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SPECTRUM

a quarterly journal of the association of adventist forums

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We Had a Hanging Last Night

ALAN DAVIES

4

In the harsh hanging of hope up
In the hurried hanging of God on tree
Making mistakes
And asking perverted questions
Of the dry land
We've all hung something
Harsh and hurried
up

Merry muted notes of bird
Hang on the wind
As the man hangs limp
On the tree

But from him no notes
No merry notes
Only God forgive
No muted notes
For they know not
No notes on the wind
What they do
Not on the wind hung
But on a tree hung

by you
by me

amen

Coming of Age

ROY BRANSON

5

SPECTRUM begins its fourth year of publication with this issue, and its parent organization — the Association of Adventist Forums — is well into its fifth year. Now is an appropriate time to remind ourselves why such an association and journal exist and what they have contributed to the life of the Adventist community. Although opinions vary widely among Association members, the Association and SPECTRUM function on certain fundamental assumptions based on the nature of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

The Reformation recovered the importance of each Christian's relating directly to God through (*a*) reading the Scripture translated into the common language, (*b*) confession of sin immediately to God, and (*c*) greater personal involvement in worship services. Ever since, Protestants have adhered to the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Along with their fellow Protestants, Adventists believe in a church whose authority is God, whose will is revealed in the Bible, which is available to all members. The church is not just the clergy, but *all* the members. The Association of Adventist Forums is committed to what is implicit in the concept of the priesthood of all believers — a democratic church.

I

The only way democracy can function is by constant and full communication among members of the community. When that happens, democracy is not only theologically sound but pragmatically desirable. When new proposals and ideas come quickly before a broad and representative cross section of the church, several desirable consequences follow.

First, the environment thus formed encourages new and hopeful creative suggestions — the kind of initiatives any community, including the church, needs if it is to flourish. *Second*, wide disclosure ensures that ideas which

survive have withstood the general scrutiny of the church. Such a rigorous test helps sift out the least useful suggestions. *Third*, if agreement takes place after full and open discussion, the consensus formed is the kind of genuine unity that binds the church together. Indeed, if this process is not followed, new departures will be either ineffective or schismatic. Considerations of this sort may well have caused the early Adventists to publish many varied and conflicting viewpoints in their publications. One thing is certain: a unity emerged that has endured through the phenomenal growth of the church in a rapidly changing world.

6

The organization of the Seventh-day Adventist church is often compared to the structure of the American political system. Many defenders of American democracy cite the importance and practicality of free discussion. When dedicated and sometimes impassioned spokesmen of varying viewpoints carry on their conversation openly within the community, citizens can learn quickly of new opportunities and challenges. They can also rapidly begin to reflect on the most appropriate response. If major departures are rejected, citizens have few second thoughts — because they have had a part in that rejection. If new policies are adopted, citizens who have participated in their formulation (at least by remaining informed) are readier to support and implement the changes. Apologists for the American constitutional system argue that free expression of ideas chastened by vigorous response has enabled the United States in its short history to make amazing social, economic, and technological changes, while its political institutions have remained relatively stable.

The Association of Adventist Forums is convinced that candid communication among Seventh-day Adventists not only flows from theological presuppositions, but is as healthful and practical for the Seventh-day Adventist church as it has been for the United States.

II

There has been cooperation between the Association and the leadership of the church from the inception of the Forums organization. The pages of *SPECTRUM* have been used by church officials to communicate with members. Members have found the journal and the activities of the Association to be channels for talking to each other and to church leaders. During the past four years, the Association has contributed to many significant developments in the life of the church.

The movement of Adventists to coordinate higher education was discussed by Charles B. Hirsch, secretary of the General Conference Depart-

ment of Education, in an early SPECTRUM. The article of a student who discussed the same subject in SPECTRUM was reprinted in *Insight*. Alvin L. Kwiram, the first president of the Association, is a charter member of the General Conference Board of Higher Education.

The Commission on the Draft — which met for several days in Washington and is in the process of revising the wording of National Service Organization pamphlets — was in part a response to discussion of the topic by laymen at several AAF regional conferences and in SPECTRUM.

SPECTRUM has published a number of articles on missions by Gottfried Oosterwal and others. These articles are encouraging the church to take a new look at the purpose and effectiveness of Adventist missions in contemporary society. Several of these articles are already being used in classes and mission institutes.

7

Delegates to the General Conference have said that they used materials from SPECTRUM in their deliberations. SPECTRUM was the only Adventist publication to print the basic arguments for the organization of black unions, an organizational development that could affect all Adventist activities in North America.

Serious discussions on graduate education in Europe (including the possibility of a European seminary) have taken place among representatives from the Northern European, Central European, and Trans-Mediterranean Division offices. The first printed proposal for graduate education in Europe appeared in SPECTRUM.

Official Fall Council resolutions have been voted encouraging unions and conferences to appoint chaplains for Adventists attending non-Adventist universities. Even before its official organization, the Association urged the General Conference to make such recommendations. Graduate students often undergo culture shock when they first attend a non-Adventist school. Later, as young professionals, they struggle with the meaning of their vocations. Many of these church members, who have much talent to contribute to the mission of the church, have said that the monthly gatherings of the local Forum chapters have helped make them feel a part of the Adventist community.

III

The national Association of Adventist Forums has refrained from taking official stands on topics of interest to its members. However, it has provided opportunity for members to talk and discuss issues in an orderly and reflective manner. Sometimes the discussions have led to action.

For instance, members of the New England Forum met to discuss possible resolutions on race relations to be voted at a constituency meeting of the local conference. An AAF member's account of the inspirational qualities of the constituency meeting appeared in the *Review and Herald*. The resolution was published in SPECTRUM. With minor revisions, it was adopted in Atlantic City by an official vote of the General Conference world session.

In Canada, the Toronto chapter has had several sessions to discuss criteria for higher education. Members of the conference and union administrative staffs attended and appreciated learning facts pertinent to the future of Canadian Union College and Kingsway College.

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The Chicago chapter invited Thomas S. Geraty, chairman of the department of education at Andrews University, to meet with them. Even though it was a small meeting, they were able to present their concern about the increase in the number of academies in the union. As a result, the union has resumed its study of the problem.

A retreat in Tennessee, attended by members of various races, discussed the issue of black-white relations. Since then, members attending the retreat have been active in spearheading interracial association in Nashville and Memphis. The interracial meetings in Nashville have been on a rather regular basis, and planning between black churches and white churches has advanced considerably.

IV

With the kind of record the Association has established during the last five years, with its growing membership in the United States and throughout the world, and with the arrival of financial solvency (through many contributions at the end of last year), the Association of Adventist Forums has come of age.

More can and should be done by the Association to increase communication within the Adventist community. Much more can be achieved in clarifying the contributions of Adventists to other Christians and to contemporary culture. As the Association continues to publish SPECTRUM, as it meets in local and regional study conferences and explores further ways to assist the church, it will be guided by the deep conviction of its members that the mission of the Adventist church can be served only by engaging the whole church in significant conversation about fundamentals of faith and practice. Only through free and open communication can all church members feel that they are truly a priesthood of Adventist believers. Only in that way can the church combine the vitality of change with the strength of unity.

Ministry to the “Secular” Campus

CRAIG S. WILLIS

9

Christians have an obligation to teach the gospel to all nations. However, as knowledge in science and technology progresses, an ever-increasing amount of information is compiled, printed, and preserved. Thus it becomes necessary to develop specialists in almost every field of endeavor, and the ministry as a vocation is not unaffected. As society itself changes and becomes more complex, the task of communicating the gospel without violating social taboos or unnecessarily provoking resentment, and without becoming so involved in political issues that the gospel is deflected, has become more difficult.

With more and more Adventists attending public universities, there is developing a major need for a specialized ministry on the “secular” campus. This is nothing new for some churches, but it is new for Adventists. Adventist colleges are becoming too costly for some students; and, in addition, some students who have a bachelor’s degree from an Adventist college want to continue their education in an area of study for which the two Adventist universities are not equipped.

Many voices deplore this situation, because the students who venture into the secular universities come under pressures and influences that sometimes lessen their allegiance to the church. But it is not always the students themselves who are to blame for this development; sometimes it is the fault of the church. There may be no active congregation in the vicinity to help these students as they attend the university. Or if there is one the pastor may feel threatened by “the intellectuals,” or may present a message and approach to religion that is quite removed from the needs of the students — even if the student population is equal to, or larger than, the number of resident members of the congregation.

Several solutions have been offered for consideration by the church. These solutions include (a) supplying church pastors who are young, well-educated, and student-oriented, and thus able to cope with the special problems of students; (b) establishing student centers with adequate facilities and full-time campus pastors; (c) starting additional chapters of the Association of Adventist Forums to enable students to "keep in touch" through local and regional meetings; and (d) encouraging students to continue their religious education by taking correspondence courses from the Home Study Institute or extension courses from an Adventist college or university.

I would like to propose some ideas that I believe will be helpful in formulating a philosophy of ministry to students on the secular campus. These suggestions are based on my experience and observations as pastor of the University District churches (in Pullman, Washington, and Moscow, Idaho) in the Upper Columbia Conference. The conference has sponsored (with a contribution of funds) my participation in the Ecumenical Campus Ministry at the University of Idaho, and has also approved my participation in the Common Ministry at Washington State University. In this connection I have been encouraged to investigate and experiment with ways of improving the church's ministry to the university community.

TRAINING AND OUTLOOK OF THE CAMPUS MINISTER

If the campus minister is to be effective beyond a very limited sphere, he must be informed and prepared in several different areas.

