

Father Curran & Denominational Dissent  
New Hymnal: The Wait Was Worth It

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# SPECTRUM

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Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

Volume 17, Number 3

## PSYCHIATRY IN ADVENTISM

Adventist Beginnings in Psychiatry  
Scott Peck Under Analysis  
Should Therapists Witness to Patients?

# SPECTRUM

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## About This Issue

Although psychiatric treatment has sometimes come under suspicion within Adventism, psychiatrists have played significant roles in the church. It is also true that Adventists have been active in psychiatry from the days when the specialty was first emerging in the United States. In our special section George T. Harding, IV, recounts how the same generation of Hardings that produced a United States president also produced the first Adventist psychiatrist. Alan Nelson and Bruce Anderson,

both active members of the church, take divergent positions on how Adventists should relate their faith to their clinical practice. And Roy Benton, trained in philosophy, scrutinizes a book by a favorite psychiatrist of many Adventists, Scott Peck, one of the most widely read authors in America.

The first three of these essays were presented in 1982 at the first formal meeting of Adventist psychiatrists. We are grateful to Ronald Geraty, then the medical director of both Fuller Memorial and New England Memorial Hospitals, who organized the two-day session and provided us with the essays.

—The Editors

# Adventists and Psychiatry— A Short History of the Beginnings

by George T. Harding, IV

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Just six days before Adventism's great disappointment of October 22, 1844, another event took place that would have historic importance for American psychiatry. Thirteen physicians met at the Jones Hotel in Philadelphia. All were among the superintendents of the 24 insane asylums in the country. They included the author of a treatise on the medical jurisprudence of insanity and the founder of the *American Journal of Insanity*. Their new Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane later became the American Medico-Psychological Association, and finally the still-dominant American Psychiatric Association.

Seventh-day Adventism and American psychiatry emerged at the same time during the last half of the 19th century. While Adventism was grappling to bring hope and meaning out of the grief and despair of the Great Disappointment, American psychiatry was consolidating its professional efforts to deal more effectively with the pain of emotional suffering. Psychiatry evolved slowly. During most of the 19th century caring for the institutionalized mentally ill was its task. Professional meetings often focused on the heating and plumbing of asylums and trends in the census of inmates. The word *psychiatry* did not even appear until two years after the 1844 meeting of asylum physicians in Philadelphia. It was 1890 before the word *psychiatry* was first noted in an American dictionary. Through much of the 19th century

the term *medical psychologist* was used, to be followed from 1880 to 1920 by the term *alienists* (a word borrowed from the French).

The year 1900 not only began a new century, but was also the year Sigmund Freud published his revolutionary *Interpretation of Dreams*, and the year my grandfather, George T. Harding, II, graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in medicine. A faithful Seventh-day Adventist, he had attended Battle Creek College, and is regarded as the first Adventist psychiatrist. The institution he founded in Worthington, Ohio, trained many of the early Seventh-day Adventist psychiatrists. To tell their history is to recount the beginnings of psychiatry in the Adventist church.<sup>1</sup>

My grandfather followed his father and mother into the field of medicine. Upon graduation from the University of Michigan, he intended to join them in their country practice. But the dean of Michigan's School of Medicine, noting that he suffered from cardiac aftereffects of rheumatic fever, recommended that instead of establishing his own practice, he "choose a sheltered life." It was this that led him to join the staff of the Columbus State Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, where he became interested in sickness of the mind as well as of the body.<sup>2</sup> For five years he gained experience in psychiatric hospital treatment.

George T. Harding, II, anticipated his older brother's move from Ohio to Washington, D. C. (Warren G. Harding would not become president of the United States until 1921.) From 1905-1907 he served his church as superintendent of the Washington Sanitarium. Seventh-

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George T. Harding, IV, is the medical director of Harding Hospital in Worthington, Ohio.

day Adventists made quite an entrance into the nation's capital by installing the sanitarium in General Grant's magnificent Victorian mansion on Iowa Circle. (The mansion still dominates what is now called Logan Circle, the only one of many in Washington still circled by all of its original Victorian homes.)

When George T. Harding, II, returned to Columbus he opened an office across from the state capitol. Initially, he worked in Internal Medicine and became a Fellow of the American College of Physicians. He was known in Columbus as a physician widely read in all areas. "Talk therapy" was always part of his method of treatment, long before it was called psychotherapy. He might take a patient out and play croquet, making comments as they played through a game. Gradually, he came to specialize in psychiatric treatment. His approach was part of the broadening of treatment that included not only psychotics, the focus of psychiatry throughout the 19th century, but also neurotics and others less severely incapacitated.

He became acquainted with Sigmund Freud's work, and incorporated some of Freud's new ideas into his own clinical practice. In addition, he read the ideas of Adolph Meyer, William Allinson White, and other early American psychiatrists. There were times when he used drugs such as chloral hydrate and paraldehyde.

His practice also reflected his Adventist heritage. His Columbus office included a "Battle Creek-style" treatment room. Throughout his career he, like John Harvey Kellogg, stressed the importance of hydrotherapy, including the calming effect of warm "neutral baths" on insomniacs.<sup>3</sup>

My grandfather's practice grew, and for a while Grant Hospital in Columbus gave him "an entire floor" in which to carry on his treatments. In 1916, with the assistance of Dr. Stella Hauser, a Seventh-day Adventist physician with some experience in psychiatric hospitals, he opened the Indianola Rest Home for women only. The eight patients who filled the facility suffered primarily from depression. His religious faith was part of his motivation for starting

the institution. He was seeking, he said, to establish "an ideal, self-supporting medical centre," where "a capable, mature, consecrated Christian physician would find his sole delight in working [here] until the close of time."

Four years later my grandfather moved his institution to the countryside south of Columbus, and changed its name to the Columbus Rural Rest Home. Early on he began to attract young people who later went on to make significant contributions to the medical work. He sought out physicians, nurses, physical therapists, and others. Several of the physicians, in addition to Stella Hauser, were women. Dr. Anna Laird, an ex-missionary, arrived with no previous psychiatric training, but stayed to become an important member of the staff. After graduation from the University of Colorado School of Medicine, Drs. Mary and Fred Weber joined the rest home staff. Dr. Mary was particularly good with very disturbed women. Dr. Fred, who specialized in working with alcoholics, was the first of many succeeding members of the staff to take additional training at the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas.

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**"Talk therapy" was always part of George Harding, II's, method long before it was called psychotherapy.**

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Frank Cobban, who was Director of Nursing working at the rest home, later encouraged psychiatric nursing as associate director of the Medical Department of the General Conference and later director of nursing at the Glendale and Paradise Valley sanitariums in California.

In 1919 my grandfather purchased a 50-acre summer estate in Worthington, Ohio, to which he moved his institution. Dr. Mary Weber's regimen for patients in the "women's cottage" carried on the tradition of Battle Creek (and incidentally the schedule now followed in the most fashionable 20th-century spas). An early morning glass of fruit juice was followed by a cold mitten friction, "a healthy breakfast," a brisk walk, and hydrotherapy. Lunch preceded

a period of rest, then activities in the craft shop. Appointments with the physician were held throughout the day. After supper there was an educational activity, then a massage and a hot cereal beverage. As needed, to help the women to sleep, the day's activities ended with a wet sheet pack, a fomentation, or a neutral bath.

Other aspects of the Battle Creek program were utilized. Evening educational programs, called "parlor talks," were always important. A highlight was a "question box" in which patients were invited to submit questions. Once a week Dr. Harding or an associate would respond. Spiritual issues often recurred in these sessions.

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**My grandfather responded that if he [the patient] were going to die he might as well accomplish something worthwhile before he departed this life.**

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An experience remembered by the staff is reminiscent of Ellen White's care of her husband, James. During the 1920's a pharmacist with an involuntional depression, including nihilistic delusions and hopelessness for the future, told my grandfather that his condition was hopeless. Indeed, he felt he was dying and by nightfall would be ready for burial. My grandfather responded that if he were going to die he might as well accomplish something worthwhile before he departed this life. Thereupon, he was directed to take a rake and hoe and clean up the weeds from the flowerbeds in front of the patient unit. Despite the patient's protestations of his terminal state, my grandfather firmly told him to begin his work, which he finally did. By nightfall the patient was much improved. The prescription of a monotonous, nongratifying task helped the patient both to relieve guilt by doing penance and to externalize his internally directed rage.

My grandfather realized that private clinics like the Mayo and Menninger clinics needed highly trained medical personnel and "shrewd management." The year he set up the Harding Sanitarium in its present

location, he set out to recruit Dr. Alfred Berthier Olsen, son of D. A. Olsen, one-time president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and one of a group sponsored by the General Conference Committee through their medical training at the University of Michigan. For the previous 18 years Olsen had been the superintendent of the Adventist Caterham Sanitarium in England. "If you are interested in teaching and preaching health," he had written Olsen, "you will help a lot in our plans. It is a work I could easily kill myself at, because it appeals to me more strongly the older I get, the more I learn and the more I realize the needs of the work in its closing days."<sup>4</sup> Olsen came.

But my grandfather also insisted on hiring a competent business manager "who would demonstrate what an advantage it would be to have a real business manager, one that knows what good business demands and a recognition of the principles of justice that no one department can ignore the interests of the other." When Olson resisted bringing a nonphysician into the management, my grandfather insisted on the value of specialization and division of labor. "There will be so much legitimate work for us doctors to do that we ought not to have time to try to do what a really worthwhile businessman can do better. The care of the nervous and depressed requires much personal attention from the physician who can make an intimate acquaintance with the mental conflicts of patients. Our place will stand out above others, if we provide the proper medical supervision in the person of physicians who know the victorious life and have time to make friends with our patients."<sup>5</sup>

In 1934, at the age of 55, my grandfather died. He had steadfastly refused to name the institution after himself. But soon after his burial it became the Harding Sanitarium, and in 1940 the Harding Hospital. Most of the early Adventist psychiatrists received their training at Harding Hospital.

At first, my father, George T. Harding, III, planned on being an internist. He graduated in 1928 from the College of Medical Evangelists. There psychiatry had been minimized. "They

were afraid to teach it," he said. "Church leaders with few exceptions spoke against psychiatry and psychiatric treatment, stating that psychiatry was a thing to be avoided." They argued that "it was largely hypnotism and therefore, a thing of the devil." But after observing the psychiatric treatment provided by his father, and reading Karl Menninger's *The Human Mind*, my father became increasingly enthusiastic about psychiatry. In 1929 he began teaching psychiatry at the Ohio State University School of Medicine. When his father died in 1934, he succeeded him as head of the sanitarium. He proved to be a master at brief evaluations and effective clinical interventions. He continued his clinical practice until the age of 80, maintaining his interest in psychiatry until his death in November, 1985.

George T. Harding, III, may not have continued all of the Battle Creek customs practiced by his father, but he did believe that "a person has to have a little bit of Christianity in him in order to want to be a psychiatrist, or else he has to be the kind of psychiatrist that shouldn't be a psychiatrist." His appointment and tenure as president of the College of Medical Evangelists (now Loma Linda University School of Medicine) from 1948 to 1951 was a symbol of the growing denominational acceptance of psychiatry. Other psychiatrists he trained have accelerated that process.

Harrison S. Evans, a graduate of the College of Medical Evangelists, came to the Harding Sanitarium in 1936 as its first resident. He received additional training in neurology and psychiatry at the College of Medical Evangelists with Cyril Courville, M.D., at the Menninger Clinic and the New York Psychiatric Institute. He married Dr. Ruth Harding, the sister of George T. Harding, III, and became co-medical director and director of residency training at the Harding Sanitarium. Evans and Harding, III, were among the first Seventh-day Adventist psychiatrists who innovatively developed a creative psychiatric treatment approach that integrated Adventist mental health teachings with growing scientific knowledge. In 1962 Evans became the chairman of the department of psychiatry at the Loma Linda University School

of Medicine. Two years later provisional approval was granted by the Council on Medical Education of the American Medical Association to offer a psychiatric residency program at Loma Linda, in addition to the psychiatric residency program at Harding Hospital. From 1982 to 1986 Evans was vice president of medical affairs

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### **Church leaders, almost without exception, argued that psychiatry was hypnotism and of the devil.**

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at Loma Linda University, a post he had previously filled from 1976 to 1979.

Over the past 50 years Harding, III, and Evans and their associates have trained a remarkable group of Adventist psychiatrists. Among them are Charles L. Anderson, who developed a strong psychiatry program at Hinsdale Sanitarium and Hospital, as did Bruce Anderson, at St. Helena Health Center; Henry Andren at Washington Sanitarium and Hospital; and Harold Caviness, at Battle Creek Adventist Health Center. Lawrence Sensemen first served at Fuller Memorial Hospital in South Attentboro, Massachusetts; he later taught at Vellore Christian Medical College in India, then returned to direct the program at Glendale Adventist Hospital. Robert Wolgamott served at Portland Adventist Medical Center.

One of the most effective bridges between Adventist psychiatrists and church leaders and pastors has been the Institute on Mental Health for Ministers held annually since 1955 at the Harding Hospital. Over the years such well-known denominational leaders as Roy Allan Anderson, director of the General Conference Ministerial Department, and Charles Wittschiebe, for many years a professor of pastoral counseling at the SDA Theological Seminary, have participated, as well as many local and conference presidents. Gradually, if somewhat grudgingly, pastoral counseling by a pastor or even therapy from a "Christian psychiatrist has become accepted within the church.

However, the long resistance and lingering

suspicion of many Adventists to psychiatry is one reason Adventist psychiatrists have not contributed more seminal writings to the field. Many Adventist psychiatrists are hesitant to risk alienation from their denominational community. At the same time, many Adventist psychiatrists have unfortunately felt too insecure about their acceptance within the mainstream of psychiatry. As a result, Adventist psychiatrists have not even advanced the literature concerning the relationship of psychiatry to religion.

Others, like the Menningers, have made much more of a contribution than Adventists to discussions about religion and psychiatry.<sup>6</sup> That is ironic, since the Menningers themselves acknowledge that Battle Creek Sanitarium had a major impact on American medicine in the Midwest, including the Mayo clinic, which in turn, influenced the Menninger Clinic.<sup>7</sup> Not only Adventism's history of creative treatment, but also its fundamental commitment to the "wholeness of man" provide a solid foundation from which Adventist psychiatrists can more boldly advance scientific and clinical inquiry, and the relationship of psychiatry to religion. From Ellen White and John Harvey Kellogg to Graham Maxwell and Jack Provonsha, Adventists have stressed the interrelationship of mind and body. That view is now endorsed by the giants of psychiatry. Carl Jung has said that the distinction between mind and body is an artificial dichotomy, based more on the peculiarities of

intellectual constructs than on the nature of things. Recently, George Engle, of the department of psychiatry and medicine at the University of Rochester, noted that "for medicine in particular, the neglect of the whole inherent in the reductionism of the biomedical model is largely responsible for the physician's preoccupation with the body and with disease and the corresponding neglect of the patient as a person."<sup>8</sup>

Adventism and modern psychiatry have developed simultaneously. Each shares some basic presuppositions. It is time for Adventist psychiatrists to shed their defensiveness within both the Adventist and professional communities. Adventists should feel not only a professional, but also an historical and religious mandate to go beyond neurophysiology and psycho-pharmacology to inquire into the entire range of psychological processes—the unconscious, object relations, the importance of persons, individual dynamics, and group processes. We should feel compelled to be in the forefront of those reaching beyond the known to study the diadic relationships of couples, the family, the community, the subculture, the culture, the society, and the nation. If we wish to be on the frontier of our field of study and meet our special challenge as Adventist Christian psychiatrists, we must undertake that greatest challenge—exploring the complex relationships of persons, including their relationship to God.

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## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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1. I am indebted to Donald Anderson, M.D., assistant professor of psychiatry, Loma Linda University School of Medicine, for his research into the history of Adventist psychiatry, and his report at a 1982 meeting of Adventist psychiatrists in Toronto. With his permission, at various points throughout this essay, I have drawn on his work.

2. George T. Harding, III, *In Memoriam—a Life Sketch of George Tryon Harding, II* (1934).

3. George T. Harding, II, *Prospectus of the Sanitar-*

*ium Realty Co.* (1919).

4. George T. Harding, II, personal letter to A. B. Olson, M.D. (1920).

5. Harding, personal letter.

6. Karl A. Menninger, *Whatever Became of Sin?* (New York: Hawthorn Press, 1973).

7. Karl A. Menninger, personal communication to George T. Harding, IV (October 1981).

8. George Engel, *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 137, No. 5 (May 1980).



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# Should Adventist Psychiatrists Urge Their Patients To Become Christians? *Yes*

by Alan A. Nelson

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Is it appropriate for an Adventist psychiatrist to discuss his or her faith while treating a patient? For many Seventh-day Adventist psychiatrists this concept of “sharing one’s faith” evokes the idea of “evangelism,” or the approach of a door-to-door hard-sell, Bible-waving, text-quoting, soul-winning fundamentalist. Most medical professionals do not favor this particular format of sharing their faith. It seems a forced and uncomfortable invasion of personal privacy.

Psychiatrists have been particularly reluctant to integrate Christianity into their practice. There are a variety of reasons for this, some of which I will discuss below.

## *Reasons for Avoiding Religion*

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One important reason is that over the last century psychiatry has been, at least in theory, without a God. Early views of religion by psychiatrists in this century were colored to a significant degree by the teaching of Sigmund Freud.<sup>1</sup>

In *Civilization and Its Discontents* Freud refers to religion as a “mass delusion” in which people “attempt to procure a certainty of happiness and protection against suffering through a delusional remolding of reality.”<sup>2</sup> In *Totem and Taboo* Freud refers to Christianity as a “myth” in

which Jesus must be sacrificed to atone for the murderous wishes that men have toward their fathers. He goes on to say that Jesus represented the attainment wishes of sons to be like their fathers, since Jesus was one with God.<sup>3</sup> In essence, Freud taught that religion, belief in God, and monotheism were adaptive constructs invented by the minds of humans when faced with a complex, frustrating universe in which they felt overwhelmed, insignificant, and helpless.<sup>4</sup>

Another important reason psychiatrists avoid discussing their religious beliefs with patients is that many therapists are uncomfortable with this most personal part of their lives. It may represent an area of conflict within the therapist, which may be manifest by resistance to discussing such issues in therapy.

Still another reason for reluctance on the part of psychiatrists is that their attempts to incorporate a spiritual dimension to their practices may have backfired. Feeling somewhat embarrassed professionally, they have either given up further attempts, become sarcastic, or referred the patients to their pastor “who deals with religion.”

Two unfortunate consequences have followed. First, the pastor’s role has been degraded to a last resort, end-of-the-line consult. Second, it gives further credence to the myth that psychiatrists must only deal with the mind and the pastor/minister must deal with “the soul.” It implies that these two concepts are mutually

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Alan Nelson is a psychiatrist practicing in Seal Rock, Oregon.

exclusive. This makes an unfortunate, artificial division in the delivery of health care. It limits the role of the physician and the minister and does not accurately represent the concept of ministry to the whole person.

This artificial division of the person is exemplified in Victor Frankl's book *The Doctor and the Soul*. Many of his works are rich in insight, but I disagree with his statement here that:

the goal of psychotherapy is to heal the soul, to make it healthy; the aim of religion is something essentially different—to save the soul. Medical ministry does not aspire to be a substitute for the proper cure of souls which is practiced by the minister or priest.<sup>5</sup>

## *Reasons for Discussing Religion*

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How does the view of Christian psychotherapy differ from this? Essentially, it states that a correct concept of the nature of humans is central to one's view of psychotherapy. Over the past century the behavioral sciences have developed the bio-psychosocial model of understanding humanity, often pictured as three overlapping spheres. From this model of wholeness stems our concept of the disease process: alterations in any of these spheres can result in pathology, maladaptive behavior, and suffering.

Noticeably lacking from this concept of humanity is any reference to a spiritual dimension. I join with many of my Christian colleagues in believing that a correct understanding of the nature of humanity states that humans were created in the image of God, designed to live in fellowship and communion with him, and that the human identity and human dilemma can never be fully understood apart from this dynamic relationship.<sup>6</sup> This statement reemphasizes the Judeo-Christian view that the person is a unity which cannot be treated holistically without being treated spiritually. Unfortunately, no formally recognized school of psychotherapy represents this viewpoint.<sup>7</sup>

Christian psychotherapy, as I understand it, does not deny the significance of the bio-psychosocial aspects of humans, but seeks to expand the definition. Christian psychotherapy assumes that disease and distortion can occur by a disequilibrium in all of these areas—including our spiritual dimension. As Paul Tournier says, "the doctor who wants to really understand man, must add to this knowledge an experience of spiritual nature. Man is not just a body and a mind. He is a spiritual being."<sup>8</sup>

This is not to state that all religious beliefs are by their nature healthy or mature. Indeed, distortions of religious beliefs can result in enormous pathology. But, for better or for worse, the patient's religious practices are important. One can disagree with their principles but ethically they must not be ignored; they are an important part of the patient's value system. All therapists must deal with the question of values—not only the patient's values, but also their own. To a great degree the therapy a patient receives depends upon the personal beliefs of the therapist. His view of life and his value system will be reflected in his treatment. This is illustrated by Bergin in his paper, "Psychotherapy and Religious Values,"<sup>9</sup> where he states that it is impossible for a therapist to provide a truly neutral therapy. Who and what we are will, in some form, come across to our patients.

For those Christian therapists who hold to the bio-psycho-spiritual model, an investigation of one's faith may be seen as essential to aiding the healing process of psychotherapy. Indeed for the nonpsychotic, nondelusional patient, a true conversion experience is seen as a psychologically integrative, rather than disintegrative, experience.<sup>10</sup> Many Christians are reluctant to see psychiatrists because they fear that this part of their value system will be explained away as merely a belief based on neurotic needs.

