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I appreciate receiving SPECTRUM, although I believe some of the articles have been too ponderous. Articles dealing with contemporary church problems would generally have more value, in my opinion. I am distressed by the failure of our church to speak out with a clear voice on contemporary moral problems such as [those involving] Vietnam and civil rights.

From what I can gather, the church has not always failed to speak out on contemporary moral issues. For example, I understand that some of the founding fathers were abolitionists, and that Ellen White wrote and spoke forcefully against the chattel slavery that existed in the United States during her lifetime.

I would appreciate an in-depth article analyzing the current failure of the church to make its voice heard on such issues, and the seeming preponderance of "right-wing" thinking in the laity and the leadership. I cannot square such political, social, and theological attitudes with my understanding of the gospel message. Perhaps SPECTRUM could cast some light on a subject that I feel is overdue examination.

BENJAMIN F. McADOO
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I much appreciate the comments made by Elder Paul Bradley on my article on "The Spirit of Prophecy" (Autumn 1970 SPECTRUM). Naturally I am gratified that he agrees on the major point — that the expression *Spirit of prophecy* should be used more precisely. His exposition of the translation I quoted is accurate, of course, and in agreement with my statement that anyone arguing from these quoted translations "would by no means have a perfect case" (page 71).

The expression *testimony of Jesus* can be identified with prophecy as Elder Bradley states. But having agreed to the major point, he can hardly claim that this is a reference to Ellen G. White alone; in fact, he does not so state. In his conclusion he offers the proper and supportable basis for faith in the prophetic gift, so that no one need resort to the verbal trickery sometimes put forth from Revelation 19:10.

William S. Peterson, in "A Textual and Historical Study of Ellen G. White's Account of the French Revolution" (Autumn 1970 SPECTRUM), taxes Mrs. White with three flaws: (1) quoting from unscholarly and biased historians when better sources were available; (2) claiming new visions to support revisions of the text of *The Great Controversy*; possibly even claiming information through visions when that information came from her discredited historical sources; (3) inaccuracies in detailed statements (bell, breviaries, expatriates).

Peterson's "cautiously phrased conclusions," calling for close study of Ellen White's historical writings and a reevaluation of her function as a divine messenger, seem to me to be reasonable and constructive. However, he overlooks a non sequitur of his own that perhaps an English teacher can legitimately point out.

He quotes Mrs. White's disclaimer (p. 59) of depending on sources for historical

fact. She was, she said, using "a ready and forcible presentation," which explains the use of passages from a stylist such as Sir Walter Scott. Yet Peterson disregards this disclaimer in his comments.

He assumes that where quoted statements are used, no "vision" material would be involved. The disclaimer applies here, too. Having had instructions through visions, Mrs. White could seek help in *presenting* the scenes.

Incidentally, is Peterson fair in equating "presented to me anew," as Mrs. White stated it, with "the result of new visions" (p. 60), as he restated it? *New* and *anew* are different words.

The rest I leave to historiographers and theologians.

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The Spring 1971 issue of SPECTRUM explores thoroughly the moral issues of abortion, usually without reaching any conclusions. The moral issues seemed to be the only concern. As in other areas of moral versus immoral conduct, the legal effects of action or inaction are inevitably interwoven with the moral aspects and must also be fully explored in reaching any valid value judgment that will have meaning in contemporary society.

This omission leaves many aspects of the problem open to speculation. For example:

1. Legal rights of the pregnant woman seeking an abortion or other alternative to a problem pregnancy.
2. Legal rights, if any, of the fetus or child.
3. An unprejudiced evaluation of the legal and illegal alternatives open to the pregnant woman.
4. Legal risks encountered in unlawful abortion.
5. A statement of the law as it exists, as a source of accurate information for those professionals dealing with the problem.
6. Anticipated changes in the law.

Persons with appropriate qualifications for answering these questions are available to you. Inclusion of a discussion of the legal as well as the moral aspects of abortion would have added credibility to your stated aim of looking "without prejudice at all sides of a subject, to evaluate the merits of diverse views, and to foster Christian intellectual and cultural growth."

This issue has once again piqued my curiosity about Adventist intellectual reasoning.

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From researches made on the history of people's attitudes toward abortion, I should like to add some very brief statements to the excellent articles on abortion appearing in the Spring 1971 SPECTRUM.

Since neither the Bible nor Ellen White has anything definite to say about abortion,

perhaps the Christian should start with God's first command to man in Genesis 1:28: "Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it."¹ Except for specific commandments of God, man is given full authority over the earth and all things in it. Therefore it seems that God left to men and women the right to make decisions about abortion and also about solving the problems of overpopulation.

The first definite Christian rule on abortion appears in the *Didache*, a manual of Church instruction of the second century: "Thou shalt not procure abortion, nor commit infanticide."² About the same time in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, where the fate of the wicked is graphically described, women who are guilty of abortion are especially punished in hell.³ Later Tertullian held that abortion was murder, since the embryo is a potential man.⁴ Early Roman jurists held that the soul entered the fetus on the fortieth day after conception, and thus St. Augustine ruled that killing of an "animated" fetus was murder.⁵ Hence the modern Catholic views on abortion. Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and Islam all issued vague prohibitions against abortion. Buddhist condemnation of abortion stems from opposition to destroying any kind of life.⁶

As to the "thing (tissue), person symbol, and potential person," explained by Doctor Provonsha, it might be of interest to read again Job 3:11-13,16:

Why did I not die at the womb,
Perish when I came out of the belly?
Why did knees greet me,
And breasts which I could suckle?
[If I had died] then now I would be inert and be quiet,
I would sleep in tranquillity. . . .
Or, like an aborted embryo, I would never have existed,
Like babies which never saw the light.⁷

If we read these agonizing statements correctly, it would seem that some of the Israelites at the time of Job believed that the fetus or newborn babe was not a person and its destruction would be no more than if it had never existed or if it had never been conceived. With the medical knowledge we have today, and the lack of any divine revelation, it would seem that abortion should be left to free choice, as so well outlined by Betty Stirling.

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REFERENCES

- 1 *The Torah* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America 1962), p. 4.
- 2 *The Apostolic Fathers*, trans. Kirsopp Lake (London: Heinemann 1959), pp. 310-313.
- 3 M. R. James, *Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1924).
- 4 *Tertullian*, trans. T. R. Glover (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1960).
- 5 S. G. F. Brandon (editor), *A Dictionary of Comparative Religion* (New York: Scribner 1970), pp. 21-22.
- 6 Brandon.
- 7 Samuel Sandmel, *The Hebrew Scriptures* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1963), pp. 278-279.