1. He should be prepared in education. Should he be invited to teach a class, he must know how to fit into the school of religion (if the university has one) and utilize his talents in this way.

2. He needs to be acquainted with the drug scene in order to cope intelligently with problems that arise in that area.

3. He needs to be informed about current and socioeconomic issues — the draft and military machinery, racism, ecology, etc. — in order to understand why students react the way they do.

4. He must be acquainted with such subjects as violence, mob psychology, and group therapy.

5. He needs to become acquainted with other campus ministers and with the vast amount of literature that is now available on campus ministry, so that he will have a broad background of information from which to draw as he formulates his own ministry on the campus.

6. If he has a regular preaching schedule, he needs to be a master of the pulpit. Too many times students and professors sit under great teachers and

associate with some of the world's finest thinkers, but then have to listen to a poorly trained speaker in church.

7. He has to be open to various viewpoints and ideologies as they are presented in the university. He may not agree with them, but he must have the maturity to keep his mouth shut. If he has an opportunity to correct or improve the situation in a nonalienating way, then he should be prepared to make use of it.

8. He should have earned a graduate degree himself, so that he can understand and communicate with the graduate students on their own level. (Most Adventist students on secular campuses are graduate students.)

9. Since the academic community may be both critical and skeptical of "preachers" and evangelistic "zeal without knowledge," the campus minister needs to learn other ways of presenting the gospel. Rather than proclaim the message verbally, in many cases he must demonstrate in a practical way what Christianity can do in people's lives.

11

DOING THE ADVENTIST THING

Some people have suggested that in the large university community there is a tremendous opportunity for public evangelism. We tried — twice — using a conference evangelistic team. Somewhere else this might work, but it did not work here. The Adventist students were "turned off" by the methods that were used; few other students or professors came, and none were converted to Adventism. Furthermore, coming on strong with a fight against evolution jeopardized every biology student who was a creationist. The overall impression of the church was not the best. Here at least, the most successful religious approach to the campus scene is quiet, consistent, personal witness.

Others have suggested that we purchase a building for use as an Adventist student center. For such a project at Washington State University, where there are usually fifteen to fifty Adventist students, we approached the North Pacific Union Conference for financial help, since the small, struggling church in Pullman could not afford such a venture. We were advised to sell our church building to pay for a student center; but we decided that we would rather have the church, since such a move would neglect the needs of the nonstudent members of the congregation. Besides, the experience of other churches has shown that student centers are expensive to maintain. If the Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, and others have trouble financing and staffing such a center, how can Adventists do it successfully?

Instead of tying up thousands of dollars in a student center, it may be preferable to provide a better church building. Frequently the local church near a university is not the most beautiful in appearance. But the students and the few others in the congregation are not able to build a new edifice; nor, in some cases, can all the redecorating in the world make some buildings look good. The church at large pours millions of dollars into "accepted" methods of evangelism and speaks a great deal about public relations; yet to provide for an appropriate church building and program would be most effective public relations in a strategic location.

At both Washington State and the University of Idaho I have tried to make the church pertinent to the needs of the university students by (*a*) delivering the best sermons I can; (*b*) organizing a recognized Adventist club on the campus; (*c*) having interesting parties; (*d*) manifesting interest in students' schoolwork by attending their classes, visiting their labs, and praying with them before major examinations; (*e*) organizing discussion groups that will help them to clarify their thinking about the new concepts they encounter; and (*f*) giving them offices in the church and letting them make it their own dynamic organization by doing their own programming. Thus I have tried to help them make their university experience a good one, as well as to demonstrate that the church can be relevant to their lives.

But if this is all I do, something is lacking. For I have not touched anyone else; I have missed the total university community. I have not gained a large enough hearing for the one gospel — the good news about Jesus Christ.

AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF CAMPUS MINISTRY

In a cooperative, interdenominational campus ministry, all of the churches involved are just as anxious to preserve their own identity as we are, and they sponsor different kinds of activities; but they work together to meet the religious needs of the total university community. A Methodist and a Catholic teach in the school of religion at the University of Idaho. A Presbyterian operates a coffeehouse, where he mingles among, plays games with, and prepares food for a large number of groups and individuals who would not normally attend church. A Lutheran has demonstrated how a clergyman can become involved in a situation of unrest, help to reconcile students, faculty, and community, and thus prevent another Kent State tragedy. A Disciples of Christ minister does draft counseling. A Lutheran and I have become involved in religious programming for the student body. We mingle informally with the students and discuss various issues, attend

meetings of the student senate, and help in such projects as a day-care center for the children of married students. We attend faculty forums and Bible discussion groups. We also visit the local churches, often giving the Sunday morning sermon.

Each of these men is known to belong to a particular church; but no one waves the "religious club" flag. They all preach the gospel of Christ's effectiveness for salvation, not in institutional or theoretical terms, but as a practical, demonstrable experience. Rather than compete with one another for converts, they take a broad view of the total needs of the students and teachers, and then they meet those needs in an unassuming way that appeals to the academic community. Despite varying theological views and personal habits, they respect each other's views and rights, and they continue to blend their efforts toward effective campus ministry.

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Thus the campus ministry is a constant and consistent influence, in contrast to the occasional crusade that suddenly appears on the campus, stirs up the students, and speaks only of the conversion experience without explaining how to grow in grace and mature in the Christian experience. When the crusade vanishes as fast as it appeared, it often leaves the student alone, to become more discouraged and take a dimmer view of the Church than ever.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Participation in an ecumenical venture on the secular campus does not mean sacrificing any religious principles. It is an opportunity to achieve a much broader ministry. The existing campus centers are hurting financially and are often understaffed; they welcome the assistance of competent, well-trained personnel. The Adventist church could help, both by assigning ministers to full-time work in these centers and by contributing funds.

Of course, in order to do this the church must reexamine some of its priorities for the distribution of funds and must realize that the campus ministry is just as important as some of the existing evangelistic and missionary activities. If the future is represented in the university community, then the campus minister is "where it's at." He can become an important means of discovering the ways in which the church will operate most effectively in the coming years.

The ecumenical campus venture will accomplish a much broader work than has been done in the past. It will give Adventist students a sense of security with a recognized minister and will allow them to obtain religious instruction in an academically accepted manner. There is no reason why a

Seventh-day Adventist minister could not also teach in those universities that develop a school of religion. The other churches are represented by men who teach with a broad outlook and would not object to a well-qualified Adventist on the faculty. We eliminate ourselves by our exclusiveness and limited ideas of the gospel.

The public witness of the church would be much better in such a program than if it entered the secular campus with a "come on, lost sinner" crusade or merely tended its own flock and never ministered to the total university community. *Instead of worrying about reaching certain statistical goals, the campus minister should be allowed to concentrate on sowing the seed among students and teachers, establishing good public relations, and keeping Adventist students close to the church.*

14

The pastor of a church that is located in a university community should be the same type of person as the campus pastor. He should avoid "personality confrontations" (or theological polarization) with other ministers. The Adventist church can ensure this kind of pastor more easily than can some other churches, since pastoral assignments are made by the conference organization and not by the local congregation. This pastor should be a master of the pulpit who can challenge the thinking of attending students and faculty as well as feed them spiritually. He should develop a church program that will complement the university experience. Never should he view the university personnel or students as a threat and keep them at a distance; indeed, he can add vigor to the entire church by letting the students occupy positions of leadership in the church. If the church is to retain its young people, it must be a growing, dynamic force for Christianity — one which will also keep the parents and the grandparents happy.

In becoming "all things to all men" each man must work in his own armor. The campus minister's perspective and methods may not agree with everyone else's, but that is no reason to doubt his Christian experience or to conclude that God is not using him. His special ministry demands that he work in experimental and constantly varying ways, in order to meet the distinctive and changing attitudes of the university community. This is the only way he can be effective. And the church can learn from his adaptability.

So the church should develop specialized men for ministry to the secular campus, and let them work as another organ in the total body of Christ — not in competition with other forms of ministry, but in unity to preach the one gospel, the good news about Christ.

What about Reorganization of the North American Division?

AN INTERVIEW WITH NEAL C. WILSON

15

In a recent interview at Andrew University, Neal C. Wilson, vice-president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for the North American Division, answered some questions on church organization addressed to him by two students there — Adele Waller, feature editor, and Bob Bouchard, editor, of the *Student Movement*. Because the questions and the answers are of wide interest, they are reprinted here (in a form slightly condensed from that in the February 3, 1972, issue of the Andrews paper), with the permission of editor and interviewee. □ M.C.

There is a move to study possibilities for reorganizing the North American Division and some of the departments of the General Conference. Could you tell us what sparked this action?

I think there's been a growing feeling that it's possible to become over-organized by placing emphasis on maintaining a wonderful organization and a lot of offices but forgetting the real purpose for which we exist. If we can get our job done with a different type of organization — by freeing either manpower resources or financial resources and utilizing them in a better way to accomplish our job — then we ought to do it. The tendency always is to build a larger organization, because the larger the organization you build, in the eyes of many people, the greater success you've achieved. But when you define what our mission is and what success is, then you've got to come to the conclusion that we could do the job just as adequately with a different type of organizational structure.

We don't want to be radical, but we should try to conserve resources by putting in effort at the grassroots (the action units) rather than at the upper supervisory levels of organization. Without question, there has also been a feeling on the part of many lay persons in the church — professional people, businessmen, and pastors as well — that we simply multiply offices without achieving greater efficiency. I think all these are significant factors.

Some reorganization meetings were held in mid-January. Could you give us some idea of what kinds of study are going to come out of them and what types of opposition will be raised?