If I were to take a strictly psychoanalytical approach it would be unethical for me to discuss my faith in Christ with a patient, for by doing so I would be introducing a delusional system to the patient. But I have chosen not to accept that position, nor do I believe it to be accurate.

Let me pause here to define the terms "sharing one's faith" or "sharing Christ with a patient." These concepts have many implications to the general public, but for our purposes I define these to mean the sharing of the knowledge of Jesus Christ in one's life, and attaining salvation solely by faith and trust in him.

I would also like to discuss what sharing Christ with a patient is not. It is not something that you do with all patients. Some causes of emotional distress or mental disorders have no need of spiritual interventions, as we will see later. It is not just stressing church attendance. It is not getting them to join your denomination.

It is affording them opportunity, at the proper time, to have personal contact with Christ.

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### *Ways to Discuss Religion With Patients*

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How may these discussions be conducted in an ethical manner? Obviously the discussion of one's personal faith or relationship to God should never be done against a patient's wishes, or in a manner that seems forced. As in discussion of any area of one's personal life, this should be a collaborative endeavor, done with the patient's informed consent, the ethics that apply here are the same as would be applied to discussion of any area of a patient's life. These conversations should have an air of openness about them which generally states, "I have a feeling that a part of your problems may stem from some of your concepts about God. It would be interesting for us to talk about this, but you genuinely have a right to close off this discussion in the event that you find this is something that you don't want to pursue."

Speaking once again of the concept of informed consent, this principle dictates that the therapist must clarify his or her view of man and the relationship between the religious question under discussion and the therapeutic task in order to remain within the bounds of the treatment contract.

Peteet, in his article "Issues in the Treatment

of Religious Patients,"<sup>11</sup> says that those who focus exclusively on religious issues risk losing sight of the therapeutic task, but therapists who avoid discussions of religious issues miss opportunities to help patients integrate their religious and emotional selves.

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### **To believe that prayer will make one's problems go away reveals a spiritual and psychological immaturity on the part of the therapist.**

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As in other aspects of psychotherapy, the dynamics described here will require proper supervision by a trained, Christian therapist. As with any aspect of therapy mistakes will occasionally be made. But mistakes would be seen as part of the overall maturation of the therapist.

In what situations would it be unethical for the Christian therapist to address a patient's religious beliefs? Some guidelines may be helpful.

First, discussions of religion with a psychotic, delusional, or schizophrenic patient is usually not only inappropriate, but harmful. These individuals suffer from disturbances in their reality testing and incorporate ideas of a God or a supreme being into their delusional, distorted thought processes.

Second, in almost all cases, it is wise to defer discussions of religion with any patient in an emergency room unless the patient's background and emotional makeup is well known to the therapist. To believe that praying will make one's problems go away reveals a spiritual and psychological immaturity on the part of the therapist. Patients rarely come to a psychiatrist with a strictly spiritual problem.

Third, detailed discussions of religious beliefs, even with the individual who has less severe problems, are best done after the therapist has carefully evaluated the patient with whom he or she is working, and has determined the patient's level of spiritual and psychological maturity. This does not reject discussions of religion, but merely asks that they be given their proper timing in therapy.

The proper time to make spiritual interventions in therapy requires much thought. As mentioned previously, the therapist must have a knowledge of the individual's personality structure and defense mechanisms. The primary goal of therapy is not conversion, but resolution of conflict and suffering. The tendency to see all problems as arising out of sin or demonic forces often distorts the therapist's vision and leads to a monothematic approach. Because the mind is a system, one must use a systems approach and

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**If Christian psychiatrists are concerned to push their ideas on patients, they will never listen effectively to what their patients are saying, and the helping and healing process will be irreparably harmed.**

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apply the appropriate technique to that part of the system that needs restoration. The properly trained therapist should have sufficient skill as a psycho-diagnostician to determine the nature and origin of the problem i.e., whether it is biological, psychological, or spiritual.

The important principle here is that the therapist be sensitive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit throughout the course of treatment. Timing and motivation for these discussions should come from above, not from a neurotic or compulsive need to share one's faith.

Value systems and personal beliefs are a matter of individual choice. If Christian psychiatrists are primarily concerned with pushing their ideas on patients, they will never be able to listen effectively to what patients are saying, and the helping and healing process will be irreparably harmed.

In summary, the teachings of Freud have profoundly influenced four generations of psychiatrists, leading many to believe that religious belief is harmful, delusional, or immature. Because of the reputation that preceded psychiatry, many Christians tended to avoid getting into treatment. They feared their sincerely held

religious values would be explained to them in terms of neurotic obsessional need, a childhood regression, or a form of intellectual immaturity.

It was for this same reason that many within medicine chose not to pursue careers in psychiatry, believing that there could be no marriage of their reason and faith.

Thus, due to an incomplete and inaccurate theoretical base, and a lack of adequate role modeling, Christians tended to abandon the practice of psychiatry. Psychiatry as a discipline lost patients and skilled practitioners, as these creative and talented physicians rejected psychiatry and pursued other medical specialties.

Seventh-day Adventists have had a long and rich history of understanding human spiritual needs. For years we have attempted to make the practice of medicine not just another profession, but a ministry of healing. Our desire is to follow in the footsteps of the great physician. As Paul Tournier states,

Man is a personal unity, in which there is a necessary and absolute interdependence between the physical in the psychical and the spiritual. Medicine then cannot arbitrarily ignore the spiritual, any more than it can ignore the psychical or the physical. The purpose of medicine is healing. Everything, therefore, that contributes to healing is proper to medicine.

Notice, as the statement continues, how Tournier's view of integration contrasts with that of Frankl.

Just as he may inject morphine without being a chemist, so he may practice soul healing without being a theologian. Soul healing consists essentially in bringing souls into personal contact with Christ. From that contact come experiences which have psychic and physical consequences, and which are thus the domain of medicine.<sup>12</sup>

The words penned earlier in this century by Ellen White are uniquely relevant.

In the ministry of healing the physician is to be a co-worker with Christ. The Saviour ministered to both the soul and body. The gospel which He taught was a message of spiritual life and of physical restoration. Deliverance from sin and the healing of disease were linked together. The same ministry is committed to the Christian physician. He is to unite with Christ in relieving both the physical and spiritual needs of his fellow men.<sup>13</sup>

Christian therapists have been given the unique privilege of advancing the course of the

behavioral sciences by forming an integration of Christianity and psychiatry. If Adventist therapists can achieve such a synthesis, Seventh-day

Adventists and psychiatry will have replaced an uneasy alliance with a genuinely integrative experience.

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# Should Adventist Psychiatrists Urge Their Patients To Become Christians? *No*

by Bruce Anderson

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What should be the role of evangelism in psychiatric treatment? I pondered that question on morning hospital rounds recently.

Annette is a 41-year-old divorced mother of two who has been recurrently ill since 1973, requiring repeated hospitalizations. (Names and identifying details have been changed.)

For the last year she has been depressed. She was hospitalized for a week a month ago. She then reported she felt she had lost her intelligence and felt dead inside. She was troubled by thoughts of the devil, which troubled her even more when she attended the evangelical church where she had been active. She was readmitted four days earlier, increasingly depressed, upset about thoughts of Satan, and worried about being saved. She was sure that she really was separated from God. I had suggested she try to avoid religious thoughts, and agreed with her request for electrotherapy. After her first electrotherapy treatment two days before, her religious delusions disappeared. Today, after her second electrotherapy treatment, she denies being depressed. She is no longer worried about the devil, nor is she preoccupied with being saved. Should evangelism play a role in her treatment?

My next patient is Bob, 29, married and divorced twice. Bob's background is chaotic. His mother was married six times. He was

raised variously by his father, his uncle, and several different foster parents. He was treated by me a year previously for a schizophrenic illness. Subsequently he left the county, discontinued his medication, and became progressively withdrawn and psychotic.

Six days ago he was readmitted involuntarily. For five days he totally refused to eat, because he believed the Lord was telling him to fast. He believed every time he ate chicken something terrible would happen to someone. Today he is still delusional, though he has eaten parts of two meals. He informs me that the Lord wants him to let the demons out of people. He feels that people are giving him strange looks. He feels guilty and thinks of suicide, because God cannot forgive him. His incredulous question is "for what I've done?" I order more Haloperidol, and suggest God just wants him to eat and take care of himself, while He runs the universe. Is this evangelism, I wonder?

Then there is Melvin. He is 46, divorced, and hospitalized here yesterday. For years he has been treated with a variety of tranquilizers and antidepressants. Because of anxiety he does not work. Recently he has become more and more withdrawn, doing little, and drinking to calm his nerves. He is anxious and preoccupied with horrible thoughts of what he might do but never has done. He confesses to thoughts of voiding on the Bible, and even on God. He feels terribly guilty about such thoughts. After some exploration, he admits that he is angry at God for letting him be ill, at his doctors for not

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helping him more, and at his mother for not paying his rent. I reassure him that thoughts are not in themselves dangerous, that people with such fears are usually the last ones likely to act on them, and suggest that he cannot hurt God with his thoughts. I further suggest that God understands his emotional struggles and desires his happiness. Is this a place for evangelism?

Should Christian psychiatrists, as they treat patients like these, try to persuade them to adopt the psychiatrist's own religious beliefs? I believe the answer is clearly No. Whether the psychiatrist is Adventist or Buddhist, for him to promote or advocate the beliefs of his own religion with his patients is unethical in my opinion. Such evangelism would demonstrate a fundamental disrespect for the individuality, freedom, and self-determination of the patient, weakening the patient's ability to make his own decisions.

The question of evangelism and psychiatric treatment requires consideration of the mutual expectations of the psychiatrist and the patient. Although not often stated explicitly, there is an implicit therapeutic contract between the patient and doctor. Were it explicit it might be expressed in the following statements:

A Statement to My Doctor—

*"I, an emotionally depressed, confused, or troubled person, have retained you, an expert in the treatment of such problems, to assist me with the treatment your skill and knowledge can provide. I expect you to be concerned, honest, and well-informed in your specialty. I expect you to be respectful of me, of my person, my deepest beliefs, even my time. I expect you to share with me such expert knowledge as may assist me in understanding my problems and may result in the relief of symptoms and the cure or control of my illness. I will contract with you for your service based on your time, experience, and the responsibility exercised in my care."*

A Statement to My Patient—

*"I, an expert in the treatment of emotional illness, am a licensed physician, fully trained and qualified in the specialty of psychiatry. I agree to respect you as a person and individual, and will provide my services in a manner as*

*effective and timely as I can. If, in my opinion, your ideas, beliefs, or way of life are destructive to you and those you love, I will challenge them. If your beliefs threaten your life or others, I will do all in my power to keep you from harming anyone. In so doing, I will always maintain respect for you as a person with a capacity for change and for increasing responsibility. I will share my values with you where appropriate, because in understanding where I stand, you may more clearly perceive your values and thereby become more capable of making your own choices. I will never try to force my ideas on you or get you to change just to please me."*

In order to make clear the destructive potential of an evangelistic approach to psychiatric treatment, I suggest a physician utilizing an evangelistic philosophy of treatment attach the following clause to the treatment contract offered to his patient:

About My Religion: An Important Clause

*"I believe my religious beliefs are true and valid. I will try in every way possible to secure your agreement with them, and to get you to join my church. I know this will result in your greater happiness. Since these values are important to me, they transcend my responsibilities to you as described above. If conflict occurs*

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**Severely depressed persons of strong religious belief are likely to view their illness as an expression of their own wickedness.**

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*between them, I will offer you religious comfort and advice rather than medical knowledge."*

It is difficult to imagine a psychiatrist offering such a contract to his patient. No one in his right mind would accept such a treatment contract. No one *not* in his right mind deserves to be confused by such a proposition. Yet such attitudes, less openly expressed, are perhaps even more dangerous. For a person, identified as an expert in the treatment of emotional illness, to offer religious comfort and healing to a person who seeks psychiatric care is unethical and

wrong. The promotion of religious belief by a psychiatrist involves several hazards.

More problematic is the danger presented to the emotionally troubled religious person. Such persons often have already pursued avenues of prayer and religious counseling; they now seek a physician trained in the care of emotional illness. For such patients, who often already feel guilty, a religious approach by their doctor may further confirm their view that "I'm just not a good Christian." Severely depressed persons of strong religious belief are likely to view their illness as an expression of their own wickedness. Simplistic theories that emotional illness, in contrast to other illnesses, is caused solely by

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**The psychiatrist holding a non-evangelistic position can better explore the psychological conflicts that may appear to be religious problems.**

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sinfulness or human selfishness, often enhance the unreasoning guilt of the depressed person. Great damage may be done by such ideas which totally ignore the genetic, biological, and medical causes of psychiatric disorders. The task of the psychiatrist is often to play a healing role in challenging such unscientific, but widely held views among religious patients.

**T**he psychiatrist who holds a non-evangelistic position is better able to explore what may appear superficially to be religious problems but are actually psychological conflicts. Holding such a non-evangelistic position makes possible the exploration of the psychological conflicts that often underlie what may appear to be religious problems. For example, in persons from a background of strong religious tradition and belief, developmental issues of autonomy and struggles with authority are likely to be expressed in the form of rebellion against the church, its restrictions and values. For a psychiatrist to accept such problems at face value as solely religious issues can deprive the patient of the opportunity to explore other meanings for his conflicts. A

doctor with a neutral position may make it possible for the patient to reassess his struggles against his church and even result in renewal of genuine religious conviction. However, if the psychiatrist adopts a position of advocacy he is quickly identified with what the patient thinks he most resents. The therapeutic alliance is threatened and treatment may become impossible.

Finally, the psychiatrist who is a religious advocate is sure to be ineffective in treating persons who simply are not interested in religion or the beliefs of the doctor.

To state that evangelism does not belong in psychiatric treatment is not to say that the psychiatrist has no responsibility to deal with the religious needs of patients. What should the psychiatrist do in place of imposing his or her religious beliefs?

First, the psychiatrist—Adventist or otherwise—should recognize that religious needs and values exist and are important. The pathological religious elements often evident in our patients do not mean religion is necessarily a negative force in society. Indeed, I believe religion is a cohesive, unifying force in life. It provides a philosophy of living and sense of meaning that is unavailable in any other way. Though both religion and the family unit seem to be under attack in our culture, this only underscores our need for them as healthy institutions. The fact that psychiatrists see so much confusion and pathology associated with religious belief may only indicate that we do not see those persons whose religion provides a satisfying framework for their lives.

Second, the psychiatrist should understand that religious needs may masquerade as emotional distress. The absence of a sense of meaning and value at the core of existence seems more prevalent than ever. Referral to a competent spiritual counselor is frequently appropriate. However, many patients who do not have a religious background or commitment expect the psychiatric physician to assume a priestly function. For some, psychotherapy may assume qualities of a secularized religion. If the psychiatrist is to be of help to such persons, he cannot pretend that psychotherapy is an enterprise



devoid of values. Persons of borderline or defective ego development may need a psychiatrist who has a clear sense of his or her own values. In a secular society the psychiatrist will often find it difficult to avoid the role of moral counselor.

Third, the psychiatrist must also be capable of recognizing that the psychiatric illness and emotional conflict may masquerade as religious concern. Here the psychiatrist is on more familiar ground. For example, the statement in a psychiatric context that "I've committed the unpardonable sin" rarely indicates that pastoral counseling should replace psychiatric treatment. Rather, the physician is most likely hearing the guilty delusion of a psychotically depressed person with a religious background. Such a statement indicates the need for a thorough psychiatric evaluation, intensive treatment for a major illness, and possibly hospitalization.

The fact that a religious metaphor is used to express disturbed thinking does not indicate that the patient's religion is at fault, or that the treatment should be spiritual. The patient has drawn on his or her beliefs to express an emotion that should arouse the trained scrutiny of the psychiatric physician.

Fourth, the psychiatrist must be able to discern the difference between religious faith and mental illness. To be insensitive to the religious needs of patients is unfortunate; to fail treating illness presented as religious conflict may be disastrous. Dr. Karl Menninger has said: "It does

little good to repent a symptom, but it may do great harm not to repent a sin. Vice versa, it does little good to merely psychoanalyze a sin and sometimes a great harm to ignore a symptom."<sup>1</sup>

Finally, the psychiatrist must possess his own value system, the product of his own study and belief, and an open, inquiring attitude toward the beliefs and moral values of others.

Sometimes patients ask their doctor what his or her beliefs are. The answer ought to be an invitation to self-exploration on the part of the patient. A psychiatrist might say—in words that summarize my own view of the appropriate role of religion in the therapeutic relationship—"You have asked about my attitude toward values and religious belief. Some of the most important values underlying my work can be called religious, though they are not the views of any specific denomination. Several beliefs fundamental to my practice of psychiatry and psychotherapy are: The importance and dignity of the individual; a belief in the healing power of grace and love in interpersonal relationships; the necessity of honesty; the potential of individuals to make positive decisions about their lives. If I share with you certain religious beliefs to which I subscribe, it will not be so you will agree with me, but so you can more clearly see your own choices. If my work has a religious quality it is only in the sense that I think I have a sacred responsibility to assist you in exercising your God-given faculty of choice."

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## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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# Scott Peck Under Analysis: The Naming of Evil and Demons

by Roy Benton

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In 1977, a small-town, Harvard-educated psychiatrist named M. Scott Peck finally found a publisher for his manuscript on *The Psychology of Spiritual Growth*. Surely he could not have foreseen that by late 1986 his retitled book *The Road Less Traveled*<sup>1</sup> would have spent 110 weeks on the paperback bestseller list, that he would be nationally revered as a religious guru, and that it would all be accomplished by word of mouth and a few rave critical reviews, without the benefit of even one promotion on "Good Morning, America" or one nod from the Book-of-the-Month Club.

Explaining its unusual success, Peck has ventured: "I think one might say that *The Road* is the first really sophisticated self-help book: it has no pat answers. And it appeals to all those who question and are in many ways critical of our present cultural values. It speaks very much to a contemporary reader—I very much doubt that had it been published 25 years ago it would have sold nearly so well."<sup>2</sup>

Peck would surely have been even more skeptical if told that his greatest sales would come from the Bible Belt. For although he has identified his target readers as educated, religious, and sympathetic to the techniques of individual or group therapy, his approach in *The Road* certainly does not pretend to any sort of

orthodoxy nor carry the spirit of fundamentalism. In fact, since it tends rather toward evolution (both spiritual and biological) and relentless self-scrutiny and discipline (perfectionism?), it might seem better suited for secular New Age Yuppies than for born-again Christians.

Now Peck has created an even more provocative bestseller, again using his uncanny gift for synthesizing religion and psychology, but this time using an approach both more explicitly Christian and more explicitly scientific. "This is a dangerous book," he says to open *People of the Lie*,<sup>3</sup> conceding the controversial nature of his main theses—namely, that evil people can and should be identified and studied "scientifically," and that satanic possession can be real.

In *The Road*, Peck opened by saying that "life is difficult," but that if we systematically face difficulties rather than passively avoid them or shift blame to people or circumstances, we can experience an almost miraculous sense of grace and thereby achieve spiritual growth. In particular, he urged the view that love is a product of commitment and hard work, and has much more to do with spirituality than with popular romantic myths. Peck clearly sees *Lie* continuing down the same fork of the *The Road Less Traveled*, and is eager to create another useful blend of science, religion, and the practical. Having converted to Christianity at age 43 (since *The Road* was written), he is not apologetic for *Lie's* Christian bias nor its controversial claims. "It may ultimately be considered a more important book than my first," Peck has said

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about *Lie*, “though it makes a lot of people angry. I see *The Road* as God’s gift to me, *Lie* as God’s task for me.”<sup>4</sup>

My purpose here will be to critically explore the most controversial themes raised in *People of the Lie* by concentrating on the first two of its four parts, which center on individual human evil and demon possession (Chapters 1-5).<sup>5</sup>

### *Peck’s View of Human Evil*

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In order to interpret his case studies of individual human evil in *Lie*, Peck proposes a “working definition”: “[Evil] is that which opposes the life force. . . Specifically, it has to do with murder—namely, unnecessary killing, killing that is not required for biological survival.”<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, “Evil is also that which kills spirit” as well as physical bodies. “Evil. . . is that force, residing either inside or outside of human beings, that seeks to kill life or liveliness.”<sup>7</sup> Peck then argues that human evil is fundamentally a mental disease, a brand of “narcissism,” or self-centeredness, which affects the will. The willful aspect is essential, as Peck does not think that all narcissistic people are evil. Furthermore, Peck claims that evil people can be identified, and their traits explored. Evil people want to control others, in a way even common criminals do not usually exhibit. Their narcissism results from an “unsubmitted will”—unsubmitted, that is, to any authority or principle higher than themselves—and the affected persons demonstrate extraordinary willfulness. Evil people are also greedy. But more importantly, they “scapegoat”: instead of blaming themselves for their errors, they project their faults onto others, and are willing to go to any lengths to preserve their self-image, including the infliction of great pain on others. In three chillingly persuasive case studies, Peck describes two sets of self-absorbed parents who callously and carelessly wound their children while deceiving themselves—and Peck—about their real intentions, and a sickeningly self-deceptive couple where the husband is a mere parasite of his self-centered wife. Evil people

keep up a pretense of “goodness,” and they are energetic rather than “lazy” about it.<sup>8</sup> Deep down, Peck says, they think they are faultless.<sup>9</sup>

Peck not only describes the evil personality; he theorizes how it can come about. “Evil runs in families,” he claims from his experience, and often results from a process he calls “psychological gargoylism.” Just as the devil-like gargoyles on medieval cathedrals were designed to ward off their own kind, similarly children may become evil to protect themselves against evil parents, with whom they have a relationship of “enforced intimacy.” Since parents play the psychological role of gods, children will always avoid labelling their parents as evil, even at the cost of viewing themselves as evil instead. More generally, Peck claims to follow Erich Fromm (and certainly is within a long Christian tradition as well) when he notes that the way people become evil is through a long, gradual series of choices. The more evil a person gets, the easier it is to choose evil over good, until finally a state of utter unwillingness to change can occur, which Christians might describe as having committed the unpardonable sin. In one extreme passage Peck claims that each person will end up either totally evil or good—“one enslavement or the other,” with nothing in between.<sup>10</sup>

### *A Critique of Peck’s Analysis of Evil*

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Peck’s *People of the Lie* has many of the same captivating virtues that made *The Road* into a bestseller. Compared to many other works specializing in psychology and religion, *Lie* is remarkably free of professional jargon and condescension, and is notably broad-minded and eclectic in its approach. Peck relates his case histories convincingly, partly because he includes his own reactions, and also because he takes other theories seriously but skeptically, so that he is respectful of earlier work but not wedded at the outset to any particular model or technique. One gets the

feeling that Peck is compassionate, sensitive, flexible, and eager to learn from both his patients and his reading in the areas of religion, psychology, literature, and myth.

