions. Noting that I was well versed in the fundamentals of the Bible, he wanted to know if I would like to be included in the baptismal service the following Sabbath. Right then I made my decision. So it was that on June 24, 1978—the second Sabbath I attended an Adventist church—I walked into the baptismal pool to seal my covenant with Jesus Christ and to begin walking in the true Lighted Path.

Three months later, I was named secretary of the Adventist youth group that met in the church, and soon after

was chosen to be its leader. The following year, several of us began the Master Guide training course, and in 1980 I completed it. About that time, I was involved in the foundation of an Adventist secondary school in town and became its mathematics teacher. God was opening new opportunities to serve Him. In 1981, I was named the first young single elder of Trujillo's Central Adventist church. Together with two gifted young leaders, we organized several youth camps, spiritual retreats, Bible seminars, and two-week Voice of Youth evangelistic campaigns. These activities deepened my knowledge of God's Word and strengthened my spiritual convictions. At that point, the administrators of the North Peru Mission offered me a scholarship to study for the ministry at our college near Lima. However, I asked for a postponement so I could finish my studies.

New horizons

In August 1982, two weeks after obtaining my university degree, I was

invited to teach in three of the best universities in Peru, located in the capital city. Because of better salary and working conditions, I chose the National University of Engineering (UNI), in Lima. Soon I joined one of the large Adventist congregations and decided that my new missionary field would be the university students and the center established for them. With the Adventist students, we organized several camping trips and public meetings on Bible prophecy. At the same time, I was active in the teachers' federation at the university.

By the end of 1985, I married the fellow-student who had invited me to her church. The following year we traveled to Porto Alegre, Brazil, where I began my studies toward a Master's degree in applied mathematics. In 1987, I started another graduate degree in computer science, and finally got a doctorate in that field in 1995. My wife also completed a doctorate, in mechanical engineering.

In the meantime, we were able to

assist public education in northern Peru by contributing to the establishment of the National University of Trujillo and by designing the internet connections for that large region of the country.

In 1988, my wife and I returned to Brazil to teach at a community university. For three years we enjoyed many professional satisfactions. We were also active in our small Adventist congregation. However, we were anxious to provide to our two sons an Adventist education, which was not available in the town where we lived. So God opened a new opportunity. The Adventist University Center of Sao Paulo invited us to join their faculty. It was the third time an Adventist institution of higher learning approached us to teach. This time we accepted the call and moved to the huge metropolis of Sao Paulo.

Since January of 2001, I have served as a teacher in software engineering, computer graphics, and telecommunications. I'm active with my sons in the Pathfinder club, serve as an elder in the campus church, and as leader in the Master Guide club. My wife also teaches on campus and coordinates the Spanish Sabbath school.

As I look at the past, I am immensely grateful for all God's blessings. He chose me when I was still in my youth and protected me through the turbulent university years. He has granted me the privilege of witnessing for Him in many situations. I know we shall always have to make decisions, but I pray that the Lord will continue to guide us in each of them. Every time I face an important choice, I find myself confronted by the words of my Lord: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33, KJV).



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The portrait

A wealthy father and his son shared a love for the arts. Together they had assembled a substantial collection of paintings by famous artists—from Rafael to Picasso. They often walked together through their private gallery admiring and discussing their treasures.

War came to the country, and the son was sent to the battlefield. A few months later the son died on the front while rescuing a wounded soldier. To the father, a widower, the loss of his only son was unbearable.

Some time later, a visitor knocked on the residence door. It was a weak-looking young man who carried a package under his arm. Speaking laboriously, he said, “I’m the soldier rescued by your son. He was shot just as he was getting me to safety. Your son talked about you a lot and told us about your art collection and how much you enjoyed it together.”

The young soldier paused uncertainly and then, opening the package, said, “I like to paint. While I was recuperating, I painted your son’s portrait as best as I could recall him. It really has no place among the master paintings you have, but please accept it as a reflection of my deepest gratitude for the man who saved my life.” As the father turned his eyes to the canvass, he saw a magnificent portrait of his son, full of life.

A few years later, the prosperous businessman passed away and arrangements were made to auction his art collection. On the appointed date, a large group of curious neighbors and art lovers assembled in the opulent hall, hoping to acquire at least one of the masterpieces. The soldier’s portrait of the dead son was also exhibited among the paintings of famous artists. The auctioneer explained that the father had stipulated in his will that the auction should begin by auctioning the portrait of his son. A murmur of disapproval rose from those assembled.

Standing next to the portrait, the auctioneer began, “How much do you bid for this family treasure? Do I hear an offer? How much do you bid?”

After a long silence, someone shouted from the back of the hall, “Forget about that portrait! We came for the real paintings!”

The auctioneer insisted, “Who wants to buy this portrait? \$200? Do I hear \$100?”

“We came for the Monets, the Van Goghs, the Picassos! Start the real auction!”

The auctioneer persisted, “Who will take this portrait? What do you offer?”

Finally, a timid voice was heard. “I bid \$10,” said the old family gardener.

“We have \$10! Who offers \$20?” continued the auctioneer. Meanwhile, the group was becoming increasingly restless.

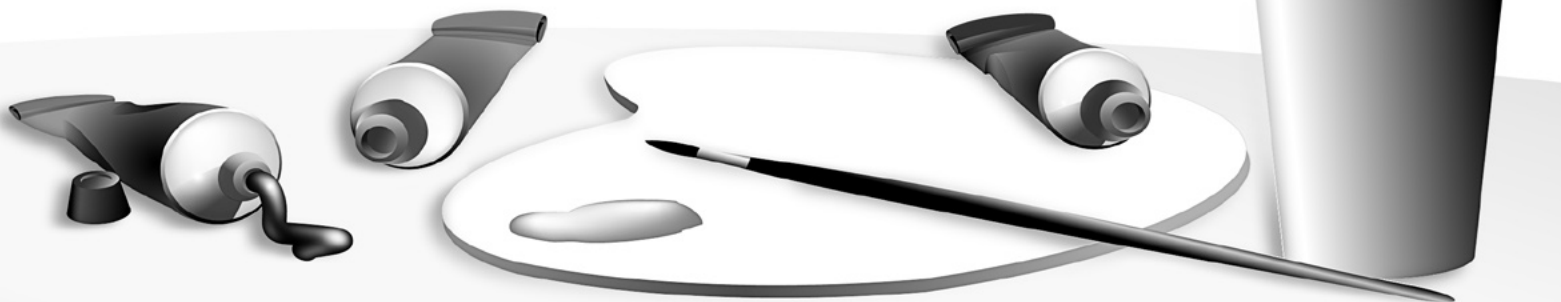
“Going once, going twice.” The auctioneer brought down the gavel. “Sold for \$10!” Motioning to the old gardener, he declared, “The portrait is yours!”

“Finally!” shouted one of the potential bidders. “Now let’s start the auction for the real paintings!”

However, the auctioneer laid down the gavel and, to everyone’s surprise, announced, “This auction has concluded. When I was asked to be responsible for this event, the lawyer showed me a secret codicil in the will that I was to reveal only at the appropriate moment. At this point, I must inform you all that the person who has just purchased the son’s portrait has automatically become the owner of this residence and its entire contents, including the complete art collection. Good day!”

“If God is on our side, who can ever be against us? Since he did not spare even his own Son for us but gave him up for us all, won’t he also surely give us everything else?”

—Romans 8:31, 32, TLB.



INTERCHANGE

Expand your friendship network

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

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