Our meeting in January was really an initial meeting to shape up what we would like to think of as a comprehensive plan to present to the Autumn Council, which will be held in Mexico City in October. We need to look at what is going to happen to money and manpower saved in reorganization. We need to make it pretty clear that these are to be channeled back to a productive area and not into some cul-de-sac. Also, we ought to study very carefully the reason for, the function of, and perhaps even the need for our departmental organization in the church. Do we need a completely self-contained unit on every level of the church? Or have we proliferated this system merely to create more opportunities for men to have offices considered of importance? Should we have the same structures on all levels? If not, how can we ensure an effective communication up and down — both directions? That's going to have to be studied very carefully.

Naturally, many are reluctant to accept the fact that we could be doing the job just as adequately with less superstructure. Some objections are genuine; some are naturally a bit defensive. I think people try to be sincere. Some people say, "At a time when it seems as though we have a great revival among the young people, the older ones are getting into the act. We have some programs designed to try to share with others what we have, such as Mission '72, Mission '73, and so on. We ought to have a very well-organized church. Rather than cut down on organization, we may have to increase." This, in a sense, is a thoughtful approach, except that it misinterprets the purpose of the various levels of organization.

I don't think we ever ought to get the conferences so large that they lose touch with people. But the union level does not need to carry out the same function. The union is to give coordination, inspiration, counsel, and unity. The unions were set up at a time when transportation and communication were greatly different from what we have today. There is nothing at all sacred about ten unions in North America. The decision for this system was purely a mechanical-judgment decision, based on transportation, time, geography, and so on.

What is your own personal opinion on this matter?

My opinion is that we can do the job effectively with fewer unions. I think we can save, conservatively, \$3 million a year. If we want to, we can save a lot more in other ways, also.

Do you have an approximate number?

I think about six unions in North America would be a fair number — five in the United States and one in Canada.

Do you foresee any involvement in this for the constituency? Do you think you'll need to educate them?

That's one of the burdens I've had. There is always a tendency to short-circuit people in the church — people who are interested and who can be very helpful when they understand what we're trying to do. I think that when we have combined all the proposals into a single one (perhaps in the late spring) we ought to have a meeting of the lay advisory committees and the conference committees from each conference within each particular union. These could get together for an information session or a public hearing where we could explain what we have in mind, ask them for their ideas, comments, criticisms, and suggestions, and add to the input that we have at present. In addition, I feel that we ought to pick out a dozen major centers of Adventist population in North America and have open meetings for any who want to attend, explaining our progress to that point, some of the options, and what the hazards would be — and again, get their feedback on this.

Of course, this will be tedious work for some of us, extremely enervating because it takes time and effort. There are always many people who don't understand, who misunderstand, who misquote. Nevertheless, I feel that it is important that the church members know what is happening. From all of this we may want to refine or change some things that have been suggested and develop a final report to be given to the Autumn Council in October.

You've asked for my views. This procedure has not yet been voted, but I think there is a fair amount of support. I'm sure that some will be reluctant and resistant to this type of approach, feeling that such decisions probably should be kept in a close circle and not exposed to everyone because it doesn't depend on popular vote but rather on duly elected bodies within the church. On the other hand, I think we'll greatly weaken our case, as well as miss a great opportunity for communication, if we fail to do this.

How would this affect the educational system? Of course, you've set up the Board of Higher Education. Is this board going to be given authority to make decisions or is it totally advisory?

The Board of Higher Education at this point is a participatory type of organization in which all institutions have a voice. I think we are to the place

where the institutions recognize that something needs to be done. Furthermore, they have pledged their complete support to the decisions and actions of this board. Each institution is still legally autonomous, yet we feel that each institution in the Adventist church has a prior or higher loyalty to a system or a sisterhood of institutions which should have the same objective. That objective is to provide the very best kind of education for Adventist young people on as broad a spectrum as the church feels is necessary. By pooling our resources, our know-how, and our facilities, we can do a more adequate job than we can with each school operating in its own little sphere. The test is still ahead of us in many ways, but we think there are a lot of hopeful signs.

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Is there any possibility of combining colleges? How do you think this would be handled?

I doubt that there will be any combining of colleges. Rather, I think we ought to cut down on what each college is attempting to do and do it a little bit better. Perhaps we'll also need to change the concept that every college must be totally self-contained in every area and that there can be no cooperative programs. If we make better institutions out of the ones we have, we can use all of them. It's either that or get these institutions so large that a very important element is lost. With the growth factor today and with so many Adventist young people not attending Adventist schools, we'll be achieving more if we get more students in and keep costs from escalating, rather than trim down the number of colleges.

In a subject such as English, it seems that teachers and students would be of a more unified opinion than in music, where students might defend types of music that most teachers would condemn. Don't you think it would be a good idea to include some students on the music committee?

Yes. It would be nice to have student representatives on all of these committees. After all, the young people make up quite a large part of the church, and it's only right that all parts of the church be represented. The main reasons that students have not been included on committees previously are: (a) problems in selecting students, (b) problems with transportation expense, and (c) the time that these committees take from studies. However, I see no reason why these problems cannot be overcome so that students can be on the committees.

Contemporary Adventism and the Crisis of Belief

19

FRITZ GUY

I

Some definitions will explain, I hope, what I mean by the somewhat formal title of this essay.¹ Indeed, if I clarify and justify the title, my task will be more than half done.

Contemporary is a word that can have, here at least, three meanings, two of which I want to disavow. There is an obvious meaning, which is as trivial as it is obvious: a *chronological* meaning. Thus *contemporary Adventism* would simply be a collective designation of all Adventists who happen to be currently alive, including the General Conference committee, the most recent converts, and all the rest of us.

There is also what I think is a misguided meaning: a *conative*, “intentional” meaning. In this sense, “contemporary Adventism” would refer to that part of the church that is deliberately trying — and trying hard — to be modern. What is misguided about this is not so much the modernity, but the trying. Whenever Christians have tried hard to be something other than Christian, they have ended up with a distorted Christianity. An example of this may be seen in some of the Christians of the second and third centuries, who turned out to be Christian Gnostics. Another example is the liberal Protestantism of the nineteenth century, which came to look astonishingly like an optimistic humanism. What happens in such cases is that Christian understanding is forced into another mold — that is (to change the metaphor), it is cut to fit other criteria than its own.

What I mean by contemporary, then, has to do neither with chronological coincidence nor deliberate modernity. Rather, the significant meaning

of this term is *cultural*, or sociological, so that “contemporary Adventism” designates that kind of Adventism that takes seriously its need both to understand the world that is its intellectual environment and also to understand itself and to be true to itself *in* the present world of ideas, knowledge, and belief. To attempt to live in any world other than the present one is to become irrelevant, and perhaps even neurotic, for it is to deny reality. And in many cases it probably cannot be really done anyway: none of us can be in touch with the world without breathing the contemporary intellectual atmosphere — any more than we can live in Southern California without breathing its air. In short, “contemporary Adventism” means Adventism related to its culture, neither denying it nor baptizing it, but trying to understand it and live creatively and responsibly in it.

The title of this paper ends with the crucial word *belief*, which points to one of the ingredients of faith. Ellen White observed that “faith includes not only belief but [also] trust.”² The distinction here between belief and trust is important: belief is *what you hold to be true*, what you think is the case; trust is a *response of self-commitment* that makes your well-being dependent on the integrity of another. In religious experience, both belief and trust are essentially involved: religious belief without trust is an empty conceptualism; and trust without belief is in one sense impossible, in another sense a fraud, and in a third sense a kind of rational suicide.

While trust is largely volitional — a result of choice, a decision to give oneself to another in this kind of relationship — belief is largely *non-volitional*: we do not in fact *choose* to believe that something or other is the case.³ Belief — as we are thinking of the word here — is often a result of a rational consideration (including, for example, the recognition and interpretation) of evidence. Belief differs from knowledge here only in that the question of validity remains open. It seems perfectly proper to say, “He believed it, but it wasn’t true,” whereas there is something odd about saying, “He knew it, but it wasn’t true.” Belief may be invalid. Some of the pertinent evidence may be unrecognized; or the evidence that is recognized may be misunderstood, misinterpreted. Yet the fact remains that belief is essentially a rational process rather than a volitional one. In other words, there is a sense in which “seeing *is* believing” — and this sense is an important one for an understanding of “the crisis of belief.”

The word *convince* derives from the Latin *convinco*, which means to overcome, to conquer. To be convinced is to be conquered by the available evidence, so that you cannot believe otherwise. Conversely, some things are, in the strict sense, “incredible,” for the available evidence makes belief in

them rationally impossible. They are not live options. No matter how hard you try, for example, you just cannot believe that the earth is in the shape of a pyramid or a cube. You can *choose to behave* irrationally (that is, contrary to belief or knowledge), but you can hardly *choose to believe* irrationally. The closest you can come to this is to choose to ignore evidence when its implications are disturbing. But this procedure involves the well-known psychological mechanism of repression, and it has all sorts of undesirable consequences; besides, it is often quite unsuccessful, for repressed knowledge has a way of expressing itself, often pathologically.

Yet one more thing needs to be said about belief, which I am using here to mean that which someone holds to be the case in regard to some aspect of reality. Belief may be characterized by any of a whole continuum of degrees of generality. That is, a particular belief may refer to a very small part of reality — my typewriter, say, or (even more specifically) its color. Or, on the other hand, a belief can refer to the nature of all reality in general. In other words, a particular belief may involve a specific fact, a limited generalization (such as Charles' law about the temperature and volume of a gas, or your understanding of the character of a neighbor), a broader generalization (the Second Law of Thermodynamics, or the basic insecurity and egocentricity of human nature), or some total generalization about the nature and meaning of being.