In my view, Peck's claim that willful and deceptive narcissism is evil, and his riveting analysis of how it comes about, are the most convincing and timely parts of his book. (Indeed, the word *narcissistic* has been perhaps the most commonly used label for our current era, and *pride* has been seen as a fundamental sin throughout Christian history.) Furthermore, his explanation of how this sort of evil is infectious fits many familiar cases (the infamous Charles Manson "family," for example<sup>11</sup>). I have consulted several friends who have read *Lie*, and all found themselves calling to mind a few acquaintances or intimates who are "evil" in Peck's sense.

However, Peck's view of evil is too limited, and in ways that have tremendous practical consequences. This is distressingly apparent in his discussion of "Evil and Sin," where he excuses common criminals far too easily.

I have spent a good deal of time working in prisons with designated criminals. Almost never have I experienced them as evil people. Obviously they are destructive, and usually repetitively so. But there is a kind of randomness to their destructiveness. Moreover, although to the authorities they generally deny responsibility for their evil deeds, there is still a quality of openness to their wickedness. They themselves are quick to point this out, claiming that they have been caught precisely because they are the "honest criminals." The truly evil, they will tell you, always reside outside of jail. Clearly these proclamations are self-justifying. They are also, I believe, generally accurate.<sup>12</sup>

Certainly we may agree with Peck that the J.R. Ewings of this world are bad people even if they are not designated as sick or criminal. However, common notions of evil (including Peck's own "working definition" mentioned earlier) include the broader category of causes of human suffering—and not simply willful, deceptive narcissism. Other important subcategories of evil besides Peck's surely must include the causing of senseless suffering by continuous neglect, by willful but unself-centered behavior such as mindless revenge, and by self-centered but not chronically devious behavior (such as blatant

racism or sexism). Like Peck, I have spent considerable time talking with prisoners, and agree that their candor is frequently disarming. However, if I were forced to compare, on the one hand, a three-time rapist who admitted his culpability but couldn't control his urges and, on the other, Peck's "Charlene"—a loner who played out pathetic control games hurting only herself, and yet whom Peck labels as totally evil—I'd choose the rapist as clearly worse.

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**Some of Peck's characterizations of evil are plagued by a subtle circularity: you are evil because you sin, and you sin because you are evil.**

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Peck gets into a linguistic thicket when he tries to justify his view that even destructive common criminals are not evil. "[I]t is necessary that we first draw the distinction between evil and ordinary sin. It is not their sins per se that characterize evil people, rather it is the subtlety and persistence and consistency of their sins."<sup>13</sup> Since Peck admits criminals are often "repetitively" destructive, they would thus seem to be "evil." But they are not:

Since I distinguish between evil people and ordinary criminals, I also obviously make the distinction between evil as a personality characteristic and evil deeds. In other words, evil deeds do not an evil person make. Otherwise, we should all be evil, because we all do evil things.<sup>14</sup>

Since we are not all evil, but do evil things, we might expect Peck to explain the distinction by conceding (as he seems to elsewhere in the book) that we are therefore all evil, but that evil is a matter of degree. However, he says: "Of course there are crimes of greater and lesser magnitude. However, it is a mistake to think of sin or evil as a matter of degree. . . . Be perfectly honest with yourself, and you will realize that you sin. If you do not realize it, then you are not perfectly honest with yourself, which is itself a sin. It is inescapable, we are all sinners."<sup>15</sup> Usually "sinner" connotes a person who persistently sins. But this clearly cannot be

the case for Peck. Though “sinners” all, not all of us are “evil,” he claims, even though it is evil people (rather than sinners) who are characterized by the mere “persistence” and “consistency” of their sins, and not by their magnitude or illegality.

Some of Peck’s characterizations of evil are plagued not only by such obvious verbal tangles, but also by a more subtle circularity. He implies, in effect: we can tell you’re evil because you chronically sin and you chronically sin because you’re evil; we can tell you’re evil because you don’t want to change, and the reason you don’t want to change is because you’re evil. According to Peck, for example, the reason the sins of the evil (those who consistently sin?) are so consistent is that people who have “crossed over the line” (to being evil) lose all sense of guilt and refuse to acknowledge the fact that they are evil. In the process, Peck overlooks the possibility that some people have pain-producing behavior patterns that they recognize yet cannot or do not overcome. Perhaps this is due to his own successful record with patients, but it is also possible that Peck is indulging in a therapist’s fantasy which exaggerates the efficacy of his profession.

I dwell on one such case of Peck’s circularity to reveal a larger issue at stake. Peck often notes that he felt “revulsion” toward his evil patients, a reaction that he says is typical and natural. This raises the issue of whether we typically feel revulsion because of the evil present (as Peck claims), or whether we first feel revulsion and then make sure that our theories label the sources of such feeling as “evil.” Peck himself seems to be particularly obsessed with those people who are unwilling to bear the cost of counseling at all, or else are uncooperative in therapy due to the “lies” involved in deep psychological coverups. By contrast, he saves his highest praise for those who do confront the truth about themselves, and who have the courage to bear the high material and mental price of therapy.

We can hardly blame Peck, as a psychiatrist, for these attitudes any more than I, as a college teacher, can be faulted for getting angry about students who continually cheat or I, as a prison

worker, was more revulsed by common criminals than Peck apparently was. But it highlights the danger of labelling people as “evil” while pretending to a privileged perspective of “scientific” objectivity—a danger that Peck explicitly recognizes, but thinks worth the benefits. Certainly we may concede to Peck that we should study evil, quite literally, by all means, and that such investigations should be as careful and as systematic as possible. But findings which carry the “scientific” label are most often suffused with an air of authority and objectivity, even though the record of such forays into complicated human problems is far from encouraging. For example, in *The Mismeasure of Man*<sup>16</sup> Steven Jay Gould has shown how the unconscious biases of leading 19th and 20th century scientists reflected not only their (racist and sexist) theories about human intelligence, but even infected such apparently “objective” operations as measurement and sample selection. Yet Peck, especially in his closing chapter, does not shrink from assuming a similar aura for himself and—after fellow psychiatrists wise up—his whole profession:

All one can see of [evil people] is the mud. And it all looks the same. In Chapter 3 I offered a clinical, nosological description of the evil personality. It is extraordinary how well the evil fit the mold. Once you’ve seen one evil person, you’ve essentially seen them all. Even psychotics, whom we are accustomed to thinking of as the most seriously deranged, are more interesting. (Indeed, there is some reason to suspect that in certain cases psychosis is chosen as a preferable alternative to evil.)

[H]ow is it that psychiatrists have until now failed to recognize such a distinct, rigid type? It is because they have bought the pretense of respectability. They have been deceived by what Harvey M. Cleckley called “the mask of sanity.” Despite their pretense of sanity, the evil are the most insane of all.<sup>17</sup>

The trouble is that “evil,” like its complementary notion “good,” is an exceedingly complex and broad category, resounding with cultural and theological overtones, and that any attempt at analysis involves an inescapable element of mystery. So if a psychiatrist as sensitive and well-read as Peck suffers from myopia on the subject of evil, then how much more dangerous will it be to encourage his peers to assume the awesome responsibility of telling

people to their faces that they are evil, and doing it in the name of science to boot?

## *Peck's View of Demon Possession*

Peck's discussion of demon possession is drawn from two exorcisms in which he participated, and from several others described in Mordecai Martin's *Hostage to the Devil*.<sup>18</sup> Peck's modest aim is to bring a reasonable person to the same open-minded position on the subject of possession that he himself had achieved by reading *Hostage*.

Peck admits that it takes a personal encounter with demon possession, like his own, to convince most persons of the reality of a personal devil, and that even such a dramatic experience may not be fully persuasive, as was the case with some of his coexorcists.

In the theoretical part of his discussion, Peck, as usual, defends the use of both psychotherapeutic and religious methods, seeing these two categories as complementary rather than exclusive. In fact, he describes exorcism as "psychotherapy by massive assault," observes that "95%" of what he witnessed can be explained by psychotherapeutic categories, and

notes that psychotherapy was essential before and after the exorcisms. However, Peck insists that the two methods use power differently: traditional psychotherapy studiously avoids it, whereas religion uses it consciously but lovingly. Exorcism, Peck admits with characteristic candor, is a form of "brainwashing," but one which is carefully chosen by the "possessed" person, whose consent is essential.

Peck then identifies common features in cases of purported possession. Possession is not an "accident": a possessed person has repeatedly "sold out," usually through loneliness, and often to an imaginary companion. Experience in the occult from an early age is typically present, as is "fixation"—the victims seem to be frozen in childhood. Both Peck's cases, like Martin's in *Hostage*, were highly predisposed by "multiple stresses," including "human evil." These "possessed" people struggle against the lesser demonic selves inhabiting the same body, and eventually want to be rid of the demonic part, which has been identified before the exorcism. Exorcism is then carried out by a carefully chosen team, and involves great amounts of time, energy ("love"), perceptiveness, and prayer. Peck does not pretend that exorcism is the end of the story. Rather, exorcism moves patients from a state of "demonic possession" to

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## Scott Peck's Growing Adventist Connection

by Charla Rideout

Scott Peck has become a popular lecturer for Seventh-day Adventist audiences. Since the autumn of 1985 three Adventist institutions have sponsored appearances by Peck, including two all-day seminars at Porter Memorial Hospital in Denver, Colorado, which drew approximately 1300 participants both times. Peck also spoke on several occasions at Loma Linda University's annual Alumni-Postgraduate Convention of the School of Medicine, in March, 1986.

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Typical of these seminars was the one held November 10, 1986, in Washington, D.C., entitled "The Road Less Traveled," and attended by approximately 1200 people. The seminar was co-sponsored by the Washington Institute for Contemporary Issues (WICI), a non-profit, community-oriented organization that is funded by the Seventh-day Adventist church and a private foundation, and Washington Adventist Hospital. Peck drew some 900 non-Seventh-day Adventists and mental health care professionals, as well as 300 Seventh-day Adventists, to the Departmental Auditorium in the Federal Triangle area of downtown Washington, D. C.

“demonic attack.” Psychotherapy is still needed afterward, although progress can be dramatic compared to usual cases.

Peck also candidly admits that his cases of purported possession are very similar, in both causes and description, to cases of “multiple personality disorders” (MPD’s), a term psychiatrists use in cases where it appears that several identities are being used by the same person. But he insists there are clues which point up the difference. Peck seems to have sensed the demonic by means of “non-human” physical features exhibited by patients during the exorcisms, including a contemptuous grin which “could only be described as Satanic,” and reptilian features and behavior, such as hooded eyes and wild aggression. Peck feels that his two cases involved possession by Satan himself, although it is possible that “lesser” demons can also be present, using various aliases.

### *A Critique of Peck’s Analysis of Demon Possession*

I suggest that there is no philosophical barrier to the idea that multiple persons can inhabit the same body, and that such a view can bridge an obvious gap

between Peck’s analysis of MPD’s and demon possession.

In the case of purported devil personalities, we need to examine the language of “possession.” It is noteworthy that we commonly say of a normal person that he or she “has” a body, using the language of ownership. However, the notion of “possession” seems to be reserved for a (possibly supernatural) being which inhabits a body against the will of another “host” being, and which may at times actually be in dramatic conflict with the host. (By contrast, it is interesting to note that people who ask God to come into their lives do not call the result God-possession, presumably because the consent of the host is given.)

While our usual concept of a person may involve a single “spirit” which “owns” its body, I see nothing fundamentally troublesome, from a philosophical point of view, with the notion that more than one person can inhabit the same body at the same time.<sup>19</sup> Admittedly, our usual prejudice is so strong that when we are confronted with cases of multiple personalities, the kind of question that usually arises in our practical mind is: Which of these is the “real” one, and which are “fantasy,” “illusory,” or “momentary”? Those of us who are open to the idea that possession is possible might go on to ask: Which are “devils”?

The seminar consisted of three sessions, two in the morning and one in the afternoon. In an easy, relaxed manner Peck began the first session by retitling it “How We Must Be Displeased With Ourselves Before We Can Love Others.” He defined meekness as “a true knowledge of oneself as one is.”

The second session dealt with marriage and the family. Borrowing from Martin Buber, Peck described marriage as an I/Thou relationship. The most common marital problem, he said, is denying problems. He gave several tips for helping marriages succeed, including making appointments with the marriage partner to sit down and talk about potential problems. With regard to the family, he said that parents should talk to their children with a single voice and that parents are their children’s servants (“servants” being defined as those who do whatever their master needs.)

The third session dealt with community building. Peck outlined four stages in the emergence of a community and provided twelve characteristics of true community. He summed up the session by saying that “true community is the best analog to the Kingdom.”

James Londis, director of the Washington Institute for Contemporary Issues, quotes widely from Scott Peck’s books. According to Londis, Peck’s book, *The Road Less Traveled*, is important to conservative Christian groups, including Adventists, who stress what one ought or ought not to do. Peck, by contrast, speaks in personal terms—how to become a mature person, a true human being. An example, says Londis, of how Peck speaks in terms intelligible to contemporary people, is his designation of falling in love as a fallacy. A person falling in love, says Peck, is a person who has fallen for a fantasy, not real love.

## A "Multiple Persons" Approach to Demon Possession

In the model I am suggesting, the additional personalities are not mere illusions. They are persons, with the same sort of roots, and the same kind of "reality," as ordinary personalities, growing in a continuous relationship with the body they inhabit.<sup>20</sup> Of course, some of them may be more long-lived than others (such as the "host" personality, which we may ordinarily view as the most "real"), some may be stronger or more persistent, and each may react differently to its physical and cultural environment. However, all these can be seen as differences of degree and not of kind.

In the "multiple persons" view, any one of the following unusual processes could possibly occur within one physical body:

—*Overlap*—just because two personalities are "different" or go by different names does not mean that they are totally separate, with no memories or traits in common; in some multiple-personality cases (such as that of Sybil), the persons may be quite different and may not "remember" the others consciously, but can still share some common traits.

—*Splitting or branching*—this could explain why some personalities do not appear until late in the game; among the causes of the splitting could be the phenomenon of "gargoylism" that Peck outlines so vividly; that is, multiple personalities, even vastly different "alter egos" ranging from the saintly to the violent and from the mature to the childish, could emerge as a defensive response against an "evil" environment, and these resulting persons could still be grounded in the same body, including the same physical brain.

—*Merging and dying*—the persons who result from splitting could merge again or simply end, even if it also seems accurate to use alternate descriptions—for example, that one or more "evil spirits" is being "cast out." In the treatment of some multiple-personality cases such as Sybil's, the term "merging" seems fully

appropriate, while this may seem a rather tame description for what goes on during an exorcism and its aftermath.

To some critics, the "multiple persons" approach may seem to involve an artificial upgrading of the "mere personalities" involved in MPD's and a downgrading of purportedly "supernatural" devils, both to the status of ordinary persons. In particular it might be objected that the more "clear-cut" cases of devil possession sometimes involve such dramatic personalities in conflict with the host personality that a merely human interpretation should be ruled out. But even "normal" personalities can be quite dramatic, especially in stressful situations, and in my theory they are viewed as having the same sort of reality as the "possessing" personalities in abnormal cases. In addition, it is an objection that Peck, who already honestly admits the similarity between MPD's and possession, cannot easily use. For one thing, Peck admits that MPD's are already quite dramatic. Furthermore, given Peck's experience that MPD's and possession are so closely related in terms of causes and character, my theory has the advantage of treating similar cases with like

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### Peck does not seriously attempt to reconcile his account of ordinary human evil with that of demonic evil.

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theory. For Peck, one case involves supernatural intervention, the other does not, though the overlap, according to Peck, is at least 95 percent.

The "multiple persons" position also allows a more unified approach to evil in some other respects. Peck does not seriously attempt to reconcile his account of ordinary human evil (committed by willful narcissistic persons) with that of demonic evil. Peck, following Martin, mentions the possibility that dramatic possession cases involve only "incomplete possession." "Complete" possession is also possible, where Satan's disguise is so thorough that the inhabited persons may appear ordinary. This view, in



which “degree of evil” becomes tantamount to “degree of possession,” suffers grave continuity problems. For example, if some of Peck’s seemingly more ordinary patients are “totally evil,” as he suggests, why do they not have preliminary episodes involving MPD’s, as was frequent in his cases of incomplete possession?

Perhaps it is this underlying lack of clear focus that leads Peck to end with a credibility-damaging discussion that includes some poorly supported theses,<sup>21</sup> such as:

—Satan has no power except in a human body;

—the spirit of evil is one of unreality, but it itself is real;

—Satan’s most effective deception is his ability to conceal himself from us. But he can’t always do it, since his narcissism often gets the better of his judgment, and he turns into a “showoff;

—Satan does not understand science, since as the “Father of Lies” he is in some important ways blinded to truth.

Given the difficulties we have mentioned, and his own initial doubts, we can see why Peck rests his case for possession upon the efficacy of exorcisms he has witnessed. However, this too seems an indecisive argument against a “multiple persons” view. For it may still be allowed in such a model that exorcism, along with or even in place of psychotherapy, is the best way to deal with an evil person inhabiting the same body as a better (host) person. This is especially

true if, as Peck’s and Martin’s studies seem to bear out, “possession” commonly occurs where the prevailing atmosphere has for years been filled with language, rituals, and fantasy structures that are religious (though in some cases “Satanic” rather than, say, Christian in origin). It may well be that the best approach in confronting evil persons is to address them by name in the religious language in which they, as persons and not mere phantasms or chimeras, were conceived and bred. This is no more nonsensical than the use of positive rituals such as worship and prayer by normal persons in more ordinary situations, where religious language functions as an appropriate inducement, and where neurological, psychotherapeutic, and anthropological language is clearly out of place as an inducing agent.<sup>22</sup> Hence, by taking the “multiple persons” view of possession we can keep Peck’s cure while remaining skeptical of his diagnosis, and, as seen earlier, derive a more unified interpretation of his diagnosis.

Silence, said Simon and Garfunkel, like a cancer grows. So, Peck convinces us, does evil. Underestimating its lethality is certainly dangerous, and we may thank Peck for vividly reminding us how insidiously destructive human evil can be. But so is focusing too narrowly on one of the many forms of human evil, for we may lose in the battle against other forms. And so is overdramatizing evil’s origin in direct supernatural terms, for we may miss the more subtle factors that ordinarily bring it about.

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## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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1. M. Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978).

2. Carol Anthony, “The Long, Winding and Happy Fate of *The Road Less Traveled*,” *Publisher’s Weekly*, Sept. 27, 1985, p. 76.

3. M. Scott Peck, *People of the Lie* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983).

4. Anthony, p. 76.

5. In the third part, which centers on “group evil” (Chapter 6), Peck’s main point is that individuals often fail to shoulder their rightful part of collective responsi-

bilities, because of factors such as group pressure and the “fragmentation of conscience” that accompanies specialization. While Peck’s discussion of group evil is both engaging and practical—for example, he argues that a morally involved citizenry should support a military draft of civilians—I will devote none of my limited space to it, mainly because I find it less original than the earlier parts. Peck’s closing argument in part four (Ch. 7) will be criticized in my discussion of part one, where he first claims that evil personalities can be “scientifically” identified.

6. *Lie*, p. 42.

7. *Lie*, p. 43.

8. *Lie*, p. 72. Thus Peck has shifted from his view in *The Road*, where the most basic sin is "laziness."

9. *Lie*, p. 73. Although in this passage Peck says evil people think they are faultless, he later says that at their deepest level evil people are constantly terrified of being found out.

10. *Lie*, p. 84.

11. See for example, Vincent Bugliosi's *Helter Skelter* (New York: Bantam Books, 1974). Other celebrated cases include Flora Rita Schreiber's *Sybil* (New York: Regnery, 1974), and murderess Frances Schreuder's family—see for example, Jonathan Coleman's *At Mother's Request* (New York: Pocket Books, 1985).

12. *Lie*, pp. 69-70.

13. *Lie*, p. 69.

14. *Lie*, p. 70.

15. *Lie*, p. 70.

16. Steven Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1981).

17. *Lie*, p. 264.

18. Mordecai Martin, *Hostage to the Devil* (New York: Bantam Books, 1977).

19. The idea that one body may contain more than one person is hardly new with me, although the application to possession cases may be relatively novel. Already in the 18th century, David Hume had raised doubts about the unity of mental phenomena, and the 20th century philosophical literature on "personal identity" has contained several works questioning the one person/one body principle. For example, Jon Elster, ed. *The Multiple Self, Studies in Rationality and Social Change* (New York:

Cambridge University Press, 1986), contains several such articles by philosophers and psychologists. Recent articles have also suggested that there is no final answer, stressing that for some purposes we should think of (even ordinary) humans as involving several persons, and for other purposes think of them as a unity, much as we view an orchestra as sometimes a single unit, and other times a collection of individuals.

For background sources on the subject of personal identity, see the articles on "Personal Identity" (pp. 95-107) and "Persons" (pp. 110-114) in Vol. 6 of *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967).

20. Let the reader understand that I do not plan to settle, nor need to settle, certain difficult aspects of the so-called "mind-body problem"—for example, whether human beings are "nothing but fancy machines," or whether the machines have "ghosts." For my purposes, all that needs to be accepted is some form of what might be called "mental continuity;" that is, that a mind matures continuously (usually gradually), and in intimate relationship with the body it inhabits. The only sorts of views that need be excluded are those which feature a preexisting soul (such as Hinduism) or a fully mature soul, single and indivisible, implanted at birth (a view held by many Catholics).

For all that I say here, the mind may be ultimately ineffable, essentially spiritual and mystical, with a channel existing from the human mind to a divine beyond.

21. *Lie*, pp. 206-210.

22. Of course such categories (psychotherapy, etc.) may be invaluable as guides in reflection and explanation.

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# Women Pastors and Baptism: Loma Linda University Church Takes the Plunge

By Clark Davis

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On December 20, 1986, Margaret Hempe, associate in pastoral care at the Loma Linda University Seventh-day Adventist Church, baptized Melissa Mead and Rocio Del Carmen Diaz into the Seventh-day Adventist church. Over the years the 64-year-old pastor had brought many persons into the Adventist church, but as a woman she had been prohibited from baptizing. Now, with tears in her eyes she explained, "I did it for the young people," hoping that more young women will now enter the ministry.

Actually, Hempe was the fourth Adventist woman pastor to baptize in North America. More than two years before, pastors in the Potomac Conference—Marsha Frost, Jan Daffern, and Frances Wiegand—performed baptisms in the Washington, D. C., area. Despite General Conference objections to the Potomac Conference baptisms, the Southeastern California Conference, prodded by the Loma Linda University Church, decided in 1986 to approve baptisms performed in similar situations.<sup>1</sup>

In preparation for the triennium constituency meeting of the Southeastern California Conference, the 40 delegates of the University Church unanimously approved a proposal in March drafted by the pastoral staff. It began by noting "with serious reservations," that the issue of women's ordination would not be finally

decided for the SDA church at least until the 1990 General Conference session. The statement addressed the inequity in responsibilities and read:

The policy of not allowing unordained women to officiate at baptisms and weddings while allowing unordained men to do so has no theological or pragmatic basis, and is therefore discriminatory against women. This discrimination is morally unacceptable.

Because this discrimination is a moral issue it is a matter of conscience and not merely a matter of procedure. It is therefore the right and the responsibility of our conference to discontinue this practice even though the present policies of the North American Division and the Pacific Union Conference allow it.<sup>2</sup>

The statement further proposed that

It shall be the policy of this conference to give women and men the same rights and privileges in regard to officiating at baptisms and weddings in the conference," and went on to note that since "it has been the historical belief and practice of the church. . . that officiating at baptisms and weddings is the proper function of fully ordained ministers. . . it shall be the policy of this conference that only ordained ministers officiate at baptisms and weddings."<sup>3</sup>

Second, the statement challenged the church to end wage inequities between female and male ministers. At the time, the University Church pastoral staff were upset that women ministers in the Seventh-day Adventist church were denied two wage increases conferred on men. Fred Kasischke, a member of the University Church pastoral staff, was outraged that Pastor Hempe

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had received neither the initial increase, which came at the time of being granted ministerial licenses, nor the second increase, which came to him at the time of his ordination. These amounted to a \$96 per month difference between the salary of top-level female ministers and top-level male ministers. Reviewing the current status of women ministers in the church, the proposal stated:

Currently within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination women functioning within the ministry enjoy all the privileges that men enjoy except two. They preach, teach, counsel, give Bible studies, chair and participate on committees, visit, perform crisis intervention, give funeral services, lead out in communions, etc. They do not perform weddings or baptize.<sup>4</sup>

Then, once again, the current practice was declared to be a moral issue demanding immediate resolution of the financial inequities:

It seems more than reasonable that the prohibition of these two ministerial functions and the absence of ordination status does not justify the disparity in financial remuneration. We submit that it is morally inequitable. We would, therefore, propose that women in preaching ministry be paid on the same wage scale as men, with the same recognition given to education and/or years of service.<sup>5</sup>

The first step in consideration of the proposals occurred on Thursday, March 6, when Thomas Zirkle, M.D., an elder at the University Church and a member of the conference committee, and Tom Mostert, president of the Southeastern California Conference, cochaired a meeting of the delegations from various SDA churches in the Loma Linda area. Conference administrators had divided the conference into five districts, each holding a preliminary meeting to discuss items coming before the constituency.

Among the many proposals for inclusion on the agenda of the upcoming constituency meeting, the two dealing with women's rights received the most widespread support. President Mostert promised to see that they received full consideration at the constituency meeting. Each proposal was then adopted by the group with lopsided majorities and the stage was set for their discussion at the constituency meeting.

More than 600 delegates, representing the churches of the Southeastern California Confer-

ence, met at the La Sierra Collegiate Church on Sunday, April 27, 1986.<sup>6</sup> The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Mostert, who by now, one month later, had been elected president of the Pacific Union. (A new conference president had not yet been elected.) But not until after 6:00 p.m. did the delegates finally address the University Church's proposals regarding women pastors. Just as Elder Louis Venden, senior pastor at the University Church, was preparing to introduce the proposal, a young woman stepped to the microphone and asked that a count be taken to see if a quorum remained. As a murmur went through the crowd, Venden, sensing what was about to happen, rushed to the microphone and introduced the first proposal in emphatic and passionate terms. Before he had finished, however, Mostert cut him off and announced that the quorum

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**His jaw tight and his voice quivering, Venden stood and addressed the chair: "Our current position on women is morally and ethically bankrupt. Let us take a stand for what is just. . . . We cannot wait another three years."**

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had dissolved and the meeting was over. Immediately, a debate broke out over whether any proceedings could take place without a quorum or whether a quorum could be redefined. Speaking from the chair, Mostert finally said that there were no alternatives—the meeting was ended. According to conference policy, another meeting was arranged for the following Sunday, but a random sampling of the delegates showed that a quorum would not be achieved then either, and without a second meeting, it would be three years before the proposals could be raised again.

His jaw tight, his voice quivering, and his hands clasped in fists, Venden stood before the assembled delegates and addressed the chair. "Elder Mostert," he said, "with all due respect, our current position on women is morally and

ethically bankrupt. Let us step forward today and take a stand for what is just, for what is right. This is a matter of right versus wrong. We simply cannot wait another three years." Mostert immediately retorted that not only was the meeting automatically called off because of the lack of a quorum, but that there were problems with the proposals that could involve the conference's relationship to the union and the General Conference.

Many people stayed in the church long after the meeting had ended. One of them, sitting in disappointed silence, was Pastor Venden. Just a few rows away, a young woman pastor fought back tears.

However, the closing of the constituency meeting did not spell the end of the women's issue in the Southeastern California Conference. Many conference constituents felt confused by the way the issue had been handled. This unrest became evident at the next meeting of the Southeastern California Conference Executive Committee on May 15. Members of the committee urged that since several issues on the agenda of the triennium held in the spring had not been discussed there should be a special constituency meeting in the Fall of 1986. Before the proposal could come to a vote, Pacific Union President Tom Mostert, pleaded for postponement of the meeting until *after* the Annual Council in order to receive the benefit of guidance from the North American Division. Reminding the president that in a "democratic institution" ideas flow upward, a member of the committee urged that the meeting come *before* so that the North American Division could receive the benefit of Southeastern's judgment. The conference committee then voted to hold a special constituency meeting in the fall, before the Annual Council, that would address some of the urgent issues on the agenda—especially the women's issue—so that the feelings of the constituents of the Southeastern California Conference could be shared with the Annual Council.<sup>7</sup>

At the next conference Executive Committee meeting on June 12, Mostert moved to cancel the proposed meeting in the fall. It became evident, however, that the committee was not about to

acquiesce, and the motion was withdrawn. After prolonged debate, September 28, 1986, was set for the constituency meeting, "To complete the agenda of the April, 1986 session."<sup>8</sup>

When the full constituency of the conference met in September, Steven Gifford, the new con-

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**Impassioned pleas against the proposal included calls for church unity and quotations from Ellen White on a woman's place in the home.**

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ference president, presided as chairman. From the outset he impressed the delegates. As the women's issue promised to be the major issue addressed, the constituency voted to move it to the top of the agenda.

The first proposal raised dealt with equitable pay. For 40 minutes the issue was discussed, much of the debate tempered by uncertainty over the specifics of the current pay scale and the proposed changes. With minutes left before the vote was to be taken, Mostert delivered an impassioned appeal to the constituents to leave the decision up to Annual Council in order to maintain all-important church unity. Mostert then moved that instead of the proposal being adopted as policy in Southeastern, it be sent as a recommendation from the conference to the Annual Council. After two chaotic votes, Mostert's motion passed by a razor-thin margin and the reworded proposal passed easily. "We would, therefore" the proposal read, "regardless of ordination, recommend to the General Conference at Annual Council, that men and women in ministry be placed on the same wage schedule with the same recognition given to education and/or years of service, based on the same evaluation process."<sup>9</sup>

The proposal dealing with equal duties for men and women pastors was presented to the delegates, and was greeted by emotional and heated debate. Impassioned pleas against the proposal included calls for church unity and quotations from Ellen White on a woman's place

in the home. Supporters of the proposal included numerous women who rose to affirm faith in their church while calling it to fairness. When the final vote was taken the delegates had voted overwhelmingly in favor of the proposal to regard the duties of men and women as equal.

"That it shall be the practice of this conference to give to unordained women and men the same rights and privileges in regard to officiating at baptisms and weddings in our conference."<sup>10</sup> The wording of the adopted proposal was close to what University Church had attempted to submit to the spring constituency meeting.

However, the supporters of the women's issue were less than euphoric. The proposal for equitable pay had become a recommendation rather than a policy. Furthermore, the proposal for equal duties had been adopted, but there would no doubt be much confusion over its implementation. Indeed, speaking at a meeting of the Southeastern California Conference Executive Committee on October 23, Mostert declared that the conference had hampered the church's ability to move forward on the issue; now the question was no longer equality, but rebellious conferences.<sup>11</sup>

However, at the next Conference Executive Committee on November 13, Gifford reported that the year-end North American Division meeting in Washington D.C., had accepted Southeastern's recommendation and that pay equity would go into effect January 1, 1987. On the issue of baptizing and marrying, Gifford, having discussed the issue with Union President Mostert and other church leaders, noted that

while the constituency's vote permitted women to baptize, he recommended that the women in the conference not baptize. However, if women pastors, acting from the convictions of their conscience, proceeded to exercise the right to baptism provided by the constituency he would not penalize them professionally and would support them as persons. Gifford reiterated this position at a board meeting of the University Church on November 24. In one of many warm comments about President Gifford, Fred Kasischke said Gifford had "adeptly walked the fine line between loyalty to the church and respect for individual conscience."<sup>12</sup>

Several months earlier, young Melissa Mead had excitedly told her mother that she wanted to be baptized. When her mother asked who she wanted to baptize her, Melissa replied, "Pastor Hempe." It had been hard at the time for her mother to explain why this would not be possible, but due to the events of 1986 the impossible became possible.

With her conference constituency's approval to baptize, Margaret Hempe spent much time in private thought and discussion with her colleagues on the church staff. When she decided to go ahead with the baptism, the church board voted unanimously to affirm her decision. Because of the actions of Pastor Hempe and the Loma Linda University Church, it is more likely that Melissa will not have to make the same explanation that her mother did. Hopefully, if Melissa's daughter wishes, she will be able to be baptized by a Seventh-day Adventist woman pastor.

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## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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1. See *Spectrum* reports: Judith P. Nembhard, "Women Pastors Begin Baptizing," Vol. 15, No. 2 (August 1984), pp. 7-13; Roy Branson with Diane Gainer, "Potomac Yields to GC," Vol. 15, No. 3 (October 1984), pp. 2-4; Terrie Dopp Aamodt, "Laity Transform North Pacific Constitution," Vol. 15, No. 4 (December 1984), pp. 6-12; Debra Gainer Nelson, "Commission Postpones Discussion on Ordination of Women," Vol. 16, No. 2 (June 1985), pp. 32-38.

2. "Resolutions Regarding the Roles of Men and Women in Ministry."

3. Resolutions.

4. "Women in the Ministry—A Proposal."

5. *Ibid.*

6. Author's notes, La Sierra Collegiate Church, April 27, 1986.

7. Conference committee member's notes.

8. Member's notes.

9. Minutes of Southeastern California Conference Special Constituency Meeting, September 18, 1986.

10. Minutes.

11. Member's notes.

12. Interview with Pastor Fred Kasischke, Loma Linda, CA, December 19, 1986.

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# North Pacific Reasserts Constitutional Independence

by Rosemary Watts

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The North Pacific Union constituency, despite objections from the General Conference, operated in September 1986 under the constitution the laity had been instrumental in writing and adopting two years before. Two events will be remembered by the delegates to the 1986 North Pacific Union Conference constituency meeting. First, Bruce Johnston, President of the Washington Conference, was elected president of the North Pacific Union. Second, the delegates heard a letter from Neal Wilson read to them by vice-president of the General Conference Kenneth Mittleider. These events, indeed the entire 1986 constituency meeting, were affected by recent history in the union.

The North Pacific Union had been especially affected by the Davenport fiasco, and church members had insisted that a special commission, chaired by a lay person, draft a new constitution. The constitution it proposed was adopted September 16, 1984, by more than the required two-thirds vote of the union constituency. A key feature of the new constitution designated the union executive committee as a standing nominating committee. Another feature required that a caucus of each conference delegation at the union constituency nominate names for the union executive committee. The names would then be ratified by the full constituency. An *ad hoc* nominating committee was created specifically for the 1986 constituency meeting (See

Terrie Dopp Aamodt, "Laity Transform North Pacific Union," *Spectrum*, Vol. 15, No. 4, [December 1984], pp. 6-12.).

That nominating committee, chaired by Charles Bradford, president of the North American Division, decided in early July not to recommend incumbent Richard D. Fearing for reelection to the presidency. The nominating committee appointed a search committee to seek names of qualified church administrators. The North Pacific Union paper, *The Gleaner*, set precedent by announcing those decisions well in advance of the September constituency meeting. Well before the opening gavel on Sunday morning, most of the delegates knew that the nominating committee had decided to recommend Bruce Johnston.

E. A. (Bud) Roberts, a pastor from Upper Columbia Conference, who was on the search committee as well as the nominating committee, says that the committee felt that one of the greatest needs in the North Pacific Union Conference was electing a president who could bring healing after all the bitterness and destruction of credibility of the past five years.

Immediately after the opening ceremonies of the 1986 constituency meeting, Bradford formally nominated Johnston for president of the North Pacific Union. Elmer Rasmussen, a retired minister in the Washington delegation, made an impassioned speech in which he declared that "we [the union] have created a monster" with the new constitution. He berated the nominating committee and the search committee, and called for constitutional changes. He also asserted that the conference presidents

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Rosemary Watts, a delegate to the special 1984 and regular 1986 North Pacific Union conference constituency meetings, lives in Richland, Washington.

were in a position of conflict of interest and could not pass judgment on a union president when they were potential candidates for that office. Ironically, he moved to refer the nomination back to the nominating committee. The day's business had truly begun.

Several speakers followed Rasmussen, expressing dissatisfaction both with the process and with the name nominated for president. Some wondered why the incumbent (who chose not to attend the constituency meeting) was not renominated. Other delegates expressed dissatisfaction with the new constitution by objecting to the innovation of a two-month interval between the decision of the nominating committee and the actual election of a president at a union constituency meeting.

Ultimately, the motion to refer the nomination back to committee lost resoundingly. An electric atmosphere swept the auditorium—delegates sensed that for the first time ever they would genuinely participate in the election of a union president. The questions asked about the nominee were not perfunctory. Some wanted Johnston to come to the floor of the constituency to answer questions. However, Bradford spoke for many when he said it would be seriously misunderstood should Johnston have to come in and “campaign” for the union presidency. Bradford and other members of the nominating committee then answered general questions. Johnston was then elected by better than 90 percent of the delegates. When he reentered the hall to a thunderous ovation, no one doubted that the excitement indicated endorsement of the system that had resulted in his election.

Not only approval of this selection as leader, but also the process of electing the executive committee of the North Pacific Union went smoothly. Under the new constitution there is no longer a pliant roomful of strangers serving for a few hours as a nominating committee. Each conference delegation met in caucus to nominate a slate of names from their own territory to serve on the union executive committee. Those names were then presented to

the body for ratification. By the end of the day, delegates agreed that the new process for electing members of the union executive committee is a vast improvement over the old way.

The second event at the North Pacific Union constituency meeting that will be remembered was the reading by Kenneth Mittleider, general vice president of the General Conference, of a letter addressed to the delegates in session from Neal C. Wilson, president of the General Conference (see appendix following). The letter echoed the telegram sent from Washington to the members of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee in 1984. As the letter was read slowly and with feeling, a range of reactions played through the delegates.

There was surprise. No one had expected such a thing from Wilson because those assumed to be representing the interests of the General Conference had earlier expressed their belief that the spirit of the constitution was in unity with the General Conference “Model Constitution” for unions. The tone of the letter also shocked the delegates. They were stunned that he so blatantly threatened the constituency of the union.

After a few moments of awkward silence delegates asked for specifics. Darold Bigger, pastor of the Walla Walla College Church, drew from a Western analogy when he said that a horse trained to respond to only voice commands and a change of leg pressure becomes frightened and ill-behaved when bits, whips, and reins are used on him. Mittleider and Ralph Thompson, secretary of the General Conference, tried to express Wilson's concerns, but their answers revealed they were unfamiliar with the constitution. Connie Lysinger, an Oregon delegate who served on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, read to the delegates from her notes of an April meeting with Thompson and Fred Thomas, a secretary of the North American Division. Both had then stated they found no problem with the spirit of the constitution. As Lysinger read from her April notes, Mittleider's face registered shock.



Nevertheless, Thompson now argued that a serious flaw in the constitution was placing all power in the union's executive committee. "You have turned your president into a toothless bulldog. You have the Union Executive Committee evaluating the officers. Who evaluates the Executive Committee?"

"We do!" the delegates chorused.

Jim Balkins, an Idaho representative on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, pointed out that some of the wording Mittleider had objected to was identical to that in the "Model Constitution."

John Brunt, a delegate from the Walla Walla College faculty, asked specifically about Wilson's threat. What would happen if the North Pacific Union Conference retained its constitution rather than accepting the "model"? Mittleider, at first, did not acknowledge that the letter contained any threat. However, a general cry went up from the floor for him to read the letter again. Mittleider never answered Brunt's question.

Brunt, who is chairman of the theology department, went on to say that if a committee is formed by the General Conference to study what has been done in the North Pacific Union Conference he hoped it would acknowledge that church members in the Northwest loved their church and the Lord very much. He ended by saying, "It is amazing to me that there is such concern over these differences; the harmony far exceeds the differences."

Jere Patzer, president of the Upper Columbia

Conference, stated his concern that "perceptions can become more important than facts. The perception becomes the reality. This union must not be perceived as a maverick union." He proposed that Wilson be invited to meet with the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. So the delegates voted to refer Wilson's letter to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and invited Wilson to meet with them.

The final words of the dramatic constituency meeting were left to Bradford, who subtly answered at least one question being asked during Mittleider's reading of the letter: Why had Mittleider, a general vice-president, read Wilson's letter instead of Bradford, who is not only a vice president of the General Conference, but president of the North American Division? Bradford left the clear impression that he had not known about the letter in advance, but heard it when the delegates did.

He said Wilson's letter was *Wilson's* letter. "I will be responsible to do what I can to adjust these matters without having to resort to a 'congressional meeting,'" said Bradford. "You're going to have to put a little bit of faith in Brad now. I don't want to see the North Pacific Union Conference embroiled in endless discussion."

Meanwhile, the constitution approved in 1984 by the North Pacific Union remains in place. But the respect of the General Conference for the North American Division and its unions remains in doubt.

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## Appendix

### Neal Wilson's Letter to the North Pacific Union

Walla Walla, Washington

My dear brothers and sisters:

On behalf of the General Conference and the world church, it is a personal privilege for me to speak words of deep appreciation to Elder and Mrs. Fearing. Much could be said about the distinguished service of Richard and

Claoma to the North Pacific Union and the world church.

Richard has blessed the lives of countless numbers of young and old as pastor of several large institutional churches, as president of the West Virginia and Upper Columbia Conferences, and for the past six years as president of your union. He also served as a valued member on various institutional boards and as a member of the General Conference and North American Division

Committees. During all of these years Claoma was known for her committed, vivacious, and gracious personality. Their lives have been characterized by optimism, positive spiritual values, integrity, a selfless spirit, and as those who demonstrated the simplicity of Christian living. Contrary to what some have suggested, I make bold to state that they have served successfully and faithfully and deserve our united thanks and appreciation.