A "crisis of belief" is a "critical moment" in belief — a moment that is highly significant for the future of belief because it means a possible change of belief. From what I have been saying, it follows that a crisis of belief is likely to involve a *loss of the ability to believe* that which has formerly been believed. Ordinarily, a change of belief is called a "crisis" only if it involves at least a moderate degree of generality. For much of my early life, I believed that Christopher Columbus was the first European to come to America; now that idea seems highly dubious. But this is, for me at least, not a matter of crisis, because it involves a rather simple matter of fact.

A crisis of belief — an inability to believe — may be an individual affair, or it may be a shared experience. An individual crisis of belief occurs, for example, when it becomes impossible to continue believing in the integrity of someone who is personally close to you. This is a real crisis, and sheer agony. Religious belief (or disbelief) is more often shared, because it involves a high level of generality, and because this kind of belief is heavily dependent on what Peter Berger calls "the social construction of reality." For better or for worse, we are social beings, and our "sociality" includes what we think and believe about the world. Most of what we believe we

have taken on the authority of others, and it is only as others continue to confirm this belief that it continues to be plausible to us. Conversely, the plausibility of belief that is not socially confirmed but instead is challenged by our fellow men, is imperiled — not only in our dealings with others, but also in our own minds.⁴

There seem to be two principal reasons for the development of a crisis of belief. Either, on the one hand, there may be a change in the understanding of the relevant evidence, resulting from a discrediting of the evidence which seems both decisive and irreconcilable with the previous belief. Such a change in the understanding of evidence was responsible for the crisis of belief in which Galileo was caught — and it was a crisis not merely because of the facts concerning the relationship of the earth and the sun, but because of what these facts implied (or seemed to imply) concerning the position of man in the universe. Or, on the other hand, there may be a shift in perspective, with the result that a belief becomes simply irrelevant, and there is no longer any reason to take it seriously. The existence of witches, for example, has not been (and cannot be) disproved, and they continue to be a logical possibility. But we do not believe that witches now exist in America, because such a belief is not useful; it serves no function.

Whatever the reason for a crisis of belief, if it involves an erosion of the ability to believe, then to respond to it by *exhortations* to believe is utterly futile. The only proper response is to show as clearly as possible that the matter in question is in fact believable — and this is a process of dialogue and education, not denunciation and exhortation.

II

It is apparent to even the most casual observer that the current crisis of belief in American Christianity is focused on the question of the reality and relevance of God. The crisis has a variety of names: in the context of American culture it may be called "radical secularism;" in theology it may be called "the death of God;" in history of ideas it may be called "the loss of transcendence." Although the little group of younger theologians sometimes called "the death of God boys" has passed from the journalistic limelight and also from most serious theological discussion, and although their announcement of the demise of deity contained a good bit of nonsense, the question that these theologians made explicit remains a first order of theological business: Is it possible for contemporary man to make sense of the idea of God? Is it rationally possible to believe that God is real?

When once this question becomes central, there is a crisis of Christian

belief that is as profound as any can ever be; for if this question cannot be answered affirmatively, there is not much point in worrying about any other Christian doctrine. On this question, furthermore, the old familiar theological "sides" seem unimportant, for now everyone is in the same boat. For Catholic and Protestant, for liberal and conservative, the question remains: In a modern world does it make any sense at all to believe in God?

What this radical secularism, this loss of the sense of the transcendent, this "death of God," means is that modern man tends to be exclusively interested in the present world. This does not imply materialism, however, or hedonism; for great importance may still be given to aesthetic and moral values, and there may be profound human concern for other persons. The point is that these values and concerns are likely to be this-worldly, having no transcendent dimension, no ultimate significance, no eternal meaning.

In this frame of mind, the only reality is the reality of this world. Real knowledge is based on tangible, empirical evidence — the facts, thank you, and nothing but the facts. Real problems are those that can be treated scientifically — overpopulation, hunger, pollution. If we haven't made much headway with such things as interracial conflicts and international hostilities, the reason is that the social sciences aren't quite scientific enough yet; but don't worry, they're getting there. Real values are those that make a difference here and now, not those of some far-off, pie-in-the-sky heaven that lies above and beyond the continuum of history.

Another implication of this radical secularism is that man is the master of his fate — if fate is to be mastered at all. What power there is to control nature is man's power — and he has done a great deal to tame his environment — to make night as good a time to work as day, to make the desert flourish, to control raging rivers, to reduce the destructiveness of bacteria and viruses. And what man cannot control, he can at least prepare for. He knows that he is not immortal, and that, in spite of the best that medical science can do for him, he will one day die. So he prepares for the inevitable. But even here, as he anticipates his exit from this world, his first concerns remain in it. "Preparation for the inevitable" does not mean confessing one's sins, but rather purchasing adequate life insurance to take care of the family and (if we are to believe the commercials) making "pre-need arrangements" with the friendly folks at Forest Lawn.

And mankind is felt to be autonomous. Man may — and must — "create his own values, set his own standards and goals, and work out his own salvation. There is nothing transcending man's own powers and intelligence; so he cannot look for any support from beyond himself, though, equally,

he need not submit himself to any judgment beyond his own or that of his society.”⁵ Of course he still goes to church — but his reasons for going are not really religious reasons. He wants his children to know that God is part of their cultural heritage, and he wants them to have the moral and ethical education that the church provides. Besides, going to church, and making modest contributions to its support, is part of the contemporary life-style of his community.

This radical secularism of our world has not always characterized man. At other times man has had a lively sense of the transcendent; he has structured his existence around his awareness of the supernatural. But not now. Of the many factors in the rise of this modern secularism, I suggest just two.

The most powerful factor is surely the elevation of science to a position of dominance in Western civilization. This development seems to have two historical roots: One of these roots is, perhaps surprisingly, the biblical doctrine of Creation, according to which the natural, material world is neither sacred (and therefore untouchable) nor illusory (and therefore unreal). Rather, the natural, material world is the product of God’s creative activity, and man’s vocation is to be its steward, and to use it. The other ideological ancestor of the scientific attitude and enterprise is the classical spirit of inquiry — a spirit which is perhaps first seen in Aristotle’s observations of nature but which practically disappeared during the Middle Ages until its re-discovery in the Renaissance. Thus, with the understanding of the material world as being placed at man’s disposal, and with the spirit of inquiry into the structure and working of things, Western civilization became the cultural ground in which science could flourish.

What has made the influence of science dominant in the modern mind is the overpowering impressiveness of its technological consequences. One can imagine a conversation between some scientists and theologians. “Well,” says an astrophysicist, “my colleagues and I have just put a man on the moon. What have you theologians done lately?” An agronomist says, “With newly developed varieties of wheat and rice we have doubled, tripled, and quadrupled food supplies in countries ravaged by starvation. Has belief in God ever done that much?”

This is not to suggest, however, that the dominance of the modern consciousness by science is the result of a diabolical plot by scientists. To be sure, there are some scientists who seem delighted with their reputation as the great discoverers of the truth about reality. But I suspect that professional scientists generally are rather less impressed than the rest of us by the accomplishments of scientific endeavor. In any case, it would seem that,

given the accomplishments of science, its installation as kind of the intellectual mountain was inevitable.

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Another less potent, but nevertheless interesting, factor in the development of contemporary secularism is deliberate and official establishment of religious pluralism in America. One reason for the separation of church and state, and for the prohibition of religious qualifications for holding a political office was the Enlightenment conviction that religion was not really vital to the welfare of the nation. And it is surely easier to be tolerant of religious differences if you think of all religions as pretty harmless — something like the Lions' Club, the Rotary, and Kiwanis. In any case, whatever the reasons for the exclusion of religious interests from the concerns of government and the quality of all religious beliefs before the law, the inevitable implication is that religion isn't very important, at least insofar as the nation as a whole is concerned. It is perhaps significant in this regard that Americans are much more tolerant of religious aberrations than of political aberrations; people are much less disturbed by the advocacy of Shintoism than by the advocacy of socialism.

Now I am no more opposed to, or disappointed by, the Constitutional separation of church and state and the principle of religious toleration than I am opposed to or disappointed by the accomplishments of science. But the fact remains that both religious freedom and scientific progress have contributed to contemporary secularism, and thus to the loss of a sense of transcendence, and the decline of the ability to believe profoundly in the reality and relevance of God.

What has happened in Western culture, then, is a shift in perspective. It is not that belief in God has been discredited, or that counterevidence has been discovered. It is rather that belief in God has become irrelevant to modern man, because it seems unrelated to those things which concern him most. Contemporary man seems existentially to echo the famous (if not certainly authentic) words of Laplace, who propounded to Napoleon a nebular theory of the origin of the earth. The emperor is supposed to have asked why the activity of God was not mentioned, and Laplace is said to have replied, "Sir, I have no need of that hypothesis."⁶

III

This brings us to a crucial question: To what extent, and in what ways, is there a crisis of belief in contemporary Adventism? The sociality of belief would suggest that there probably is some such crisis, and there seems to be evidence that the suggestion is correct.