Now, may I request your kind attention for just a few more minutes as Elder Mittleider reads a short message which I feel compelled to share with you. It is both a privilege and a duty to address this personal appeal to those of you assembled for this important meeting. This appeal is offered in the spirit of the words used by the apostle Paul when he wrote to the Corinthians. In spite of his natural inclination to come with a whip in his hand, he made it clear that in the final analysis the love of Christ is the most powerful and effective force, and therefore he uses the words we find in 2 Corinthians, chapter 10, verse 1. Quoting, "I plead with you—yes I Paul—and I plead gently, as Christ Himself would do" (Living Bible).

The whole chapter is an impassioned appeal not to trust in our own wisdom and devisings and not to measure ourselves by ourselves, but to realize that we are a part of a spiritual body and therefore obligated to think of the benefit of the whole and not simply ourselves. In this context I appeal to you not to ignore the entreaty of the General Conference to take corrective measures to bring your constitution and bylaws into closer harmony with the General Conference model, both in word and in spirit.

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**The General Conference has the authority to create subordinate organizations and the union conference is such a subordinate organization**

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We highly commend you for taking your responsibility seriously and showing concern for greater accountability and a more efficient operation. We applaud an evaluative process, but we believe this can be done without unilaterally disregarding General Conference policy. The ultimate purpose, of course, is not simply to have what might be considered an ideal organization. There is only one reason for our existence and that is to proclaim the saving grace of Christ and His soon coming. We can become so involved in the technicalities and in trying to copy certain models of governance and management that exist in our world that we will forget why we are here. God's messenger, Ellen White, cautions us on this particular point.

The General Conference has the authority to create subordinate organizations and the union conference is

such a subordinate organization, and not simply a constituent. These subordinate organizations are to recognize the General Conference as the highest authority in the church. No departure in policy is to be made without prior approval of the General Conference or the North American Division. This concept and philosophy was adopted by action of the world body at the recent General Conference Session in New Orleans.

In the section entitled "Preserving the Unity of the Church and Message," several clear points are established. "Unity can be maintained through constitutional structures. The *General Conference Working Policy* should contain model constitutions for church organizations on various levels. These are to be followed closely and adhered to in essence at the various levels of church organization. When a constitution is adopted or revised by an organization, it should be with the counsel of the next higher organization and in harmony with the *General Conference Working Policy*." Again, "Unity can be maintained through church leaders and organizations operating the church in their area of responsibility in full harmony with the *General Conference Working Policy*. Thus, unity of working methods and organization are maintained (church officials not able to or not willing to do this should not be continued in leadership position)."

Despite these clear statements, the North Pacific Union has unfortunately embarked upon a course that is not only a significant departure from the model constitution and bylaws and operating policies of the General Conference, but has done so in opposition to the counsel of the General Conference.

I am deeply troubled by the fact that the image of the North Pacific Union is not what it used to be. The North Pacific Union for many years was considered one of the stalwart bulwarks of the world church in terms of policy, finance, and missionary spirit. It was always predictable and dependable. Now when the North Pacific Union is mentioned, it evokes the question, "What has happened in the Northwest in the last few years? It is sad and unfortunate that they seem to be drifting and are not solidly anchored."

It is difficult for most to understand why you as a constituency are willing to yield your authority and important responsibilities to bodies that you have not appointed. You have permitted certain approaches that diminished the role of the constituency, and reduces the capabilities of the president to offer aggressive and much-needed leadership. The role of the constituency and the role of leadership, in our opinion, has been eroded and will ultimately result in weakness and confusion.

I realize, my dear brothers and sisters, that I run the possibility of being misunderstood, but that is one of the risks of being a leader. What I have said is in a spirit of concern, which I also know is shared by many within the North Pacific

Union, to say nothing of those who look on from outside.

My concern just now is not necessarily to identify every point of departure. This can be done later. In our opinion you are drifting in a direction and on a course, which if not corrected, will inevitably result in greater distance and tension developing between you on the one hand, and the General Conference and the world church on the other. I would personally be happy to discuss these matters with you, but my appeal is that we work together to restore the credibility and image of the North Pacific Union. My appeal is also that the constituency take control of its own business and appoint committees to take corrective measures. If this is not felt to be workable or acceptable, the only other option I see is for the North American Division to implement the provision in the *Working Policy* which gives the North American Division the authority to appoint a survey commission to determine whether a union or other entity is operating within the spirit and guidelines established for union conferences, with the understanding that appropriate action will be taken in the case of organizations that do not measure up to the standard.

And now my concluding appeal. We have great challenges before us and we need to be about our Father's business and the real purpose for which the Lord brought us into existence as a people and as a prophetic

movement. We need to spend our time and energy on the primary purpose and function for which we exist. In your constitution, Article IV, Section 1, it indicates what your primary purposes are:

A. Evangelism—to teach the everlasting gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the context of the three angels of Revelation 14, and to lovingly persuade people to become His disciples and responsible members of the church.

B. Nurture—to encourage and educate the church's members in the development and use of their spiritual gifts and in a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

I feel confident that the vast majority of our people in the North Pacific are in full harmony with these primary purposes.

I conclude with verses 15 and 16 of the same chapter from which I quoted in the beginning: "We hope that your faith will grow and that, still within the limits set for us, our work among you will be greatly enlarged. After that, we will be able to preach the Good News to other cities that are far beyond you, where no one else is working. . . . If anyone is going to boast, let him boast about what the Lord has done and not about himself."

With kind Christian greetings to each of you, I am  
Sincerely your brother,

Neal C. Wilson

# Thinking of the End

by John McDowell

We never tire  
thinking of the end.  
    (a dream of final  
        total violence  
    )  
    *given in a moment*  
        *in a twinkling of an eye*

(Will it be?  
Will it be

ash across our horizon?

Doomed as the dinosaurs—  
rulers of the world  
longer than we know the colors of sun  
across the prairie—  
swept by ancient rivers  
to graves on sandbars.

(Yes, now that we wield

the spade      we will  
                 we will  
    know your final      humiliation/the angle  
of                      death.

So, we classify but do not ask,  
what was your last expectation?  
Did you know that bright light  
in the late cretaceous sky  
as a meteor rained down for your apocalypse?

Surely, you who thundered these plains  
understood how temporary  
this planet's flight  
falls between twin eternities.

\* \* \*

*Brontosaurus, Stegosaurus, Allosaurus*  
 We gather your scattered parts  
 (if by facts we find what  
 it is to say

List: plaster, wrap, glue  
 plastic, steal rods  
 lights, video, T-shirts  
 postcards, balloons for the kids.

Still, museums fail.  
 With hands retreating  
 from plexiglass explanations  
 we seek churches—  
 the assured flight of prophecy.

List: horsemen, plaques  
 famines, rivers of blood  
 dire angels  
 people running to and fro

Suddenly the bright light  
*A trumpet shall sound*

On your last day  
 did you wake to sniff salvation  
 on the morning breeze?  
 air visible with expectation.  
 With what dull reflex did you wait  
 all day to eat a last supper  
 along the river? And then  
 nothing, nothing, nothing

The frail

till unknown hands chip away the sandstone:  
 a hammer rings against fossil bone  
 cameras flash.

## *My Fossil Fish*

by John McDowell

A fossil fresh water herring  
holds itself serene  
on display in my living room.

Raw to all who care to comment—  
I wonder if I'll wake one morning  
to find the rock's face empty?

To where will you swim  
with your mineral bones  
a mere shadow across time?

You hold what you've known  
since chipped from a cliff wall  
of Utah's Green River basin  
where you swam into shale and stayed.

You are far older than anything  
I'm ever likely to own, so  
if you leave, I want to know

did you find pleasure in your eocene lake  
swimming through sunny days  
your gills lulled by tropical waters

so when you were forced to give one last  
flick of your tail  
did you sigh for love  
or just the lack of oxygen?

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John McDowell is a Canadian poet writing from College Heights, Alberta. In 1983 he won the Banff Centre for the Arts Bliss Carmen poetry award. He has been published in *Dandelion*, *Blue Buffalo*, *Insight*, and *College People*.

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# L'Affaire Curran

by Richard McCormick, S. J.

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**W**e here reprint from the journal *America* (April 5, 1986, pp. 261-267) the most cogent essay yet written about a celebrated case raising issues confronting any denomination that operates colleges, seminaries, and universities. At the invitation of the editors, two Adventist leaders with different backgrounds—General Conference administration and academia—explore issues raised by the Curran case: freedom of expression, theological dissent, and the unity of believers.

Since the writing of both this article and the responses following, the other shoe has indeed dropped, to use Richard McCormick's phrase. Charles Curran has been barred, by order of the Vatican, from teaching theology as a Catholic theologian, a move seen by many as a means to bringing American Catholic priests and theologians back to John Paul II's conservative line.

The author of "L'Affaire Curran," Richard A. McCormick, S. J., recently accepted the position of John A. O'Brien Professor of Christian Ethics at the University of Notre Dame. McCormick and Curran are undoubtedly America's most widely read and quoted Catholic moral theologians.

—The Editors

The March 12 issue of *The New York Times* headlines a front-page article "Vatican Orders Theologian to Retract Teachings on Sex." Clearly the headline editor knew what she/he was doing. Every word is a grabber. "Vatican" and "Sex" jump at you. Then add to that "Orders" and "Retract" and the looming donnybrook takes even clearer shape. The scenario is given final touches with "Theologian" and "Teachings." It is not just anyone, but a theo-

gian of the church, who is not just analyzing, examining, proffering opinions, but "teaching." Similar reports, without such telltale headlines, were read across the country, from Shreveport (where I was) to Toledo, from Sacramento to Boston.

What is going on here? The Rev. Charles E. Curran, revered and reviled professor of moral theology at The Catholic University of America, has been in correspondence with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (C.D.F.) since 1979 concerning certain of his writings. On March 8, there was a personal interview with Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in Rome. The writings in question concern contraception, sterilization, indissolubility of marriage, abortion and euthanasia, homosexuality and masturbation. They could have concerned—but only by a vigorous stretch of the imagination—other issues, such as nuclear war, revolution, poverty, racial justice, and economics. But, in a sense, the issues are not the issue. Beneath this bill of particulars is the tender nerve, dissent—and more precisely, as I shall make clear, public dissent.

What did Father Curran actually write about some of the subjects mentioned above? A few examples will suffice. In *Moral Theology: A Continuing Journey* (p. 144) he states: "Human beings do have the power and responsibility to interfere with the sexual faculty and act. The official Catholic teaching is often accused of a physicalism or biologism because the biological or physical structure of the act is made normative and cannot be interfered with. I take this dissenting position."

With regard to the indissolubility of marriage he writes: "In light of these and other reasons, I

propose that indissolubility remains a goal and ideal for Christian marriage; but Christians, sometimes without any personal fault, are not always able to live up to that ideal. Thus the Roman Catholic Church should change its teaching on divorce" (*Issues in Sexual and Medical Ethics*, pp. 15-16).

Finally, with regard to homosexuality, he summarizes his position, expressed previously, in this way: "My position affirms that for an irreversible, constitutional or genuine homosexual, homosexual acts in the context of a loving relationship striving for permanency are objectively morally good" (*Critical Concerns in Moral Theology*, pp. 92-93).

Similar proposals could be adduced about sterilization, masturbation, abortion, and premarital sexual relations. One thing should be absolutely clear: These conclusions do represent dissenting views. There should be no fudging on that.

But where do such views put Father Curran in the theological world? Is he the radical and

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**In neither substance nor purpose do Curran's writings constitute an extreme "left" position.**

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notorious *enfant terrible* that *The Wanderer* describes and urges its readers to denounce to the Holy See? He has repeatedly argued that his positions, while departing from official formulations, fall within the mainstream of substantial Catholic concerns. He points to the fact that other theologians throughout the world have written similar things.

For instance, in his book *Medical Ethics*, Bernard Haring justifies direct sterilization in certain instances. Hundreds of theologians have dissented from the central thesis of *Humanae Vitae* (that every contraceptive act is intrinsically immoral). Any number of theologians have proposed "pastoral solutions" to the dilemma of homosexuality that do not always reflect the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's 1975 "Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics." For instance, the con-

servative Roman theologian Jan Visser, one of the collaborators on the declaration, has admitted that it is sometimes the lesser of two evils for homosexuals to live in stable unions rather than in promiscuous relationships.

So far as the indissolubility of marriage is concerned, Catholic exegetes and theologians have been struggling for some years to read the implications of Jesus' words for our time. Thus the late George MacRae, S.J., once wrote: "We must discern the process by which the teaching of Jesus was remembered, communicated, interpreted, adapted and enshrined in the practice of the early Christian communities. That process, we have seen, is one of accommodation in circumstances that were not the context of the preaching of Jesus Himself."

Similarly, the distinguished exegete Joseph Fitzmyer, S.J., wrote in *Theological Studies* (1976): "If Matthew under inspiration could have been moved to add an exceptive phrase to the saying of Jesus about divorce that he found in an absolute form in either his Marcan source or in 'Q,' or if Paul likewise under inspiration could introduce into his writing an exception on his own authority, then why cannot the Spirit-guided institutional church of a later generation make a similar exception in view of problems confronting Christian married life of its day, or so-called broken marriages (not really envisaged in the New Testament), as it has done in some situations?"

None of these proposals—and many more could be adduced—is made in a spirit of defiance, with the authors claiming to be an official voice or competitive magisterium. Their intent as well as their tone is one of searching and questioning, of public theological wrestling proposed to scholars and the broader church community for careful consideration. The same can be said of Father Curran's writings, even though he proposes them under the rubrics of "position," "teaching," "dissent." He has a strong point, then, when he argues that in neither substance nor purpose do his writings constitute an extreme "left" position.

Why, then, is Charles Curran singled out for special scrutiny and threat? The answer to the



question must remain speculative. Was it because he organized the public dissent against *Humanae Vitae* in 1968? It is no secret that some Roman institutions have elephantine memories. Was it because archconservative groups such as Catholics United for the Faith flooded the Congregation with mail against him? Was it because he is perceived as America's Hans Küng? Was it because Rome feels that now is the time to make an example of someone so that others will take note? As I say, "speculative."

When the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith first broached this matter with Father Curran, it listed some of the subjects of concern noted above. At first, he did not respond to the individual subjects of concern, but instead presented his view about the legitimacy of public dissent in the church. He stated that this was the key issue and that, before he could enter into dialogue with the Congregation, he would have to know its view on public dissent.

On June 21, 1982, he responded in detail to the Congregation's specific concerns with a 23-page letter. The Congregation was not satisfied with that reply and told him so in a letter dated February 10, 1983.

On May 10, 1983, the Congregation again wrote Father Curran spelling out its problems. It listed issues where he was in clear dissent from the magisterium and some "issues that remain unclear," but stated that the "right to dissent publicly is at the basis of the C.D.F.'s difficulties with Father Curran." The Congregation implicitly admitted the right of *private* dissent but noted that "to further dissent publicly and to encourage dissent in others runs the risk of causing scandal to the faithful." It viewed such dissent as "setting up one's own theological opinion in contradiction to the position taken by the Church." Curran was asked to reply within a working month.

On August 10, 1983, he wrote the Congregation, addressing only the first of its concerns (public dissent). He felt that the individual subjects of dissent could not be fruitfully addressed until the Congregation's view of dissent itself had been clarified. On December 2, 1983, the Congregation wrote him again about the in-

completeness of his reply ("We still await your complete reply").

Because the Congregation's letters were sent through Washington's Archbishop James A. Hickey, Father Curran wrote to Archbishop Hickey on February 28, 1984, of his "growing frustration." He stated:

My reaction is one of growing frustration. I mentioned this to you in earlier correspondence and have said the same in my most recent detailed response to the Congregation itself.

From my very first response in Oct. 1979, I have tried to determine as exactly as possible the differences between the Congregation and myself on the question of dissent. I formulated five questions at the time, but the Congregation has been unwilling to respond to them. I ended my response of Aug. 1983, with the request that the Congregation state what are the norms that should govern dissent. . . . Why has the Congregation been unwilling to answer that question? Why are they stalling?

Curran was obviously referring to public, theological dissent, since private dissent is not the issue.

The Congregation wrote to Father Curran once more on April 13, 1984, asking for a reply by September 1 on its specific points. On August 22, he replied to those specific inquiries, but this reply was undoubtedly seen as unsatisfactory by the Congregation.

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**The inescapable message: Unless Father Curran retracts, he will be stripped of his mandate to teach as a "Catholic theologian."**

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On September 17, 1985, Father Curran received a letter from the Congregation stating that its inquiry had been completed and that the results "were presented to the Sovereign Pontiff in an audience granted to the undersigned Cardinal Prefect [Joseph Ratzinger] on June 28, 1985, and were confirmed by him." The letter called attention to the fact that "Catholic theologians, hence those teaching in ecclesiastical faculties, do not teach on their own authority but by virtue of the mission they have received from the church." The letter then continued with an ex-

planation of this "mission":

In order to guarantee this teaching, the church claims the freedom to maintain her own academic institutions in which her doctrine is reflected upon, taught and interpreted in complete fidelity. This freedom of the church to teach her doctrine is in full accord with the students' corresponding right to know what that teaching is and have it properly explained to them. This freedom of the church likewise implies the right to choose for her theological faculties those and only those professors who, in complete intellectual honesty and integrity, recognize themselves to be capable of meeting these requirements.

The letter then details the issues concerning which Father Curran dissents (contraception, abortion and euthanasia, masturbation, homosexuality, premarital intercourse and indissolubility of marriage). It concludes:

In light of the indispensable requirements for authentic theological instruction, described by the council and by the public law of the Catholic Church, the Congregation now invites you to reconsider and to retract those positions which violate the conditions necessary for a professor to be called a Catholic theologian. It must be recognized that the authorities of the church cannot allow the present situation to continue in which the inherent contradiction is prolonged that one who is to teach in the name of the church in fact denies her teaching.

The language in this letter is clear, and clearly ominous. "Indispensable requirements," "cannot allow the present situation to continue," leave little room for doubt or compromise. The inescapable message: Unless Father Curran retracts, he will be stripped of his mandate to teach as a "Catholic theologian." (That would mean practically that Father Curran could not teach theology at Catholic University, nor realistically at any Catholic university.) The only question now seems to be: When will the other shoe drop? When I first saw the Congregation's letter, I wrote (November 15, 1985) to Archbishop Hickey, noting that it would be tragic if the letter were made public. My letter continued:

I use the term "tragic" deliberately and thoughtfully. The reason: The theology of the letter is, in my judgment, at variance with Catholic tradition and, as such, open to serious criticism. When such a letter becomes public, it will quite properly be read as the official Roman attitude toward theological inquiry. Such an attitude represents a self-inflicted blow on the credibility of the magisterium.

Why? Because the letter explicitly states that agreement with the ordinary magisterium on every authoritatively proposed moral formulation is required if one is to be called a Catholic theologian. After detailing four areas where Curran's opinions are at variance with official formulations, Cardinal Ratzinger refers to "those positions which violate the conditions necessary for a professor to be called a Catholic theologian." This contention—which undergirds the entire letter—disallows dissent from non-infallibly proposed teaching in principle. Such a point of view cannot survive historical and theological scrutiny.

If Cardinal Ratzinger's letter were to be applied to theologians throughout the world, it is clear that the vast majority would not qualify as Catholic theologians; for, as a matter of record, most theologians have found it impossible to agree with the central formulation of *Humanae Vitae* (see, for example *Sittliche Normen*, ed. W. Kerber, Patmos, 1982, where this point is repeatedly made). Indeed, if Cardinal Ratzinger's letter represented an acceptable ecclesiology, we would not have the Decree on Religious Liberty as an official church document. Only because John Courtney Murray, S. J., conducted a long uphill battle, and a dissenting one, could Vatican II arrive at the Decree on Religious Liberty. Briefly, dissent in the church must be viewed much more realistically and positively—as the ordinary way to growth and development. Even quite traditional ecclesialogists now view the matter in this way (see *Magisterium: Teaching Authority in the Catholic Church* by Francis A. Sullivan, S. J.).

When the Congregation will drop the other shoe and declare Father Curran no longer a Catholic theologian is not clear. *That* it will do so seems unavoidable from the logic of its approach. If so, it will be the first American instance of this and, as such, an important landmark in American Catholicism. For this reason, it is important to unpack some of the issues that surround this matter.

**Nonissues.** Before listing the issues, it would be useful to clarify things by explicitly eliminating nonissues. I see five.

**Agreement with Father Curran.** One need not agree with all or any of Curran's analyses and positions in rejecting the Congregation's threatened action. I have disagreed with Curran and he with me. Others have disagreed with both of us. That is neither here nor there, for discussion and disagreement are the

very lifeblood of the academic and theological enterprise. We all learn and grow in the process, and it is a public process. Without such theological exchange and the implied freedom to make an honest mistake, the magisterium itself would be paralyzed by the sycophancy of theologians.

**Dissent.** Dissent as such is not the key issue. The Congregation admits as much when it states that personal dissent demands certainty that a teaching is erroneous — a statement whose rigor is open to serious challenge. The church does not and cannot expect assent to moral formulations that one judges to be erroneous. The mind can assent to what it perceives to be true in itself or it can assent because of trust in the teacher. Neither can occur when there are contrary reasons utterly persuasive to an individual. This is quite traditional teaching. The issue is rather *public* dissent.

**Infallibility.** There is no question here of dissent from infallible teaching. Infallibility is not the issue it was in the case of Father Hans Küng. It is generally admitted by theologians that the church's authentic teaching on concrete moral behavior does not, indeed cannot, fall into the category of definable doctrine. There is a recent tiny pocket of resistance to this, but even the Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith makes no claim that Father Curran dissents from infallibly proposed teachings. In a press statement Bishop James W. Malone, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, left the matter a bit murky. He referred to "the teaching of the church's magisterium on crucial points." What does "crucial" mean? Is everything taught authoritatively, especially if frequently repeated, crucial? Crucial to what? And are crucial teachings removed from the possibility of dissent? Why?

**Authority of the church to teach.** In dissenting from this or that authoritative formulation, one does not automatically deny the authority of the church to teach in the area of morals. Indeed, the very anguish, ardor, and prayerfulness of one's dissent asserts the opposite. If one denied such authority, strenuous efforts, anguish and prayerfulness would be out

of place. One simply would not care. Father Curran has repeatedly asserted the church's moral teaching authority. Such authority is a nonissue in this case.

**The right and duty to safeguard teaching.** All theologians would, I think, admit that the church has such a right and duty, and even that it could take the disciplinary form of removing one's mandate to teach as a Catholic theologian. That is not an issue. The issue is when and under what circumstances this form of safeguarding should be used. Only for outright heresy? For any dissent from any "crucial" teaching? I say "under what circumstance"

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because clearly Pope John XXIII acknowledged the church's "right and duty to safeguard teaching" (Bishop Malone's phrase), yet he rejected the punitive measures associated with Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani's Holy Office. "Nowadays," he said, "the Spouse of Christ prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than that of severity. She considers that she meets the needs of the present day by demonstrating the validity of her teaching rather than by condemnations" ("Pope John's Opening Speech to the Council," *The Documents of Vatican II*, p. 716).

**Issues.** If the above are nonissues, what are the true issues we ought to think about? There is but a single issue, but one with many ramifications. That single issue is public dissent. If one judges a teaching authoritatively proposed to be one-sided, incomplete, partially inaccurate, or even erroneous, what is one to do?

There are two possible answers to this question. One is the Congregation's. Simply put, it is: Keep silence. For if one writes of one's disagreement, the Congregation sees an "inherent

contradiction." It follows: "One who is to teach in the name of the church in fact denies her teaching." For the Congregation this is intolerable ("the authorities of the church cannot allow. . ."). It "runs the risk of causing scandal."

A second possible answer is presented by the late Karl Rahner, S. J. Writing in *Stimmen der Zeit* (1980), Father Rahner asked: "What are contemporary moral theologians to make of Roman declarations on sexual morality that they regard as too unnuanced? Are they to remain silent, or is it their task to dissent, to give a more

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**The invalidation of dissent discredits personal reflection and freezes the Church's learning process within the last available official formulation. There is simplicity and security in this—but also the stillness of the mausoleum.**

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nuanced interpretation?" Rahner was unhesitating in his response. "I believe that the theologian, after mature reflection, has the right, and many times the duty, to speak out against a teaching of the magisterium and support his dissent." In sum, where Rahner sees the right and duty to speak out, the Congregation sees scandal.

Most theologians would, I believe, share Father Rahner's view. A group of such theologians (all past presidents of the Catholic Theological Society of America and The College Theology Society) issued a statement on March 12 manifesting this and putting the following questions to the Congregation about the threat to Father Curran: "(1) Which noninfallible teachings are serious enough to provoke such a result, and how are those teachings determined? (2) How many noninfallible teachings would one have to disagree with before this result would follow, and how is that number determined? (3) If disagreement with any noninfallible teaching of the Church is sufficient to provoke this result,

on what theological, doctrinal or historical basis is that principle deduced?"

These are serious questions, and we as a community of believers deserve clear answers to them. If such answers are not forthcoming or are unsatisfactory, and if the threat against Father Curran is carried out, it will be hard to avoid the conclusion that we are dealing with an abuse of authority.

The letter of the theologians noted one more important point:

If Father Curran's views on the various issues mentioned in the letter [of the Congregation] are so incompatible with Catholic teaching that he must be declared no longer a Catholic theologian, justice and fairness would dictate that other Catholic theologians who hold similar views should be treated in exactly the same fashion. Indeed, the credibility of any action on the part of the Congregation would be seriously undermined by a failure to identify and act upon other such cases. The problem is, of course, that there are very many Catholic theologians who do dissent from noninfallible teachings.

The implications of the Congregation's approach should not be overlooked. The first is that, to be regarded as a Catholic theologian, one may not dissent from any authoritatively proposed teaching. The second is that "authentic theological instruction" means presenting church teaching, and never disagreeing with it, even with respect and reverence. Third, and correlatively, sound theological education means accepting, uncritically if necessary, official Catholic teaching. The impact of such assertions on the notion of a university, of Catholic higher education, of theology and of good teaching are mind-boggling. All too easily, answers replace questions and conformism replaces teaching as "theology" is reduced to Kohlberg's preconventional level of reasoning (obey or be punished).

One has to wonder about the notion of church that undergirds all of this, the notion of magisterium, the notion of teaching and learning, the notion of the autonomy of earthly realities proclaimed by Vatican II ("Church in the Modern World," No. 36), the notion of collegiality and the notion of lay competence. Vatican II discarded much of the cultural and theological baggage that produced *Roma locuta, causa finita* (Rome has spoken, the matter is closed). The

Congregation's approach to theology and theological education reintroduces much of it. The invalidation of dissent discredits personal reflection and freezes the Church's learning process within the last available official formulation. There is simplicity and security in this—but also the stillness of the mausoleum.

Let teaching be an example here. Teaching means helping others to understand, to see what they did not see. It is the exhilarating experience of seeing eyes opened to dimensions of reality formerly hidden. In practical moral matters, the very last thing one arrives at is a moral norm. A moral norm is a generalization about the significance of our actions. It is a conclusion drafted from understanding that significance. When it is up front as the dominant preoccupation, it hinders teaching and learning by bypassing the struggles that lead to understanding. We call this moralism.

Yet I dare say, if many educated Catholics were asked, "What is the church's teaching on contraception, homosexual acts, masturbation?" the answer would be that they are intrinsically evil actions. One would not get an insightful view of the gift and challenge of sexuality as our capacity for human relatedness. One would get a conclusion, and a negative one. "Authentic church teaching" has come to mean a set of conclusions. In this perspective, "learning" degenerates into accepting such conclusions. Understanding the significance on which they are based is almost beside the point. This is a caricature of both teaching and learning, yet it is a caricature powerfully supported by the rejection of dissent *in principle* from Catholic theology. Dissent is not an end product; it is a way of getting at things, a part of the human process of growth in understanding. When it is viewed as having such enormous importance in itself (as it is when the title "Catholic theologian" is denied to one who dissents on noninfallibly proposed teaching), it is a sure sign that "authentic teaching" is being conceived in a highly moralistic way.

The Congregation's chief concern seems to be scandal. In its May 10, 1983, letter to Father Curran, it said of public dissent that it "runs the

risk of causing scandal to the faithful." In the Curran dossier, that is the only peek we get at the Congregation's rationale. The introduction of the notion of scandal raises several interesting questions.

Scandal, it must be remembered, is not surprise or shock at the discovery of a skeleton in someone's closet. It has a technical theological sense, and the Congregation is using it in that sense. It refers to an action or omission that provides another or others with the occasion of sin. We must ask, therefore, what sin is occasioned by dissent from noninfallible teaching on sexual questions.

The first possible answer is that it occasions or facilitates those actions condemned by official teaching but approved by the dissenter. But that begs the whole question. It assumes that the actions condemned by official teaching are, indeed, morally wrong. Such an assumption would invalidate dissent, in principle, by elevating the teaching to the status of the unquestionably true. The church does not make such claims for her concrete moral teaching.

Another possible answer is that dissent is the occasion of others' neglect of, and disrespect for, the teaching office of the church. This seems

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to be the Congregation's view. For it uses the phrase "encourage dissent in others" and ties this to scandal. That will not work either. Whether or not "encouraging dissent in others" is morally wrong depends on what the dissent is aimed at. If it is aimed at a teaching that is incomplete or inaccurate, it is quite appropriate, even obligatory. And that, of course, is precisely what the dissenter is saying. It is simply no response to object that dissent "encourages dissent in others," for if the teaching is inaccurate, that is what dissent should do.

But these are close arguments, and I would

not expect everyone to appreciate them. There remain more general concerns stimulated by the term "scandal." Who are these "faithful" who are scandalized? Why are they scandalized? What is their notion of church, of theology? What is their notion of the magisterium? What is their notion of collegiality and the church's accountability to reason for its moral teachings? What is their attitude toward the commercialism of ideas in the university setting? What is their attitude toward tradition (learning from the past or embalming it)? Is tradition, to borrow from Jaroslav Pelikan, the dead faith of the living, or, as it should be, the living faith of the dead? Finally, and most tellingly, is not such intolerance of any dissent—in itself—a greater cause of scandal? Does it not lead many to believe that Rome is more interested in the authority of the teacher than in what is taught by the authority?

The Most Rev. Matthew H. Clark, Bishop of Rochester, New York (Father Curran's bishop), issued a magnificent statement on March 12. After adverting to Curran's personal qualities as priest and scholar, he stated:

It is, I believe, commonly accepted in the Roman Catholic theological community that Father Curran is a moral theologian of notable competence whose work locates him very much at the center of that

community and not at all on the fringe. I believe that perception is true. If Father Curran's status as a Roman Catholic theologian is brought into question, I fear a serious setback to Catholic education and pastoral life in this country. That could happen in two ways. Theologians may stop exploring the challenging questions of the day in a creative, healthy way because they fear actions which may prematurely end their teaching careers. Moreover, able theologians may abandon Catholic institutions altogether in order to avoid embarrassing confrontation with church authorities. Circumstances of this sort would seriously undermine the standing of Catholic scholarship in this nation, isolate our theological community and weaken our Catholic institutions of higher education

In the same March 12 issue of *The New York Times* that reported the Curran affair, there appeared a report on the ethical aspects of certain sex-therapy techniques. The report cited the views of Moshe D. Tendler (Orthodox Jewish community) and Beverly Harrison (Protestant community). The article ended as follows: "Catholic tradition also forbids a practice like masturbation as violating the procreative purposes of sexuality. One Catholic ethicist, *who asked not to be identified* [my italics], said that an argument could be made for its use in therapy 'since it was designed to help people become sexually functioning and procreative.'"

Is such anonymity what we really want in the church of 1986?

# I. Fellowship Is as Important as Theological Dissent

by Duncan Eva

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Richard McCormick’s essay, “*L’Affaire Curran*,” makes it clear from the start that both Charles E. Curran and the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith recognize the basic issue in the continuing conflict between them. It is the question of the right of a Catholic theologian to dissent *publicly* from positions his church takes on the basis of its beliefs and teachings.

If it were the SDA church facing a situation as tense as this one, several points would trouble me deeply. Because of the limitations of space I will refer to only three of them.

First, I feel a certain measure of sympathy with the view of the Vatican that dissenting *publicly* and encouraging other to dissent “runs the risk of scandal to the faithful.”

McCormick defines *scandal* in the “technical and theological sense” as referring to “an action or omission that provides another or others with an occasion to sin.” I see more to it than that. The New Testament word *skandalon* properly means the bait-stick in a trap, thus a snare, a stumbling-block. Most of “the faithful” would not use the “occasion to sin” but their minds could well be confused with doubt because of public and publicized dissent and disagreement

in their church. Later that could well lead to sin and apostasy.

A major concern for me in the issue would be the unity of the believers and the stumbling-blocks that public dissent would create for many. Christ prayed most earnestly for the unity of his followers and those who would believe through their word.<sup>1</sup> Of the apostles it is John who refers most movingly to this unity.<sup>2</sup> Belief in and acceptance of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ brings a blessed fellowship, the *koinonia* of which the New Testament speaks so much. As a credible and living witness John writes, “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.”<sup>3</sup>

Whatever tends to disturb this fellowship, this sharing together of life in God can do very great harm to individual believers. This is especially true when doubt is cast on the body’s understanding of truth and its teachings as it seeks to interpret and apply the truth it believes. The New Testament *koinonia* operates on two planes, the horizontal (with men) and the vertical (with the Father and with his Son), which is the closest interaction. Disturb one and you have disturbed the other. The sheep of God’s flock are by no means all theologians, despite what we may and should believe about the notion of lay competence. Therefore a compassionate pastoral concern for their faith and stability should always characterize those who are their shepherds,<sup>4</sup> whatever the specialized capacity in which they serve. And our Lord’s concern is clear also.<sup>5</sup>

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Duncan Eva, for many years up to 1980, was a vice president of the General Conference and before that president of the Northern European Division. He has chaired and served on the boards of many Adventist colleges, and at one time chaired the boards of all the Adventist publishing houses in North America. Although retired, he continues to carry out special assignments for the officers of the General Conference.

Seventh-day Adventists have been given an abundance of sound advice on matters like this and we shall be spared much heartache if we heed it.

Second, McCormick argues that as a Catholic theologian Curran is not really so far "left" as the Curia makes him out to be. In fact in his letter to Archbishop Hickey of November 15, 1985, he states that "if Cardinal Ratzinger's letter were to be applied to theologians throughout the world it is clear that the vast majority would not qualify as Catholic theologians." Obviously the Catholic church has a problem, and it will be inter-

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esting and instructive to observe how it is dealt with. But as a Seventh-day Adventist I see a prior problem, one that to me lies at the root of the whole issue. One cannot overlook the weight McCormick attaches in his line of reasoning to the Catholic authorities he quotes to support his contention. I refer to just two of them—the late George MacRae, S.J., and Joseph Fitzmyer, S.J. Their arguments sound sensible and reasonable, but when we slacken or loosen the cables that fasten our ship to the Word of God we are on the way to casting them off altogether, or being torn from our moorings and set adrift and rudderless on a stormy sea.

Of course there are instructions in the New Testament that were given against the cultural context of the times.<sup>6</sup> Where such instructions do not relate to the moral and ethical principles of the Christian faith they may be (I even think they should be and to some extent already have been) modified by a church seeking to be relevant to its times. But where they are bound up with the great moral principles our Lord died to uphold, the matter is altogether different. For me, MacRae and Fitzmyer and those who reason as they do are walking a dangerous road. Will the Spirit of God guide to human modifying of the moral and ethical principles inextricably

bound up with the divine order of Creation? I think not. It seems to me that a careful consideration of Paul's closely reasoned argument in 1 Corinthians 6:9-20 makes this abundantly clear. There are eternal principles on which by God's grace we build our faith and our lives. I personally fear to trust anything else.

Third, what about the right to dissent, to disagree? What about academic freedom? I believe the SDA statement entitled "Academic Freedom in Seventh-day Adventist Colleges and Universities in North America" dated October 21, 1981, is a fair, reasonable, and balanced statement. It sets forth clearly the privileges and accountability of the professor on the one hand and the duties and responsibilities of church leaders, boards of trustees, and presidents on the other. It does not solve all problems, however, especially those that arise out of (1) our lack of confidence in (and perhaps also our lack of love for) one another; (2) our prejudices, which are so often based on inaccurate and incomplete information; and (3) the persistent tendency of some of us to label people as we perceive or hear them to be, and then to force them into our neat categories without regard as to whether they fit or not.

It is wrong for an administrator in any organization or institution to allow himself to be influenced unfavorably toward a person who serves with him by reports, however true and convincing they may seem. He must first talk frankly with that person, ensure his right to meet his accusers or detractors face to face, and take into full account what the person's peers and friends might have to say. It is the administrator's privilege and Christian duty to defend and protect his fellow-servants and their reputations and ensure for them a sense of comfort and security so that they can give their very best service. Actually this is one of the highest purposes of Christian administration. If it is not being achieved something is wrong.

It would be wise, however, for the administrator to humbly examine himself first. The position to which he is elected or appointed does not bestow real wisdom or true authority. These always have another primary Source.



Even when incensed and angered the wise leader will ask himself, "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." Truth, important doctrinal truth, never suffers when we are gentle and loving with people, even those who have erred seriously. The reverse, however, is almost always true.

Although I cannot agree that theologians (or any others for that matter) have the *unqualified* right of *public* dissent, the defense of our faith must not be allowed to degenerate to the place where in McCormick's words, "answers replace questions and conformism replaces 'theology.'" If it does then it might truly be said of us that we have "the dead faith of the living" and not "the living faith of the dead"—the living, acting, searching faith of our pioneers.

Someone has observed that "in Adventist circles thinking has often been treated as a virtue in rhetoric and as a sin in practice."<sup>7</sup> You might smile and I might frown for the same reason: is there more than a grain of truth to the observation?

When our scholars work under a cloud of suspicion as to their loyalty and integrity and therefore feel threatened, or when we become so dogmatic that the necessary degree of flexibility for productive study and investigation (admittedly this is not easy to define) is denied them, major evils can result. As McCormick puts it, "Theologians may stop exploring the challenging

questions of the day in a creative, healthy way because they fear actions which may prematurely end their teaching careers. Moreover, able theologians may abandon Adventist institutions altogether in order to avoid embarrassing confrontation with church authorities." Furthermore, our institutions could fail "to train the

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youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought."<sup>8</sup> A further long-term loss could well be that we would not attract to the ministry recruits with those special spiritual gifts which the church will sorely need in facing the challenges of the future.

We must not forget Mrs. White's inspired insight and the setting in which we find these words:

The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God's people, should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves, to make sure that they have the truth, there will be many. . . who will hold to tradition, and worship they know not what.<sup>9</sup>

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

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1. John 17:20-24.
2. 1 John 1:1-4.
3. 1 John 1:3, NIV.
4. 1 Peter 5:1-4.
5. John 16:12, 13.
6. 1 Corinthians 11:5-10; 1 Timothy 2:11-14; 1 Corinthians 14:34,35.

7. Quoted from Arnold Reye by George R. Knight in *Myths in Adventism* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1985), p. 7.

8. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1903), p. 17.

9. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1946), p. 39.

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## II. Dissent Is the Lifeblood of the Church's Renewal

by Lawrence T. Geraty

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Keeping up with what is going on in Catholicism would be reason enough to be interested in McCormick's incisive analysis of "L'Affaire Curran," but when one considers the insights Seventh-day Adventists can learn from that experience ("It takes a wise person to learn from the experience of another, any fool can learn from his own") then *Spectrum* is to be doubly thanked for calling it to our attention.

To start where we all agree, it is obvious that Curran has genuine dissenting views when compared with official church pronouncements. I'm sure we would agree also that this would not be a problem if his views were kept private. After all, no one can be asked to hold to a view when there are contrary reasons that to him or her are utterly persuasive. I'm sure we would agree with McCormick that the "single issue is public dissent. If one judges a teaching authoritatively proposed to be one-sided, incomplete, partially inaccurate or even erroneous, what is one to do?"—particularly when that teaching lies within your own area of expertise and concerning which people look to you for guidance? Some readers may think keeping silent is the answer, while others may think it more responsible to dissent by giving a more nuanced interpretation of the evidence.

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Lawrence Geraty is in his second academic year as president of Atlantic Union College. Prior to that he was Professor of Old Testament and Archeology at the SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University, and director of the Siegfried Horn Archeological Museum. He has led several archeological expeditions in Jordan and is a former president of the Association of Adventist Forums.

I myself have ambivalent feelings on this issue. On the one hand, I see real value in preserving properly constituted authority, respecting tradition, preserving the faith "once delivered to the saints," maintaining order and unity, and avoiding scandal (in the technical sense referring to "an action or omission that provides another or others with the occasion of sin"). Perhaps it is because my paternal roots are Irish Catholic, and good Catholics, they say, make good Adventists! Furthermore, as a student I remember wanting to know unambiguously what Adventist teachings were. As a pastor I found people expected authoritative answers delivered with enthusiasm. As a seminary teacher I realized I taught by virtue not only of my own authority but of the mission I received from the church. As a college president I grant my governing board the right to maintain an institution in which Adventist doctrine is reflected upon, taught and interpreted in complete fidelity. As a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church I want to protect the stability of the community from the destabilizing influence of an individual whose spirit seems inimical to Adventism.

On the other hand, I've been brought up as an Adventist to believe that we have "the truth." If that is not so with any particular facet of our teaching then the sooner we face it the better. There is certainly no virtue in spreading error. Because of my Adventist commitment to truth I'm for it no matter where it is found or where it leads, knowing that that commitment could put me at odds with family, friends, and even members of established institutions to which I'm relat-

ed. But my Adventist roots are in a group of youth who bucked the establishment because of truth's call—whether in the Advent Awakening of the 19th century, the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, or the birth of Christianity out of Judaism nearly 2000 years ago. In other words, as a people we have learned that disallowing “dissent from noninfallibly proposed teaching in principle” cannot survive historical and theological scrutiny. We must always leave room for “present truth” to arise and claim our

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**We must do nothing to cause people to believe Adventists are more interested in the authority of the teacher than in the teaching of the authority.**

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commitment. In fact as Adventists we are rightly proud that one of our identifying characteristics is the presence among us of the “spirit of prophecy.” Eschatologically, this spirit must belong to more than one individual and will characterize the group (cf. Joel 2:28-30). And of course we've learned that the Spirit is no respecter of persons; it is quenched only at our peril. While dissent can admittedly on occasion cause scandal, intolerance of any dissent can be an even greater cause of scandal. We must do nothing as a church to cause people to believe that Adventists are more interested in the authority of the teacher than in what is being taught by the authority.