For one thing, we *are* part of the modern world, and therefore, whether we like it or not, have modern minds. We are twentieth-century men, not first-century or medieval men, or even nineteenth-century men; and this unavoidable fact influences our understanding of ourselves, our world, and God. In particular, the fact that we are modern men means that we are scientifically oriented. We know, for instance, that lightning is a discharge of atmospheric electricity from one cloud to another, or perhaps from a cloud to the ground, and is a result of a certain combination of natural forces; we do not understand it simply (or even primarily) as an act of divine revelation of judgment — although we may believe that in certain cases it also has this kind of significance. Again, if a wife is distressed over an apparent inability to become pregnant, we are likely to advise her not just to pray (as did Hannah in the Hebrew temple at Shiloh) but also and (significantly) especially to consult a competent gynecologist. And in planning for the proclamation of the gospel we are concerned not only about the presence of the Holy Spirit but also about public relations and advertising; and if our efforts are less effective than we had anticipated, we are more likely to review our communications techniques than to search our lives for sin.

Our modernity also means that we are secular men — at least in the sense that we have important (to us) this-world concerns; we own cars and houses; and we are interested in social, economic, and political issues. For a variety of reasons we *are* concerned about inflation, crime rates, and the quality of public education. The point here is neither to bewail nor to defend our modernity, but to acknowledge it as a fact of life that, whether we like it or not, influences the way we understand the reality of God.⁷

But this is all inferential, supposing that in the church as well as in the culture, modernity and secularity threaten belief. There also may be some more direct evidence that suggests a less than vigorous belief in the reality and relevance of God. There may be, for example, an absence — or a decline — of the “behavioral consequences of belief,” the sorts of things that you ordinarily do if you believe. The behavioral consequences do not prove belief, for they may be artificially generated; but absence of these consequences would seem to be *prima facie* evidence that our belief is in trouble.

It is interesting, for example, to observe our homiletical preoccupation with experience, with the existential. This takes several forms: sometimes the emphasis is psychodynamic, with attention given to our anxieties and hostilities; and sometimes the concern is with interpersonal relationships, as we try to learn how to get along with people. But relatively rarely, it seems, is there a ringing affirmation of belief.

There also seems to be a lack of financial involvement. In the Sabbath school that I regularly attend, the average weekly offering is pathetically small; and this is but an acute instance of a church-wide situation. Jesus is reported to have said that "your heart will always be where your riches are;"⁸ and the automotive hardware parked outside Adventist churches on Sabbath morning indicates that there may well be a crisis of belief somewhere. This supposition is strengthened by our preoccupation with immediacy rather than ultimacy. Among Adventists who are not ecclesiastical functionaries (that is, who are not paid to sound religious) — how often is there serious talk of ultimate values? There is probably no better index of our own secularism than the subject matter of our informal, spontaneous discourse. The conclusion seems unavoidable that contemporary Adventism, as part of the modern world, has not, and probably could not, escape the crisis of belief.

But we need not wring our hands and weep; for there are important resources which we may use in responding to this crisis of belief within the church. In the first place, the church itself can function as a kind of counterculture, affirming the reality and relevance of the transcendent. Our much-deplored tendency to live in "Adventist ghettos" may in fact be an instinctive endeavor to seek the support of such a "counterculture" in maintaining a view of the world that is at odds with radical secularism. There are limits, of course, to this function of the church: on the one hand, it can become an escape from the world; and, on the other hand, the church has its own problems with secularity.

In the second place, the church can devote some of its energy to showing the meaningfulness of belief by identifying those elements of human existence that point beyond it to that which is transcendent — the experience of existential wonder and the awe of self-consciousness, human rationality and the concern for "truth," moral freedom and obligation, the threat of ultimate emptiness, the refusal to be imprisoned by the finite, and the grace of goodness and creativity. This will not make anyone a believer; but it will help to make belief a live option.⁹ And, in the third place, the Sabbath rest is an occasion for the kind of reflection that enables one to recognize these experiences as symbols of transcendence. For all of our interest in establishing the seventh-dayness of the Sabbath rest, we have just barely touched the experiential possibilities that are here.¹⁰

IV

I have tried to make these four points:

1. Contemporary Adventism at its best is Adventism in touch with its intellectual environment, attempting to understand itself and its relation to that environment.

2. Belief — in the sense of what you hold to be the case about reality — is not something you can freely choose, and thus a “crisis of belief” is best understood as an *inability* rather than a *refusal* to believe.

3. The current crisis of belief in American religion is a result of the prevailing secularism of our culture; and the main contributor to this secularism is science and its impressive technological accomplishments.

4. Finally, contemporary Adventism cannot escape this kind of crisis; but it has within it the possibility of responding to the crisis constructively.

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REFERENCES AND NOTES

- 1 This paper was presented at the 1970 fall retreat of the Southern Pacific Region of the Association of Adventist Forums.
- 2 Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association 1958), book one, p. 389.
- 3 The reason the New Testament sometimes sounds as if belief were a matter of choice is that the Greek word for *believing* also means *having faith*, which includes the volitional element of trust. The word is *pisteuo*. Sometimes it means simply believing that something is the case, as in James 2:19: “You believe that there is only one God? Good! The demons also believe — and tremble with fear.” And sometimes it includes the idea of self-commitment, as typically in the Fourth Gospel, which says (3:16) that everyone who believes in God’s Son has eternal life.
- 4 Adapted from Peter Berger, *A Rumor of Angels* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company 1970), p. 6.
- 5 John Macquarrie, *God and Secularity* (volume three of *New Directions in Theology Today*; Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1967), p. 48.
- 6 This anecdote appears in many popular discussions of science and religion, including C. F. von Weizsäcker, *The Relevance of Science* (New York: Harper and Row 1964), p. 25; and Ian A. Barbour, *Issues in Science and Religion* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall 1966), p. 58.
- 7 Most of the two preceding paragraphs appeared previously in the essay *Affirming the Reality of God in The Stature of Christ: Essays in Honor of Edward Heppenstall*, edited by Vern Carner and Gary Stanhiser (Loma Linda, California: privately published 1970), pp. 13-14. Reprinted by permission.
- 8 Matthew 6:21.
- 9 See *The Stature of Christ*, pp. 17-18, for a brief elaboration of these elements of transcendence.
- 10 A very useful introduction to this aspect of the Sabbath is provided by Abraham J. Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Harper and Row 1968).

The Basis of Belief

ALLAN W. ANDERSON¹

29

I

One hears much these days about the "crisis of belief" — and little wonder. The crisis has been with us for some six centuries. And the end is not in sight. In fact, the crisis bids fair to grow much worse before a resolution to it can be found. Habituation (for six centuries) to disbelief in transcendentals and to the denial that universals have a real existence represents a spiritual disorder that will not be healed overnight. If one must choose between a life-style founded on the reality perceived by the intellect or a life-style based on the belief that reality is that which we perceive by the senses only, his decision will determine his destiny.

The issue here is far graver than the question of "meaning," whatever our cultural thirst for that might be. Quite simply, the issue turns on whether we will affirm or deny the being of objective truth. The question of meaning is without meaning, in any intellectual sense of the word, if it is not referred to its criterion, namely, the existence of an independent reality that measures meaning. The alternative is to make experience the criterion of meaning and thus fashion man as the measure of all things. We are self-condemned to this posture when we deny whatever transcends experience. If we substitute experience rather than truth as the criterion of meaning, inevitably appetite usurps reason; and the world is grasped as basically savage and alienated.

The words *estrangement* and *alienation* are so commonplace in our time that only the philosopher and the theologian who remain devoted to our culture's classical vision of being will pause to call the use of such words to account. Those who are professionally concerned in the life of the academy are well aware of the price one pays for holding publicly to the metaphysical

and biblical conviction that: (a) the world at its core is essentially good; (b) this transcendent goodness is abidingly available to all men of goodwill, since time does not affect things of the highest value.

This, the oldest of civilized convictions, is scoffed at by learned barbarians as medieval or — in their view, worse — antediluvian. And though they seem to have their dates right, that against which all dates are intelligibly measured and finally judged — namely, the eternal — somehow airily escapes them. Comically, in their infinite passion for and devotion to infinite progress, they overlook that no point is privileged above another within any infinite series. This oversight renders their claim that the present age is the one of highest development about as convincing as the self-inflation of a blowfish. Such lusting after the infinite is but one of many current symptoms of the disease we call the “crisis of belief.”

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II

We must be careful how we regard the word *crisis* in this phrase. If it means that we are uprooted from the basis of belief so that we are blown about by every wind of doctrine, then “crisis” points to a *disease* (if we shift the figure of speech), a fatal sickness that finally annihilates the possibility that we shall ever understand anything. Simplemindedness will counsel us to leave it at that, and urge us to drop all further inquiry, in the conviction that intellectual inquiry is the vanity through which we contracted the disease in the first place. Now simplemindedness is nothing if not babblesome. Immediately it prattles of an ancient remedy. One has only, with continuing muscular efforts of the will, to exert and exert himself to believe what he somehow has come long since to disbelieve. But the disease has never yet yielded to such quackery.

Fortunately, the word *crisis* bears another meaning that holds much promise. It is found in Kierkegaard’s observation that man, regarded as spirit, is always in crisis — that is, “always in a critical condition.” In part, he means by this that at every instant a man must be deciding always for the claim of the Eternal — on penalty of losing his self. That this requires faith and its corollary belief who would deny? Yet, seeing this as the case is far from possessing the faith and believing. One can see it as the case while in process of losing his self — something, perhaps, no one will notice. Kierkegaard says ironically: “About such a thing as that, not much fuss is made in the world; for a self is the thing the world is the least apt to inquire about, and the thing of all things most dangerous for a man to let people notice that he has it. The greatest danger, that of losing one’s own self,

may pass off as quietly as if it were nothing; every other loss, that of an arm, a leg, five dollars, a wife, etc., is sure to be noticed."²

If the crisis of belief is understood in this respect, then we might be in a fair way toward inquiring into the basis of belief — that is, its ground. At least, to begin with, we should have taken the matter seriously — itself no mean accomplishment during a crisis of belief, when supercilious reserve is cultivated as a virtue and seriousness is laughed off the stage.