So even though I have ambivalent feelings when it comes to dissent from generally held church teachings, I recognize that dissent itself is not the real problem but rather the degree of dissent. Who, what, where, when, and how are all questions that need to be carefully considered in relationship to dissent. Is the dissenter within the mainstream or from the extreme left or extreme right? Motivations and manners can sometimes be helpful in judging validity. Is the attitude of the dissenter one of defiance or of searching? Is the dissent within the realm of the dissenter's speciality, experience or expertise? Even though Pope John XXIII acknowledged

the church's “right and duty to safeguard teaching,” I admire his statement to Vatican II that “Nowadays the Spouse of Christ prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than that of severity. She considers that she meets the needs of the present day by demonstrating the validity of her teaching rather than by condemnations.” In order to do this successfully, of course, the church needs the help of its trained experts. It can only strengthen the church to have a third party, the dissenter's peers, involved in a fair process of consideration of the dissent, perhaps even a judicial mechanism for reaching a decision as to how to handle the dissent and/or dissenter. For perspective and contact it would always be wise to include some knowledgeable historians in this process.

As I reflect on “L'affaire Curran,” other thoughts, other implications for Adventists come to mind. Can it be perceived as arrogant for any body of humans to claim absolute truth? Commitment to absolute truth is one thing, but to have arrived at a static concept or formulation of it is another; hence the importance and appropriateness of the preamble to the 27 fundamental beliefs adopted in Dallas in 1980 by the Seventh-day Adventist church.<sup>1</sup> When that is taken seriously, dissent has to be allowed and even encouraged in order that our formulations of truth may ever more approximate the truth into which Christ is leading us. The alternative was well put by McCormick: “The invalidation of dissent discredits personal reflection and freezes the Church's learning process within the last available official formulation. There is simplicity and security in this—but also the stillness of the mausoleum.”

It may be useful to ask ourselves why the church is in the world. When is it most effective? When is it pronouncing dogma or following the incarnation-example of Christ? The power of the former often corrupts human lives; the power of the latter leads to the changing of human lives. The effect of the former is to take away human responsibility; the effect of the latter is to produce responsible humans who mature into the fullness for which they were created.

Healthy tension between the church's right

wing and left wing is good for the church because truth is always the winner. It is a tragedy when the church singles out for silencing the most effective spokesperson from either camp for a dissenting position. Ultimately, not only the truth will suffer but also the church itself. The church always comes out the loser when people perceive it as an abuser of its authority. Above every other institution, it should be apparent that fairness and justice are at home in, and important to, the church. Furthermore, the silencing of dissenters could have serious consequences for Adventist education and pastoral life. To paraphrase the Bishop of Rochester: "Theologians may stop exploring the challenging questions of the day in a creative, healthy way because they fear actions which may prematurely end their teaching careers. . . [A]ble theologians may abandon [Adventist] institutions altogether in order to avoid embarrassing confrontations with church authorities."

Again, it all depends on how dissent is voiced by the dissenter and how it is viewed by the church. If it is viewed as one way to get at truth, as part of the human process of development and growth in understanding, rather than as an end-product—especially when it is aimed at a teaching that is incomplete or inaccurate—then the church will see dissent not only as appropriate but even obligatory for theologians and teachers of the church. It probably goes without saying that if this is the attitude the Seventh-day Adventist church takes toward its dissenters, and I'm sure it is when the church feels secure, then it is incumbent on its dissenters to dissent in a searching, responsible, constructive, and humble manner—in a way that befits their humanness.

Let us encourage this kind of dissent for it is the lifeblood of the church's renewal, a sign that the Spirit continues to fulfill Christ's prayer that he should lead us into all truth.

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## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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1. The full text of the preamble reads: "Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scripture. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Revision of these statements may be expected

at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word." "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook 1984* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1984), p. 5.

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# The New Church Hymnal: Hosanna in the Highest!

by Will Stuivenga

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“The church has waited long,” to quote hymn 217/177,<sup>1</sup> but now the new hymnal is here! And it has been well worth the wait. The brand-new *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, copyright 1985, replaces the *Church Hymnal*, dating from 1941. Adventist church musicians everywhere, be they organists, choir directors, pianists, or song-leaders, should rejoice in the plethora of outstanding new music to be found in the new hymnal. Congregations will be happy to find old favorites retained, as well as familiar hymns and spirituals not contained in the old hymnal added. Enthusiastic musicians will soon help them discover new favorites. And those involved in planning for worship will be pleased to find a greatly expanded variety of worship aids. The purchase of this new hymnal is truly a “must” for every English-speaking Adventist congregation concerned and excited about their weekly worship experience.

The new hymnal is a substantial improvement over the old one—musically, typographically, thematically—in every way. It is a genuinely significant achievement, a volume in which the church can take pride, which will join the ranks of the hymnals of other denominations. Everyone involved in its preparation is to be commended on a job well done.

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The new hymnal has an attractive look, both inside and out. The cover material, however, does not appear to be as sturdy as that used for the old hymnal. After less than three months of admittedly heavy use, the copy used in preparing this review is already showing signs of abrasion and wear along the edges of the spine.

Inside, one need only open the two hymnals—old and new—side by side to notice the striking effect of the large clear type, both on the music and the text in the new book. Extra space was created by increasing the length of the pages from 8-1/2 to 9 inches, and by reducing somewhat the size of the margins. Even so, the appearance of the music on the page is not cramped, but appears spacious and airy.

Unfortunately, the first printing suffered from a series of identical printing glitches, tiny squiggles and dots, which occur on pairs of hymns about every 30 pages throughout the hymnal. According to the publisher, these were caused by spots on the glass through which the negatives were burned onto the plates; they were removed in subsequent printings. (If yours is a first printing copy, you can find them on hymns 31, 33, 66, 68, and so on throughout.)

One significant change in musical notation should be noted. For many years it has been standard practice in hymnals to give a separate flag to each 8th or 16th note when that note is to be sung to one syllable of the text, reserving barred flags to situations in which more than one note was to be sung to one syllable. This typography is awkward to read musically, especially for keyboard players. The new hymnal follows

the more current practice of barring 8th and 16th notes together musically, leaving the determination of how many notes to the syllable to the placement of the text under the music. A quick comparison of such hymns as 434/199, 499/320, 545/394 will clearly demonstrate this improvement.

The new hymnal has retained precisely 300 hymns from its predecessor.<sup>2</sup> An additional 24 texts have been retained, but supplied with new tunes. At least six tunes have been supplied with new texts, their old texts eliminated; another six or seven new texts have been united with familiar tunes already in use elsewhere in the hymnal. Eight hymns have been given two tunes from which to choose. Almost two-thirds of the 300 hymns retained have been lowered in pitch. While this may annoy the trained singer, it will be a boon to the average person.

Complementing the 300 hymns from the old hymnal are approximately 90 "new" hymns, which will nevertheless already be familiar to most Adventists; about 70 more of the "new" hymns will be familiar to at least some members. Many of these selections have previously been

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**The new hymnal contains much exciting new material, with representation from widely divergent sources and traditions.**

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printed in Adventist hymnals such as *Singing Youth* and *Christ in Song*. Others have been hallowed by long familiarity as staples of the "special music" repertoire; still others, in common use for years by other denominations, are undoubtedly buried to some degree in the Adventist subconscious. Thus, material already familiar to Adventist congregations constitutes approximately two-thirds of the new hymnal. This ratio hardly leaves significant ground for complaint of too much "new" music.

The hymns have been thoughtfully arranged into topical divisions. This organization is parallel but not identical to that of the old hymnal. A

comparison of the tables of contents of the two books is instructive.

A major difference is the omission of the large separate section entitled "Sabbath School." This substantial grouping of gospel songs, whose topical subdivisions largely overlapped those in the rest of the hymnal, was seemingly designed to consign these musically inferior songs to the more informal setting of the Sabbath School. Unfortunately, it didn't work. To this day, in all but the most musically sophisticated Adventist churches, one commonly finds even the opening hymn of the 11:00 worship service taken from this section of the hymnal.

The compilers of the new hymnal wisely rejected this two-tiered arrangement, shuffling all hymn styles together according to their subject matter. But the current arrangement has caused some rather incongruous pairings of violently opposing hymn styles across the page from one another. Undoubtedly the worst example is the placement of Martin Luther's powerful Reformation hymn (506) next to the rather trite "I Need the Prayers" (505), whose lack of significant musical or poetic value makes it a poor companion for "A Mighty Fortress." Equally unfortunate is the pairing of "Lift High the Cross" (362), one of the hymnal's most stirring new hymns, with the familiar but uninspired "Hark! 'Tis the Shepherd's Voice I Hear" (361). Other incongruous matchups include numbers 182-183, 194-195, and 422-423.

The new hymnal contains so much exciting new material that it would be impossible to single out more than the smallest sampling for special mention here. Widely divergent sources and traditions are represented. From the old German chorale school, we get the so-called "Queen of Chorales," Philip Nicolai's "O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright" (18), as harmonized by J. S. Bach. Another high point from this tradition is "If You But Trust in God to Guide You" (510). "Jesus, Priceless Treasure" (239), also harmonized by Bach is itself a musical treasure.

From the Calvinistic side of the Reformation come such psalter tunes as RENDEZ A DIEU (13), here set to a recent versification of Psalm

98 by Erik Routley. Also included is OLD 124TH (22), from the *Genevan Psalter*, put to a modern-language psalm-related text by Fred Pratt Green.

Folk tunes from a variety of ethnic sources are found in profusion, matched with appropriate texts from many sources. From the popular "Morning Has Broken" (44), set to a Gaelic melody, to the sprightly "Now the Green Blade Rises" (175), an old French carol, these charming melodies add life and character to the hymnal. From the Welsh tradition come such tunes as HYFRYDOL (167, 204), CWM RHONDDA (201, 415, 538) and AR HYD Y NOS (47), tunes probably familiar to most Adventists already. Also familiar is the Irish tune SLANE (320, 547). One of the most delightful new tunes is THE ASH GROVE (407, 560), another traditional Welsh melody.

Two charming English folk tunes—KINGS-FOLD (144, 465) and FOREST GREEN (90, 168)—are arranged by English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, who contributed two of his own well-crafted tunes for "At the Name of Jesus" (232) and "Come Down, O Love Divine" (257). Adventists already know and love to sing his stirring tune SINE NOMINE to the text "For All the Saints" (421/364). From the north of Europe comes the Swedish hymn "Children of the Heavenly Father" (101), and "Arise, My Soul, Arise" (38), set to a Finnish melody.

From our own continent come two especially significant genres: the Negro spiritual and the early American folk hymn. Each contributes some of the hymnal's strongest and best "new" material. Spirituals include "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" (121), "Give Me Jesus" (305), "Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow" (138), and many more. Alma Blackmon, a member of the hymnal committee, has provided fine arrangements for several: 69, 138, 305, 580.

Restoring the "right" tune to "Amazing Grace" (108/295) provides but the first of many stalwart early American hymns. Three of the best are "Wondrous Love" (162), "Jerusalem, My Happy Home" (420), and "O, When Shall I See Jesus" (448). Hymns 104, 215, 280, 299, 464, and 620 are also exceptionally fine.

The past decade or so has seen an astounding resurgence of interest in hymn-writing, producing a veritable explosion of exciting hymns in a contemporary idiom. Beginning in England, with such writers and composers as Fred Pratt Green, Peter Cutts, Brian Wren, Erik Routley, and others, it has quickly spread across the Atlantic. Many of these outstanding new hymns are represented in our new hymnal. A few of the best are "Great Our Joy as Now We Gather" (59), the powerful theological statement of "This Is the Threefold Truth" (203), "Christ Is the World's Light" (234), "All Who Love and Serve Your City" (356), "There's a Spirit in the Air" (584) and "When the Church of Jesus" (581).

Special mention should go to the small subsection of the hymnal (438-454) entitled "Early Advent." Eight of the 17 hymns therein were in the *Church Hymnal*, but five have been

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revived from the older *Hymns and Tunes*, specifically 443, 446, 450, 451, 452. These, along with 438, said to have been sung by James White, provide a quaint but fascinating glimpse into our Advent roots. The apologetic tone of the compilers, e.g., "they may not always reach the musical standard of the great hymns of the church"<sup>3</sup> is totally unnecessary. No one who sings them can help being charmed by their fresh folklike character.

The apology would have been more appropriate directed toward some of the shallow modern gospel songs that have unfortunately been included in the hymnal. Undoubtedly the very worst example is "Sweet, Sweet Spirit" (262), which possesses no redeeming theological or musical value, and, with its lack of rhythmic stability, is virtually unsingable by congregations. That this song, clearly written for the gospel crooner, ever made it into the new hymnal is a cause for shame.

Almost equally poor are such numbers as

“Fill My Cup, Lord” (439), “Because He Lives” (526) and “In Times Like These” (593). These songs may have marginal value as vocal solos, but have no place in a book designed for congregational singing. Other musically marginal hymns include numbers 75, 99, 180, 181, 192, 289, 297, 485; one could list even more. It is unfortunate the committee decided the level of Adventist musical taste was low enough that it was necessary to add songs of this type.

The space occupied by these could have been put to much better use. There are a number of fine hymns missing from the new hymnal which knowledgeable church musicians might well have expected to find there. And while no two persons would submit identical lists, the following hymns would undoubtedly figure prominently in many.

One of the most powerful hymns ever written, “Ah, Holy Jesus, How Hast Thou Offended?” (LBW 123)<sup>4</sup> is inexplicably missing, as is the beautiful communion hymn “Soul, Adorn Yourself With Gladness” (LBW 224). Also missing are Luther’s classic “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come” (LBW 51), and the

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**Another major area of interest concerns four types of textual alterations in the hymns: poetic, theological, and those involving alteration of archaic and sexually exclusive language.**

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joyful “In Thee Is Gladness” (LBW 552).

The thin baptism section would have been immeasurably strengthened by the inclusion of “We Know That Christ Is Raised” (LBW 189), whose striking imagery links Christ’s resurrection with the believer’s baptism. Regrettably missing is “Earth and All Stars!” (LBW 558), a hymn memorable for its contemporary language and imagery. The lovely THIRD MODE MELLODY, by Thomas Tallis (LBW 497) has been set to a number of different texts, but is included in most recent hymnals. Finally, it is difficult to understand the omission of “Like as a Father,”

which may well be F. E. Belden’s finest hymn text.

Several members of the hymnal committee made significant personal contributions as well. Most prolific are Wayne Hooper, the committee’s executive secretary, and Melvin West, chairman of the tunes subcommittee. In the “Composers and Arrangers” index, Hooper has 19 listings, West 31. Many of these are merely straightforward harmonizations, which any competent musician could produce. More significant are several original hymn tunes written by each. West has three: 209, 386, 657, while Hooper supplied six: 126, 220, 379, 385, 410, 542. Other committee members: Allen Foster (203, 298, 417), James Bingham (54, 81, 102, 148) and John Read (278, 677) contributed hymn tunes as well. Alma Blackmon’s contributions were mentioned earlier.

While none of these should probably be considered a major contribution to Christian hymnody at large, most are solidly crafted settings of their texts. Most successful are those which remain simple and straightforward in style. Read’s BLUEBONNET (278) has an easy folklike character reminiscent of the early American tunes discussed earlier. Hooper’s most successful effort, TENDER SONG (542), has a similar lilting quality well suited to its text.

A pair of Sabbath hymns (385, 386) written especially for the hymnal by poets Gem Fitch and Otilie Stafford are set by Hooper and West, respectively. Neither tune is especially memorable, though both are sensitive to their well-written texts. West’s SLY PARK (657), with its striking modulation, is more effective. Substituting Hooper’s bland UNITA (126) for Gustav Holst’s much stronger CRANHAM (224) as a setting for Christian Rossetti’s tender Christmas poem, “In the Bleak Midwinter,” was definitely a mistake. Holst’s setting is inseparably connected with the poem to those familiar with the carol, and rightly so.

Those familiar with Melvin West’s inimitable style of hymn improvisation will be pleased to find several hymn settings reminiscent of his “last verse” reharmonizations. Especially noteworthy are DIX (123) and DUKE STREET



(227). These two, at least, probably should not be used to accompany all stanzas of the hymn; the accompanist should turn to the cross-referenced “harmony” setting for most of the stanzas, reserving the “unison” setting for special effect. See also numbers 153, 199, 200, 215, and 616. West has also written several elegant free accompaniments to canons (see the canon index on page 808) and responses.

**A**nother major area of significant interest concerns the textual alterations in hymns. These can be divided into essentially four categories: poetic, theological, and those involving the alteration of archaic or sexually exclusive language.

Poetic changes rarely involve substantial change of meaning, and are often effected by substitution of entire phrases or “verses,”<sup>5</sup> often with the intent of restoring the original poetry. A good example is found in hymn 156/130. For the second half of the first stanza, the old hymnal had:

How pale Thou art with anguish,  
With sore abuse and scorn!  
How does that visage languish  
Which once was bright as morn!

while the new hymnal restores the original poetic translation of James Alexander:

O sacred head, what glory,  
What bliss till now was Thine!  
Yet, though despised and gory,  
I joy to call Thee mine.

Perhaps the editors of the 1941 hymnal found the word *gory* to be too gory. Other hymns with poetic substitutions or changes include 76/131 and 384/462. Both poetic changes and additional stanzas can be found in 169, 170/136. Hymn 455/141, based on a poem by John Greenleaf Whittier that has more than 30 stanzas, has been given an entirely new first stanza, which gives the hymn a new title as well. The tune’s meter has been altered from duple to triple, making this hymn even more difficult for some to recognize.

Hymn 553/676 has been supplied with a translation by a different author.

Numerous hymns of dubious musical value ing one less stanza to suffer through: 159/533, 300/474, 335/644, 367/623 are examples. A number of stanzas with morbid language now out of fashion have been dropped (272/655, 287/563, 306/594), and number 530/313 has lost a stanza that began with the name of Satan, but has regained its traditional refrain.

Hymn 163/124 has lost its third and fourth stanzas, to the detriment of the final stanza, which continues the thought of those omitted. The transformation of this noble hymn by Isaac Watts into a gospel song, by the addition of an irrelevant refrain, can hardly be thought an improvement either. Another hymn whose poetic conceit is virtually destroyed by the omission of a crucial stanza, and in this case, the substitution of a different stanza in its place, is number 79/67. The missing stanza spoke of “reading” God’s love in nature; the next two stanzas amplify the conceit by stating that we “read” this love best in Christ’s death and resurrection.

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### **Most of the textual alterations have to do with the doctrine of the state of the dead.**

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The compilers have occasionally added stanzas to especially fine hymns, such as “Fairest Lord Jesus” (240/165) and “Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones” (91/77), though not as often as they could have. The inclusion of the two additional extant stanzas for “Praise to the Lord” (1/12) would have been welcome.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, one of the stanzas added to “Amazing Grace” (108/295) was not written by the same poet, and matches the original poetry in neither language nor tone. It sounds fine around a campfire, but hardly seems appropriate to the more formal setting of the 11:00 worship hour.

More significant than the addition or deletion of stanzas is textual alteration for theological purposes. While most changes have to do with the doctrine of the state of the dead, some also

restore trinitarian language, as is the case with numbers 71/3 and 73/73. In hymn 298/278, stanza five, the word *saints* is changed to *them*, the pronoun now referring to angels, the old language having implied the presence of the departed saints in heaven. Similar reasoning has prompted changes in 321/276: "I will love Thee in death," has been altered to "I will love Thee

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'til death," and in 337, 338/635, stanza three, in which the word *saints* is substituted for *spirits*. This latter requires the singing of one syllable to two notes of music, where all other stanzas supply one syllable per note. (Congregations should be encouraged to try out the strong new tune for "Redeemed" (338), but should note that the stanzas numbered 2 and 3 are really stanzas 3 and 4 of the original. The missing stanzas can be found across the page.)

Archaic language is very occasionally replaced. "Thee's" and "thou's" are only rarely altered, the most noticeable example being hymn 235/487. The title and first line of 169, 170/136 have been similarly treated.

The text committee states that it replaced archaic and exclusive language "with great caution,"<sup>7</sup> and while this is certainly the case, great *care* was not always taken. Hymn 344, new to this hymnal, but found in many other denominational hymnals,<sup>8</sup> is given a bizarrely inconsistent version here. The hymn begins with modern language—"I love *Your* kingdom Lord"—(italics supplied) but reverts to "Thee's" and "Thine's" partway into the second stanza. The fourth stanza switches back to "Your."

Further inconsistency is found in the pronouns used to refer to the church. In stanza 2, the church is feminine: "Her walls before Thee stand," while in stanza 3, the church suddenly becomes neuter. Now, while there probably

should not be any great objection to referring to the church as feminine, we should be able to expect consistency, at least within the frame of a single hymn. The text committee obviously had no scruples against a feminine church *per se*; hymn 374 uses feminine pronouns to refer to the church throughout.

Exclusive language has been removed from a few hymns.<sup>9</sup> Hymn 283/231 changes "Shame on us Christian brethren" to "O shame, professing Christian." Hymn 612/360 substitutes "Christians" for "brothers" in both stanzas 2 and 3. Hymn 618/354 alters "Ye that are men" to "Ye that are His." In hymn 25/16, stanza 3, "men" is changed to "man," a slight improvement.

More significant is Otilie Stafford's rewrite of number 615, "Rise Up, O Men of God," which, under her pen, becomes "Rise Up, O Church of God."<sup>10</sup> She solves the exclusive language problem neatly by addressing one stanza each to men, women, and youth. But she is less than entirely accurate when she states in a recent article that "Where appropriate changes could not be made, the hymn was eliminated rather than exclude a major portion of the church from its message."<sup>11</sup> Were this truly the case, hymn 602/173 "O Brother, Be Faithful," should certainly have been omitted. Musically, the hymn is no great prize. But presumably the committee was unwilling to tamper with the work of early Advent hero Uriah Smith, the hymn's author. Stafford's own solution would have worked here, if substituting "Christian" for "brother" was thought too drastic. Hymn 399, with its exclusive second stanza, probably should have been left out also.