III

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The *ground* of belief is properly distinguished from the *necessity* for belief. Moreover, it is also to be distinguished from psychological and epistemological considerations, such as the part played in belief by motivation and validation — important as these are for a comprehensive grasp of belief's activity. In a short statement such as this, perhaps it will suffice to distinguish between the necessity for belief and the basis or ground upon which belief is established.

The *necessity* for belief can be stated simply. Belief is necessary because our knowledge is finite and subject to becoming. It can be increased or it can slip from our grasp. Aristotle³ shows that, in the case of singular and contingent things that are far removed from our senses, it is necessary to depend on another person's testimony for an adequate report of them. He calls this a defect in the knowable things themselves. There is also a defect on our part, in our intellect. Thomas Aquinas comments on Aristotle's observation of these defects.⁴ Saint Thomas says that because of our defect we are insufficiently equipped at the start for the study of divine and necessary things, even though they are the most knowable in their own nature. We must necessarily move from things less knowable in their nature to those things that in their nature are more knowable and primary. But in order to do this, we must have some acquaintance with those divine and necessary things that are not apparent. This, he says, cannot be done without believing.

It remains the case, as every learner knows, that one must at first believe what only later he will grasp as known. There is no exception to this in any branch of formal study. Is it any wonder, then, that the prophet Isaiah declared, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established" ?⁵

Having taken this step, it should not be too difficult to make our way to the *basis* of belief. But we shall need first to pause briefly over another philosophical distinction. It is this: the cause that produces effects is different from that which grounds them. One would hardly claim that the artist

is the ground of the picture he has painted, though he is its efficient cause, its producer. The picture and the man possess different natures. In order to discover the ground of a thing, we must look to its nature and to the principle intrinsic to it.

Belief is an activity whose nature it is to *prepare* for later knowledge. Belief has always an object; it is always belief in something to be known. Belief, then, has something to attain regardless of time elapsed to attain it. Since belief cannot in and of itself convert itself into knowledge, but acts to make one ready to receive knowledge, it is dependent on knowledge for its being. More precisely — for its activity, belief depends on the force of the things we learn later. These “later things,” as final cause, draw belief to its consummation in knowledge. Clearly, belief is not belief in knowledge, but in things to be known.

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We have now come upon the basis, the *ground* of belief. Shall we say it is the immanent power by which we make ourselves ready to receive the things we are waiting to know? But, as such, this basis for belief is necessarily a grace and will not indicate the natural principle intrinsic to the act of believing. Matters left here will likely lead to that confusion which theologizes in philosophy and philosophizes in theology.

The old saw *seeing is believing* causes no end of mischief for an inquiry like this. It is just not possible for one and the same person to be believing what at the same time and in all respects he is seeing to be true. The certitude proper to believing is not caused by the rational evidence we perceive in the natural light of reason. Belief requires an act of will. It is *consent* to remain confidently making ready to receive the thing to be known. Consent is a free act and cannot be coerced. The consent in belief can be discontinued at any moment, as happens when one tires of waiting confidently before the thing to be known. For this reason we are exhorted to pray without ceasing to hold on to that which will confirm itself to us if only we will consent to affirm it.

The principle intrinsic to belief is precisely this consent, for which we are responsible, since it is the basis, the formal cause of belief and, as such, proper to its nature.

At this point theology comes forward, in its own right, to complete what philosophy has begun. It will point us to the Author and Finisher of our belief in the sovereign and highest Good. He draws us to consent to make ourselves ready to receive things beyond all that we can ask or think. And in this preparation we are continually perfected.

To this end Saint Gregory of Nyssa exhorts in the full beauty of his dis-

course: "We should then make every effort not to fall short utterly of the perfection that is possible for us, and to try to come as close to it and possess as much of it as possible. For it may be that human perfection consists precisely in this constant growth in the good."⁶

REFERENCES AND NOTES

- 1 These remarks were prepared for the 1970 fall retreat of the Southern Pacific Region of the Association of Adventist Forums.
- 2 Soren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling, and the Sickness unto Death*. Translated by Walter Lowrie. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday 1954), p. 165.
- 3 Aristotle *Metaphysics*, II, 1, 993b7.
- 4 Thomas Aquinas *Exposition of Boethius on the Trinity*, III, 1.
- 5 Isaiah 7:9.
- 6 Gregory of Nyssa *Contemplation on the Life of Moses*, B-301C.

33

Academic Freedom and the Quest for Truth

34

EDWARD HEPPENSTALL

I

Freedom belongs to man on religious grounds. Freedom is the gift of God which man has through a right relationship to God and to the truth of God. To be a Christian is to have both the right to that freedom and the capacity for it. "You shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free. . . . If then the Son sets you free, you will indeed be free" (John 8:32,36 NEB). External coercion in religious matters is a denial of that freedom. If freedom is restricted, the power of truth must be limited.

The Christian faith, or any religion for that matter, must have the stabilizing power of sound ideas and of balanced emotions and willpower. Consequently, Christians should never decry diligent research of the truths of the Bible, but only intolerant, dogmatic perversion of research. There are few things more calamitous than the control of men's independent thinking by dogmatists who claim to have a monopoly on truth. We cannot copyright truth. Truth is larger than any man's conception of it.

Candor compels us to say that all too often through the centuries the Church has been characterized by intolerance, obscurantism, and intellectual dishonesty. Men have practiced every other kind of virtue but intellectual honesty. The truth of God is the mightiest power that can possess the mind of man; yet in the hands of some men it tends to become perverted and restricted — both by intolerant, ignorant religionists, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, by the "liberal" who holds nothing sacrosanct and questions everything.

The mind of man as an essential part of the image of God in man, has its

rights. When those rights are denied or ignored, the results are destructive in every way. When religion is divorced from the diligent exercise of the mind, it tends to grovel in make-belief, in superstition, and in dangerous forms of demonic manifestation.

The place of academic freedom in Christian colleges has always been hard to determine. By it we mean both freedom from limitation or restraint as to the material to be studied, and freedom in the method used in communicating the various subjects taught and discussed. Conservative church-related colleges in particular are often accused of violating or restricting academic freedom, of being closed to certain ideas with which they disagree.

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Religion as a field of study is of unusual importance because it comes with the claim of divine authority. Freedom and authority are both Christian principles and Christian demands, and not one more than the other. Freedom is not the freedom of wild fanatics, religious subversives — but the liberty of the children of God. Authority and freedom together constitute the sound compendium of the Christian faith. This means that the church must not deny the right of teachers, students, and believers to think differently. At the same time, however, the church must assert the right of a conservative Christian college to be different within a secular culture and to defend its religious position and stand on the revealed word of God. No one should deny a church college the right to give an adequate and favorable presentation of the faith on which it is based.

This does not mean a one-sidedness on religious points of view. Where academic freedom exists, various sides of a religious question can be presented without compromise on matters of faith. This procedure holds true in the study of comparative religions, in the examination of Creation, and in the consideration of textual and higher criticism. Christian faith does not have to suffer thereby. The firmer one's faith is in God's truth, the less afraid he will be to examine other positions than his own. Someone has said, "The universe is fireproof, and it is safe to strike a match anywhere."

II

If freedom of thought and expression is to be preserved, then we all must be continually alert to the dangers that beset such dearly-bought liberty and must sacrifice time and energy to preserve it. There are certain qualities of mind essential to academic freedom.

The first is *intellectual integrity*. We should not ask men to choose between honesty and faith. Unfortunately, class and professional position de-

termine most of the thinking. If the status quo is essential to prestige, then men don't want any changes that threaten that. Men are prone to marshal their feelings and biases in support of that position. It is difficult for a person with favored place, standing, and frontage to get a true picture of himself. Many a man is tempted to think highly of himself by virtue of the position he holds. Keeping the mind ever open to new aspects of truth, especially when these cross one's personal opinions, is one of the hardest things to do. Consequently, people get confused as to the nature of freedom. They themselves demand freedom of thought and speech for their own position, but deny that freedom to others because it disagrees with that position.

To have intellectual integrity also means to face the question of the competence or incompetence of the human mind to arrive at ultimate truth. The Christian responsibility is to remind ourselves that we are sinners and yet children of our heavenly Father by the grace of God. That means that ultimate answers do not reside in us. The claim to total competence independent of divine revelation is sheer pride and folly. Appeal must be made to more than reason. Logic is not enough. We do not proclaim as ultimate truth the product of man's mind deteriorated by sin, but that which is the expression of God's mind. Only the truth which comes from God can be ultimate and final. The intellect must not be enthroned above the revelation of God. For when reason is enthroned, it sits in judgment on Jesus Christ and on revealed truth. Man is in peril when he himself becomes the ultimate court of appeal. Human pride and arrogance, agnosticism and cynicism flourish in such an atmosphere.

Intellectual integrity requires humility before the facts. No interpretation of truth is correct simply because it is so many years old, nor false because it is new and may contradict what has been previously held. At the same time, the deep features of truth remain the same. We believe in the eternal truth because we believe in divine revelation. Men who have the spirit of Christ will not be easily turned from biblical truth. But to say that one has to believe certain things in order to be loyal to the church can lead to rebellion and skepticism. Fairmindedness, a clear knowledge of all the facts, genuine spirituality, and sound scholarship should all complement one another.

The second quality of mind essential to academic freedom is *openminded diligence* in the search for truth. The most troublesome thing is suppressed truth. It will not stay suppressed. It is dangerous to believe that any one person or church has all the truth, and that is all there is to it. The Christian has no greater obligation than to search for the truth and to obey it.

The last thing Jesus sought to do was to fetter the intellect. The word of God puts no padlock on the mind. Revelation was given us not to suppress the mind but to assist it in learning what is true.

No Christian can afford to be arrogant as to the truth he holds, since it is the gift of God. One must not develop a theology of fear in the name of the God who dispels fear. One must not advocate a religion that suppresses freedom in the name of Christ who promised man freedom by means of truth. The discovery of truth is sometimes hindered by those who claim to be its defenders. Some men tend to feel that truth will not survive unless one be continually engaged in defending the truth of God. Truth has nothing to fear from investigation and scholarly research. There is still a vast range of truth beyond man's present knowledge. Sound discussion is to be desired. By it we may be able to see other facets of the truth without resorting to controversy in an un-Christian way. God has much more for man to know and learn.

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Religion that is afraid of investigation and scholarship tends toward superstition and emotionalism. One can but object to the paralyzing fear that if study were pushed any further faith would thereby be undermined. It is alarming indeed when one entertains the idea that a vague and shallow belief that cannot stand further study is superior to that which commands the believer to love God with his *whole mind* as well as with his heart, soul, and strength. Blind credulity as to the truth one holds is the refuge of sluggish minds. It relieves the individual from real study of God's word. It settles all differences by silencing all opposing voices and denying the right to ask questions. This takes all the meaning out of religion, leaving it ignorant, superficial, intolerant. Quite often young people are victimized by a failure to provide an adequate interpretation of religious authority. The authority exercised is too narrow to be trusted, too competitive to be redemptive, too self-centered to be saving, and too parochial to be creative and dynamic.

At the same time there is a positive side to the search for truth. One of the manifestations of our intellectual age is the fear of positive conclusions and convictions. Many men seem to be afraid that, if they commit themselves wholeheartedly to any belief, in some way they surrender their intellectual freedom and can no longer be objective about truth. From this misunderstanding, they come to resent the authority exercised by the church or the word of God. But thinking that fulfills men as sons of God must rest upon the assurance that divine truths are forever true.

Much of modern criticism of religion is negative in character. It takes

away and gives nothing in return. The habit of asking questions that raise only doubt is easy to acquire. It is a serious error to permit oneself to entertain doubts on everything, to give attention to the negative aspects rather than to the positive. Today men need to be nerved on affirmatives. These edify the mind and develop the character. To attack truth or error in any other way than by spreading positive understanding is hardly worthwhile. Much of man's problem in the search for truth arises out of the spirit of willful ignorance and failure to obey the truth. What a man is not living up to he finds easy to question and doubt.

The third essential quality of mind is *Christian tolerance*. Belief in God and truth, for most people, is so serious a matter that the believer must stand firmly and be an outspoken defender of the faith at all times. With a firm faith there comes the obligation to propagate one's creed. Consequently, many religionists often become militant in their faith. From this point it is but a step to intolerance.

One of the most curious of all the illusions that beset mankind is the tendency to suppose that we are mentally and morally superior to those who differ from us in opinion. The nature of the human heart is such that under the guise of defending the faith, the individual finds it easy to respond with varying degrees of intolerance to those who may differ with him. Men get angry and excommunicative in debate, not because they are defending the truth, but because they attach importance to themselves and to the positions they hold.

Christian tolerance is the ascendancy of unselfish goodwill over all differences of opinion. The Christian possesses both love of truth and love of his neighbor. As the man who is sure of his wife is free from jealousy, so the man who is sure of the truth he holds can afford to be courteous and tolerant with others who entertain the opposite convictions. When John complained about a man driving out devils in the name of Christ, Jesus said, "Do not stop him; no one who does a work of divine power in my name will be able in the same breath to speak evil of me. For he who is not against us is on our side" (Mark 9:38-40 NEB). It was not the failure of this unknown man to get right results that led to John's intolerance. Evidently the man was casting out devils, but not doing it the orthodox way.

Christians should learn to like other religious men, even if they cannot accept their theology. All too often the claim to know the truth has degenerated into calling names. We don't agree with what a man says; so we make disparaging remarks about him. It is easier to abuse a man by charging him with error and wrong motives than to take time to find out what he

actually does believe. There is far too much castigation of others in the name of Christianity. It denies the faith. It obscures the truth. It expresses a doubtful emotional response to one's fellowmen.

Unfortunately, under the name of amiability some have minds like a house where the doors are open to all kinds of religious opinions, one regarded as good as another. However, there is a clear distinction between religious tolerance and religious indifference. The claim to be broad-minded can be nothing more than shallow-mindedness. Sometimes men claim to be tolerant when they are simply indifferent. They simply do not care about truth at all. It is easy to be tolerant when nothing is at stake.

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To many people the phrase "academic freedom" is forbidding. It is confused with the pursuit of knowledge independent of God, a departure from the word of God. But true academic freedom is a right thing. It insists that we have a frame of mind of our own, and a life that corresponds with the revelation of divine truth. The truth of God presents so much to be investigated and studied that one is never content with secondhand information. Skepticism of the Bible grows more out of ignorance and indifference than out of clear knowledge.

III

But how tolerant should a conservative Christian college be towards divergent views? How far should teachers go to give students any or all ideas, no matter how divergent they may be? The purpose of the Christian college is to instruct and capture the life of the student for Christ without violating his freedom or bypassing his right to think for himself. There is a Christian type of control exercised by the church which seeks to maintain the faith on which the college is established, the unique beliefs and values not found anywhere else. These, the church maintains, are of prime importance for the fulfilling of the individual.

The teacher's teaching and personal beliefs are of great significance. By virtue of the influence he has on young lives, their importance cannot be exaggerated. The Christian college is founded for the purpose of restoring in men and women the image of God. The Christian influence of a college depends on the sound Christian character of the staff as well as of the student body. Unless that college takes a definite stand on the eternal gospel and the word of God, there is no reason for its continued existence. Any state college has the right to stay clear of religion, and that is its claim to academic freedom. Any Christian college has the right to teach the Christian faith, and that is its claim to academic freedom. Religion is not thrust down

people's throats simply because the school has built its program and curriculum on the Christian faith. That occurs only when clear thinking is bypassed and students are emotionally conditioned to one way of thinking. Academic freedom will cherish and defend truth. It will seek in the spirit of Christ to maintain and encourage a life of positive commitment to the everlasting gospel of Christ.

What marks academic freedom is not dissension, but mental and spiritual growth. This growth is not unlike man's discovery of atomic energy. The capacity to learn something new, to be corrected if in error, to consider the difference between what we really know and what we only assume and take for granted, to be considerate of those who do not agree with us — all this is an essential aspect of Christian living.

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Consequently, to be a Christian scholar is a marvelous thing. It is also a serious responsibility. For if one fails in his quest for mental and spiritual growth, he may become a bigot and a traitor to truth. However fervently we claim to possess the truth, we must ask it to do what is really needful for us: to clear our minds of fogginess, to increase our grasp of truth, to sanctify our personal relationships, to transform our whole life. To commit oneself to a faith and a church with a special mission in the world — a mission that can rightfully claim a support which few others could claim — requires deep spirituality and keen intellectuality. Ours is a time that has no precedent, a time that has come to the shining of a marvelous light from God. This means that we search for truth with a committed and orderly mind and also with a serious moral and spiritual purpose.

Academic freedom means diligence and industry, endurance and honesty, devotion and commitment, where all of life is caught up in the search for the truth given to us in Jesus Christ and in his word.

The Historiographical Work of Siegfried J. Schwantes

41

GARY M. ROSS

It is ironic but not coincidental that it took a nonhistorian to make one of Adventism's most serious ventures into the field of historiography. Whatever their virtues and specializations, Seventh-day Adventist historians are not noted for their inquiry into the nature and meaning of history. It may even be said that they are conspicuous in their avoidance of such inquiry.¹

The reasons for neglecting what can only be called the ultimate concern of the discipline are curious. The exploration of these would divert us from the subject of this paper, but two reasons of special moment must be noted.

First, our profession has long sought for meaning in history, and for an equally long time has failed to find it. Before the nineteenth century, failure lay in a *multiplicity* of meanings: history was intelligible, hence meaningful, because it was lawful, although precisely what made it lawful was disputed, the usual options being Providence, dialectics, recurrency, and progress. Today, the failure to find meaning (which itself, for the historian, is part of a larger crisis that I shall describe later) refers to the *absence* of meaning. Sometimes this situation is ascribed to the romantic or historicist revolt against classicism that detached history from philosophy in the late eighteenth century and instituted the new relativism. Usually, the absence of meaning is ascribed to the emergence of history as an empirical discipline. Natural science itself, based as it is on general principles and laws, need not, of course, have deterred the quest for universal history. We recall the meticulous method but also the generous dimensions of Leopold von Ranke's work, and of mid-nineteenth-century positivism in general. Seemingly, history and philosophy were at the point of reunion; for — whatever

else he was — man viewed “positively” was not unique. More commonly, however, natural science atomized society and pointed up the particularity, uniqueness, and individuality of it, thereby narrowing the scope, while improving the method, of history. Historians misunderstood an adjacent discipline just as they not infrequently do today. As it became more reliable because of this misunderstanding, the discipline became proportionately less purposeful — a good example of the mixed blessing.