There are numerous examples of exclusive language that could have been altered quite easily, but was not. To list but a few: hymn 29, stanza 4, "men" to "all"; 62, stanza 5, "Blest is the man," to "Blest is the one," or "Blest are all those;" 84/78, stanza 3, "man hath defied Thee," to "we have defied Thee;" 193, stanza 4, "her" to "its;" 558, all uses of "men" to "we;" and so forth throughout the hymnal. The wording of these suggested changes is that which comes immediately to mind; no doubt a thoughtful text

committee could make improvements upon it.

There *are* examples also, of exclusive language that cannot be changed without ruining the poetry. In stanza 3 of hymn 97, for instance, the exclusive language is part of the rhyme scheme. In hymn 96, right across the page, the sun is portrayed as masculine, the moon as feminine. The possessive pronouns "his" and "her" could easily be altered to "its," but the poetic imagery would be weakened thereby. Still, throughout the hymnal in general, the text committee was much more cautious than they could and should have been in this regard.

I cannot conclude without mentioning the vastly improved selection of Scripture readings and "worship aids," as they are called in the new hymnal. The number of responsive readings has been almost tripled; also included are many appended Scripture readings appropriate for use

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**The church needs to continue to grow musically, as well as in other ways.**

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as calls to worship, offertory sentences, and benedictions. I hope that pastors and church leaders will make use of these materials, organized by a subcommittee chaired by Merle Whitney, associate pastor of the Sligo church. The quality of church services cannot help but be improved by them.

The use of a variety of modern translations as well as the King James Version, substantially enriches the section of responsive readings. It is also gratifying to see that a large percentage of these readings are taken more or less uninterrupted from a single scriptural source, rather than pieced together. These latter, especially when compiled in support of a particular doctrinal position, often seem forced, weakened as they are by lack of context.

Another exciting "first" is the index of "Scriptural Allusions in Hymns," beginning with page 791. Of invaluable aid to those planning for worship, this index can also provide hours of thoughtful entertainment in looking up favorite hymns to see which Scriptures are listed, finding

and reading those passages, and comparing them to the hymn text. While the careful reader will undoubtedly detect additional allusions not listed here, the index is remarkably comprehensive and represents an enormous amount of work.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, the first printing contained a number of typographical errors.<sup>13</sup> The Review and Herald Publishing Association says these problems will be corrected in later printings. Some of these mistakes are no doubt due, at least in part, to the haste with which the new hymnal was prepared. For years, the General Conference resisted suggestions that a new hymnal was needed. When the inevitable was finally acknowledged and the decision made to create a new hymnal, it was wanted immediately. Committee members have complained that the time allotted was too short for completing the job thoroughly. The new Episcopal hymnal, by comparison, has been in preparation for at least 10 years, and as of this writing, had yet to appear in print.

We may hope that the church will not make this mistake again. Within a few years, information should be gathered as to the success and acceptance of the new hymnal, and long-range planning committees should be set up to begin preparations for the next one. The church needs to continue to grow musically, as well as in other ways.

In the meantime, may this fine new book inspire a resurgence of praise and worship in our churches. Perhaps the best summation of the entire hymnal and its purpose can be found in the words of hymn 32:

When in our music God is glorified,  
And adoration leaves no room for pride,  
It is as though the whole creation cried  
Alleluia!

How oft, in making music, we have found  
A new dimension in the world of sound,  
As worship moved us to a more profound  
Alleluia!

Let every instrument be used for praise;  
Let all rejoice who have a voice to raise;  
And may God give us faith to sing always:  
Alleluia!

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 NOTES AND REFERENCES
 

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1. Unless otherwise identified, numbers in the text refer to hymn numbers in the new hymnal. Where two numbers are given, separated by a slash, the second refers to the location of the same hymn in the old hymnal. Readers are encouraged to have copies of both hymnals in hand.

2. In this review, the term *hymn* generally refers to the combination of a tune with a text.

3. "Introduction" to *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, p. 5.

4. The "omitted" hymns discussed here are referenced to the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (LBW) (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1978) for the pragmatic reason that all of the hymns cited happen to be found within it.

5. In proper poetic terminology, a *verse* is one line of verse, or poetry. A *stanza* is the correct term for successive portions of the hymn sung to repetitions of the tune. Although the term *verse* as in *last verse, please*, is widely used in this regard, it is technically an incorrect usage.

6. For the missing stanzas, see Edward E. White, *Singing With Understanding* (Warburton, Victoria, Australia: Signs Publishing Company, 2nd Edition, 1981), p. 16.

7. *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, p. 7.

8. For the original version, see *The Hymnbook* (Presbyterian, 1955), hymn number 435. For two modern language versions, see *The Worshipbook* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), hymn number 626, and the *Lutheran Book of Worship*, hymn number 368.

9. *Exclusive* is a term used to describe generic language that excludes half the race by its masculine (or occasionally feminine) construction, i.e., man, men,

brother, etc. *Inclusive* describes language that is carefully worded to include everyone.

10. For the original, see *The Hymnbook*, hymn number 352.

11. Otilie Stafford, "The New SDA Church Hymnal," *Journal of the International Adventist Musicians Association*, Vol. 1 (Spring 1985), p. 17.

12. The introduction to the hymnal credits Edward E. White. His *Singing with Understanding* (cited above), the unofficial "companion" to *The Church Hymnal*, will undoubtedly provide the foundation for the proposed companion to the new hymnal.

13. "Introduction," p. 7: the word *hymnal* is used, though the word *hymn* was obviously intended, in the sentence reading, "To the left is found a Bible reference if the hymnal [sic] is based on a specific passage." Fanny Crosby's birthdate is incorrectly listed as 1826 under hymn 7. The correct date of 1820 is given at all her other hymns. (Interestingly enough, the old hymnal gives her birthdate as 1823 throughout.) The cross-reference under hymn 228 to the same music in another key is misspelled. Hymn 338 has a musical "typo:" the penultimate melody note on the first score should be a half note, not a dotted half. In the composer and arranger index, Peter Cutts is given credit for hymn 456; it should be 356. Similarly, Gustav Holst's listing for number 658 should read 648. A more serious indexing problem revolves around hymn 380/469. A computer printout made shortly before the new hymnal went to press, which lists the proposed contents, shows that it was intended to substitute Louis Gottschalk's tune MERCY for I.A. Steinels EVANS, but for some reason, that substitution never took place. The composer and tune indexes act as though it had, with listings for 380 under Gottschalk and MERCY, rather than Steinel and EVANS.

## Tobacco War Continues: The Battle to Ban Ads

by Melvin L. Wulf

The introduction of a bill in the House of Representatives to ban all forms of tobacco advertising immediately raises the question of whether the First Amendment allows such a broad prohibition. I believe it does, and the Supreme Court's latest ruling seems to suggest it would uphold such a prohibition.

The scientific evidence that tobacco maims and kills has led the American Cancer Society and the American Medical Association to support a prohibition against tobacco advertising. The statistics show irrefutably that a smoker runs three times the risk of sudden cardiac arrest than nonsmokers do, that smokers run up to 25 times the risk of lung cancer, that smoking is the major contributor to emphysema and that women who smoke during pregnancy run an increased risk of spontaneous abortion, stillbirth and premature delivery.

Only the Tobacco Institute, which speaks for the industry, and the occasional representative of advertising agencies that profit from the industry seem capable of denying the overwhelming evidence of harm inflicted by smoking tobacco.

Notwithstanding the conclusive evidence, objection to the proposed advertising ban on First Amendment grounds has been raised not only by the Tobacco Institute, but more seriously by the American Civil Liberties Union and some First Amendment lawyers. They claim that such a prohibition offends the guarantees of free speech and of a free press. I disagree.

The Supreme Court has frequently acknowledged over the past decade that there is a constitutionally significant difference between speech whose purpose is predominantly to make a profit—so-called commercial speech—and speech whose purposes are “self-expression, self-realization and self-fulfillment”—that is,

speech that has political, artistic and cultural purposes. The court has also distinguished between speech by corporations and speech by individuals and groups of individuals who join together to enhance individual speech.

The reasons for these distinctions rest on the judicial perception that corporations are artificial creations of the state that acquire unusual powers and rights, including the quite special right of limited liability; that as artificial creatures of the state they are not the “natural persons” that the First Amendment is intended to protect; and that being organized solely for the purpose of making money, they acquire a disproportionate power in the political sphere because of their financial resources. These views have been expressed in one form or another across the whole Supreme Court spectrum, including liberal Justice Thurgood Marshall, centrist Justice Byron White, and conservative Justice William Rehnquist.

The concrete significance of these differences, in terms of constitutional litigation, is that the courts allow commercial speech to be regulated to a wholly different degree than speech by individuals and groups of individuals that classically involve the political, artistic and cultural spheres of national life.

In a rough but essentially correct sort of way, government can suppress the classic forms of speech with great difficulty, if at all, though there is an ebb and flow of power that moves with the politics of our times. On the whole, however, political, artistic, and cultural speech has survived various efforts at curtailment.

The power to regulate commercial speech, however, is more flexible, as it should be. Though classic free speech cannot be suppressed absent a clear and present danger, a compelling state interest, or one or another such formulation, commercial speech can be regulated, even suppressed, according to the Supreme Court, if there is a reasonable relationship between the condition believed to require regulation and the particular form of regulation adopted to achieve the desired result.

The distinction is obvious, significant and longstanding. An easy example is false advertising. Companies can be and often are penalized for false advertising. If an oil company falsely claims that its gasoline will allow 100 miles of travel per gallon, it will be ordered to discontinue the claim and may even be punished. If a Socialist or Republican claims that his particular brand of politics will cure all social problems, that speech cannot, should not, and will not be suppressed or penalized.

The degree to which a particular form of commercial speech can be regulated by government is ultimately a decision for the courts. They will look at the ends and the means, and decide if the two are reasonable related.

Though the courts institutionally defer to the will of the legislature where economic regulation of industry is involved, they may tend to be slightly less deferential where regulation of

commercial speech is concerned because invocation of the First Amendment does happily have a mildly intoxicating effect on judges. Nonetheless, in light of the medical and scientific evidence that inexorably links smoking and death, the courts will uphold the constitutionality of a flat ban on tobacco advertising.

Presumably, my former colleagues at the ACLU, together with the Tobacco Institute and the advertising industry, will declare that prohibition of tobacco advertising will be followed immediately by the end of the First Amendment as we know it. Don't believe it. The only result will be a reduction in tobacco consumption, heart disease and cancer. Our real First Amendment freedoms will be as intact as ever.

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The writer, a lawyer in New York, was legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union from 1962 to 1977. The article is reprinted from the op-ed page of *The Washington Post*, July 2, 1986.

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*Reviews*


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## Spicer Biography: Not as Interesting as the Man

Godfrey T. Anderson. *Spicer: Leader With the Common Touch* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1983), 124 pp, \$5.95

Reviewed by John Hamer

William A. Spicer's career in the Seventh-day Adventist church, spanning the first 40 years of the 20th century, coincided with a complicated time for the denomination. During that time there was an ecclesiastical reorganization leading to the centralization of power in the hands of a General Conference Committee; serious questions were raised by members about the role and influence of Ellen White's writings; a number of dedicated and thoughtful leaders left the church in a series of wrenching defections; and the Seventh-day Adventist church became an international institution. To see this pivotal era through the words and actions of one of its major participants, and to understand his role in these events, should make an important contribution to our understanding of this denomination's history. Unfortunately, Godfrey T. Anderson's *Spicer: Leader With the Common Touch*, fails to provide that contribution.

Granted, Professor Anderson did not set out to write a definitive biography of Spicer, choosing instead to offer a brief account of the main facets of Spicer's life and thereby supplement the present hagiography on Adventist leaders. But even so, he fails to capture the spirit of the man. Throughout his life (and since his death in 1952) Adventists have held Spicer in high esteem. From 1922 to 1930 he served as president of the General Conference. A Seventh-day Adventist college in India named in his memory demonstrates his importance to the development

of Seventh-day Adventist missions in the first half of the 20th century. People who met him or heard him speak recall a man with an absolute optimism in the direction and fate of the Adventist church, a man of incredible memory for names, and a man who continually displayed an extraordinary kindness. Little of this comes through in Anderson's account.

The brief, impressionistic, popular biography is a reputable genre in American letters. A short, well-written life can provide succinct analysis, a brief narrative of events, or, as in the case of a religious leader, inspiration. For example, Anderson himself authored an interesting biography of Joseph Bates not much longer than this current book on Spicer. To succeed, however, the author of such a book must have a specific audience clearly in mind from the opening page—a necessity Anderson neglects in *Spicer*.

The scholar or serious student will find few of his needs met in this brief biography. Unfortunately, Anderson does not analyze, discuss, or even list Spicer's participation in any of the major events of his professional life. At best, he merely says something happened and Spicer did the right thing. Using this book as a source for further study, is an equally bleak prospect. Unlike Anderson's earlier biography of Bates, which cited numerous primary and independent sources and included a very useful bibliography, *Spicer* lacks both index and bibliography, limits notes to identifying the sources of direct quotations in old *Review and Herald* articles or family letters, and contains no illustrations.

The general or more casual reader could forgo analysis in favor of an interesting account of Spicer's life. But such an account would require narrative—a story. Despite the chronological organization, this book does not have a strong narrative line. In fact, when Anderson mentions specific incidents or events, the narration is frequently more enigmatic than illuminating.

Consider an example from Spicer's career as secretary to the General Conference. Anderson says: "During the years of his secretaryship, Spicer witnessed a variety of issues that affected the work and progress of the church." He then ticks off Prohibition, the rise of Fundamentalism, black Seventh-day Adventists beginning "to feel that the time had come for them to receive better representation of their views," and the Bible and History Teachers' Council of 1919. Yet, Anderson tells nothing of the particular significance of any of these events to the church or to Spicer. Neither does he relate Spicer's opinion or role in them, except to say that during the 1919 Council he "remained overseas," but was generally supportive of Ellen White (cf. pp. 49, 50).

An even more glaring and disappointing example of the absence of either narrative or analysis comes from Anderson's handling of the General Conference session of 1922, in which Secretary Spicer was elected president while President A. G. Daniells was demoted to secretary. The switch took place amid "lengthy discussions" and "harsh debate." Anderson quotes a newspaper headline: "Adventists in Acrid Debate Change Leader." What was the debate about? Why was there such controversy? What was Spicer's role before and during the meeting? What was the importance of this controversy? How did this revolution change the church and Spicer himself? These seem obvious questions that a biographer should address, beyond simply asserting that Spicer's role was always "statesmanlike and correct" (cf. pp. 53-68).

A true believer, looking for inspiration in the life of a great man, might not care much for extensive analysis or complete narrative, but the Spicer that emerges from these pages is not even an inspirational character. He bears little resemblance to the kind man remembered by so many who knew him. Indeed, he seems little more than a career bureaucrat of no great originality or leadership. Often, Anderson's efforts to capture a sense of the humanness of Spicer's personality contain an unintended irony and put Spicer in a much less flattering light than Anderson intends. Anderson's quotations from Spicer's more than

2,500 *Review and Herald* articles reveal nothing more than a cliché-ridden optimist, and we learn that Spicer, the loving family man, left his semi-invalid wife and his children behind, and traveled abroad in virtually every year of his 40 years of service to the church.

The weaknesses of this book are troubling. Here is a church leader who lived at a pivotal time for Seventh-day Adventists, written about by an experienced biographer and historian who does no more than trivialize, obfuscate, and avoid. It is as if *Spicer* was published to confirm the notion that, since the Seventh-day Adventist church is God's church, the way it is now is the way it should be. Therefore, it is necessary to demonstrate that almost everything and everyone in its past were precisely as they should have been. If William A. Spicer was an extraordinary man, or if he did more than observe while the tides of his time moved past him, it is not evident from this book.

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John Hamer, a former historian and teacher, now works in engineering training and education for a large computer firm in Massachusetts.

## Archetypes of the Mind: Excavating Biblical Symbolism

E. Randall Binns. *The Archeology of the Mind: Modern Man in Search of His Roots* (Cambridge, Eng.: Hefers Printers Ltd., n.d.), 602 pp, bibl., indices. (Available in the U.S. from Leona Running, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI 49104. \$15.00, plus \$4.00 postage and handling.)

Reviewed by Leona Glidden Running

In *The Archeology of the Mind* E. Randall Binns reminds her modern readers that "God is still speaking to us as He has done from the beginning, and He now calls us to recognize that all the non-Biblical 'religions' are merely fossilized, degenerate remnants of the original Truth, and that *His* thinking



must govern ours" (p. 579). After years devoted to the study of ancient Greek mythology and modern psychology, the author believes she can break down the barriers keeping people from understanding the Bible's relevance for their condition and can elevate the discipline of psychology to new "spiritual heights" (Preface).

Binns, who formerly taught at Newbold College in England, believes that the primordial ideas symbolically taught to the human race by the Creator at the beginning of time became distorted in the pagan mythologies, while still being preserved in a pure form in the oral and written traditions from Seth, Noah, Abraham, and Moses, and thence to the Israelites. Since divine truth has, through time, been revealed to humans via symbolism, the Bible reader needs an understanding of Biblical symbols. Many of these symbols the author finds in parallel but distorted form in ancient pagan mythology.

Modern psychology enters the picture when

Binns argues that the archetypes and primordial images of Carl Jung's influential psychology find their reference in biblical symbolism and ancient myth. For example, the archetypes of the God-image, the savior, and the trickster are not only present in the unconscious of individuals, but symbolized in the biblical sanctuary and temple, and in many Greek myths including those about Heracles, Zeus, and Dionysus.

Concerned as it is with a great controversy between good and evil (although she never uses this language), Binns's book is a gold mine of insight, and would be excellent for lending or recommending to ministers and educated laity of all churches, and to those with no church ties.

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Leona Glidden Running is Emeritus Professor of Old Testament at the SDA Theology Seminary at Andrews University. She received her Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University and has written a biography of William Albright, the preeminent American archeologist, under whom she studied.

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*Responses*


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## The Remnant vs. The Republic

To the Editors: Ellen White repeatedly speaks against (1) entangling involvements with the government, (2) incurring indebtedness, and (3) using the tithe to repay debts (which would seem to imply student loan debts, too). In direct violation of both the letter and intent of these "counsels" the Adventist church *actively* involves its young people (through the student loan program) in entangling indebtedness with the federal government (among others), and then looks the other way when the federal courts take the position that (1) attending a "Christian school" is a luxury, and (2) tithing is not a point of doctrine: it is a charitable donation.

It would seem that the bottom line in Mr. Hansen's news brief, "California Case Threatens Adventist Institutions" (*Spectrum*, Vol. 17, No. 1) is whether or not the institution's "mission" is faith or business. Inasmuch as the educational system's mission seems to be business, I'm not so sure they *should* be treated any differently than any other secular business. Someday the Adventist church is going to have to choose between its prophet and its business enterprises; it can't have it both ways.

A. E. Dunham, Jr., M.A., D.D.S.  
Clarinda, IA

## Adventist Tithing: Hard Choices

To the Editors: I read with considerable interest the article "Adventist Tithing—The Untold Story," by Brian E. Strayer (*Spectrum*, Vol. 17, No. 1). Perhaps the author was unaware of a method the Inter-American Division utilizes that ensures that tithes are paid.

The IAD withholds the tithe from the check of the interdivision personnel. I do not know whether it is withheld from the checks of others on the division payroll. This neatly avoids any uncertainties such as: to whom should the tithe be paid (home base church or church in the field, etc.), how much should be paid (the tithe is 10 percent deducted *before* taxes), or when it

should be paid (it is deducted from every check—i.e., monthly). I was an interdivision worker in the Inter-American Division for nearly 10 years and this practice was still in effect a year ago when I came home on permanent return. I have not heard that it has changed.

Neither I, nor as far as I know, any other interdivision worker requested deduction of the tithe from the paycheck. This left some of us in a bit of confusion concerning the blessings promised to faithful tithers. Since the tithing was not done on our own initiative, should we expect to receive the promised blessings? Should we pay an additional 10 percent on our own initiative?

The General Conference functions similarly under some circumstances. The standard GC expense report form has a line for deduction of tithe from the salary. However, it is not always used.

My personal opinion is that the practice of withholding the tithe from the paycheck is wrong. Whatever administrative problems it may solve, it does not give the worker the responsibility of deciding and acting upon this important concept.

David M. Crabtree  
College Place, WA

To the Editors: Of particular interest to me was the debate as to whether tithe should be calculated on the basis of "income" or "increase." Tithe calculated on the basis of income as traditionally defined (gross or net) is fundamentally unfair because of its disproportionate impact upon the poor. Those who possess substantial or modest incomes may have both discretionary and nondiscretionary income while those of impoverished means may possess only nondiscretionary income required for the necessities of life (food, clothing, and shelter). The ultimate result is that the poor may have to choose between tithing and eating, while those who are more fortunate are able to escape such life-threatening and potentially guilt-producing choices.

Since discretionary income represents surplus over the requirements of basic necessities, it may represent an increase in net worth. When church policies of the past and in the present suggest that tithing may appropriately be computed on the basis of increase, it is presumptively referring to net worth.

The foregoing should not be viewed as excusing the underprivileged from contributing to the financial well-being of the church, but as an attempt to briefly articulate an approach to tithing manifested by fairness to all.

Jan M. Long  
Grand Terrace, CA

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