Second to science as a deterrent to historiographical work has been the difficulty awaiting those Christian historians who ignore the empirical restraints, yield to impulse, and attempt to orchestrate the past. Praying believingly that “thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” asserting the historicity of the Incarnation, adhering to the “fullness of time” concept, in sum precluded by their theology from all but the providential option, Christian historians have been forced to the defensive by all of the questions that accompany this option. Does not the attempt to identify God’s hand in history elevate the scholar to God, courting an unscriptural pretension and immodesty? Does it not invite a “cop-out” from tiresome research? Does not the hand-of-God device raise expectations for disclosure to the precarious point where failure to disclose produces disappointment and cynicism? Most important for our purposes here, does it not superimpose on human freedom a determinism which renders that freedom meaningless by reducing man to a mechanism?

Regardless of the answers, these questions clearly provide a context in which to examine the work of Schwantes as it appears in his book *The Biblical Meaning of History*. The method of science and the principle of moral freedom may deter some from historiographical work; but such people are apparently the timid, for here we encounter an attempt to make science and freedom the veritable basis of historiographical work. The proposal is bold and arresting and the formulation of it just plausible and judicious enough to warrant thoughtful consideration.²

I

It will surprise exactly no one that Schwantes discerns pattern in history, that he ascribes this pattern to Providence, and that he identifies faith as the source of the double discovery of pattern and Providence. “History is purposeful,” he writes early in the book, “and is moving toward a goal of God’s own choice” (p. 48). There is, he says, “a general providence guiding the broad outlines of history” (p. 31). There is evidence of “God’s active concern in history” (p. 162).

How do we know all of this? Not by locating ourselves in temporal time and seeking the meaning that is discoverable by human reason, but by reaching beyond history to faith in divine revelation. After all, "God has vouchsafed for man not a philosophy of history, but a theology of history" (p. 135). Just as the contemporaries of Christ missed the significance of the Incarnation because they were "immersed in the historical continuum" (p. 139), so also will the historian who is involved in the historical process succumb to myopia and loss of perspective until he experiences the superior insights of faith.

Schwantes knows that this idea is not original with him; indeed, the many who have espoused it before him seem to lend validity to it. Yet he must equivocate precisely where its other advocates have equivocated: Are we any better for having from faith a glimpse into the ultimate coherence of history? Is that glimpse of any practical use to the working profession aside from its satisfaction-value? Or, as the *philosophes* of the eighteenth century commonly asked, is the regularity of nature only a comforting thought, or is it grounds for action? This is the hard question. It is prompted by all those persons who fervently believe but refuse to implement. An example is Bernard Ramm, who contends that

the reality of historical revelation does not put the Christian in a superior position to write the philosophy of history. Concerning the importance of most events of history the Christian is no more enlightened than the secular historian. The Christian can give no special interpretation of the role of Bismarck . . . in the history of the German people, or of the particular form of Chinese history. Nor does historical revelation enable the Christian to offer authoritative explanations of political, economic, or sociological events which elude the secular historian.⁸

Schwantes wants to find practical value in the providential approach; and as the disclaimers multiply, we suspect that he wants to find it badly. "To accept the providential view of history," he warns us, "does not necessarily enable one to give a plausible explanation for every major turn of events in terms of an overruling moral providence" (p. 4). Again: "A fully convincing account of history as moving toward a divine goal may forever remain beyond [the] reach [of historians]" (p. 16). Again: Scripture "confers on no one the charisma to label some events providential and some not. . . . Providence is an all-pervasive and silent influence. . . . We may be convinced of the discreet and continuing operation of providence leading all history to its appointed goal [but] it would seem sheer conceit on the human level to assert a 'more' providential efficacy in one event than in another" (p. 29). Again: "To affirm [the biblical viewpoint] does not imply

that the believer can fit every minor and major event into a coherent whole. Faith in a divine providence does not necessarily confer on him the gift of prophetic interpretation. In fact, most believers are content to say that the whole of history will eventually reveal a meaning, and that for the time being we see more often than not 'only puzzling reflections in a mirror' " (1 Corinthians 13:12 NEB) (p. 146). A final disclaimer is the statement that "divine providence must be assumed to be active in the totality of history [although] in most areas it eludes positive identification" (p. 163).

Without being perverse, I suggest that disclaimers can become self-denying when they are overused. By saying so often what he cannot do, Schwantes discloses exactly what he wants to do and what, in fact, he will attempt to do. Meaning assumed without illustration, Providence without examples, might be the lowest common denominator among Christian historians, but such caution cannot remove Schwantes from the gamesmanship of playing God. He remembers in his despair that God is sufficiently reasonable to disclose at least a modicum of His activity. "It would be idle," he says as he gains confidence, "to speak of . . . a plan if it must remain forever unidentifiable in the play and counterplay of events which make up human history" (p. 15). In another passage Schwantes finds it "consistent with the Biblical concept of man created in God's image, capable of holding communion with his Creator, that, within the limits of man's finitude, God's ways should be intelligible to him. The operation of divine providence within the historical process should be at least partially discernible and capable of conveying meaning to man's mind" (p. 119). Again: "Granted that . . . the points where the suprahistorical touches the historical are not occurrences open to the ordinary historical rules of evidence . . . it would yet be reasonable to expect that a loving Father would vouchsafe for man some glimpses of His benevolent providence" (p. 145).

Schwantes rounds the corner and takes the offensive with the help of two major devices, both of which peculiarly stem more fully from his own creative mind than from the biblical page. As a science major in college, he learned about the end-of-century investigation by physicists and chemists into the nature of matter — a perennial issue in Western philosophy — and about the startling conclusions wrought by this investigation. In particular, he discovered and subsequently never forgot the quantum theory of Max Planck that in 1900 undermined the traditional "verities" of mechanistic physics. We are all familiar in general, if not in detail, with the proposition that radioactive masses emit energy in discontinuous rather than continuous "packets" or quantities, and with the corollary that particles of such emis-

sions tend to defy the efforts of man precisely and completely to measure them. And we appreciate the extent to which such conclusions reduced the likelihood, or removed the possibility, of the objective reality so confidently assumed by the positivists, especially when combined with the contemporary work of Albert Einstein. What may surprise us is the significance for history in general that Schwantes assigns to these findings.

Far from being a harbinger of despair, the discovery of quanta rewards the patience and vindicates the fidelity of all those Christians who endured an unfavorable metaphysics during 1600-1900, a metaphysics in which nature seemed too uniform, regular, and predictable to permit divine intervention. Our world, says Schwantes, quoting a scientist at Oak Ridge, is manifestly one "in which indeterminacy, alternative, and chance are real aspects of the fundamental nature of things," and, Schwantes adds, "if this is true of nature, it should be even more true of man who transcends nature by the power of thought" (pp. 24-25). Therefore —

the view long held of strict determinism in history must be likewise replaced by the concept of the openness of history. At every turn of events history is confronted with innumerable alternatives. Which alternative will be taken is, from the secular point of view, purely a matter of chance. But from the point of view of faith, the alternative taken may be a matter of Providence. . . . [Science] gives to the uncertainty surrounding every turn of events the name of chance. . . . But this new realization of the openness of history is exactly what the Christian recognizes as opportunity for divine providence [p. 25].

Openness, then, typifies nature and society, repudiates determinism, and invokes Providence. But is not Providence merely a more transcendent form of determinism? For Schwantes it is not. The revolution in physics discloses latitude for Providence and dispels misgivings about identifying God in history; but Schwantes has yet to say how Providence actually utilizes the newly found "openness," a challenge which leads him to a second major device.

Notwithstanding the undergraduate years, Schwantes is also a theologian. Indeed, so informed is he about the centrality of man's nature as a theological issue that his work becomes a veritable anthropology. Foremost, of course, is the *Imago Dei*, the image of God in the human person; and a vital part of that is the freedom of man. Unfortunately, that freedom is somewhat latent, because man tends to squander it (although this is itself a free act), especially because original sin distorted God's image in man.

Hence, man must recover the freedom that will make him truly human and that will restore in him the divine image. Man *desires* to make such recovery, because freedom as desire is a divine implantation. Man is *able* to

make such recovery only in an atmosphere conducive to experiencing freedom, for the exercise of it is the surest multiplier. Does such an atmosphere exist? Yes — because, open and fluid, history abounds in the alternatives and choices without which freedom would be a vain pursuit and a senseless pursuit. How, then, does God use the openness which the tiny quanta disclose? He uses it to remind man that the freedom universally sought is attainable (pp. 19-37, 177-186).

It is a sufficient reminder. If every book must have a thesis, this is a book, for Schwantes is ready to propose a thesis that will unify his work: the “unquenchable thirst for freedom is the chief propelling force in history” (p. 36). The idea recurs in variant forms, but the variance is only stylistic. Whoever elevated the world to “a higher stage of political and moral freedom” performed a providential mission (p. 104). “To follow the trail of freedom . . . is to follow where the Spirit is leading” (p. 164). “We propose that the enlargement of freedom is the motif that introduces meaning better than any other into . . . history” (p. 165). “History [is] on the side of freedom” (p. 177). A final statement of the thesis sums up all that we have said: “Through the enlargement of the areas of freedom, as well as by the well-timed advances of science, divine providence has been leading history to its appointed goal” (p. 192).

II

Evaluating is harder than describing. As we turn to this task it is well to note some considerations that compound the difficulty of evaluation and to moderate the criticisms to be made.

First, it is unfair to demean a book that raises and attempts to answer the questions that we anxiously avoid. I contended earlier that we are reluctant to “do history” in the truest sense, and my point here is that the work of Schwantes is rendered significant merely by what it undertakes to do, irrespective of its success.

Second, we are dealing here with universal history. The book commences with the breath of life and ends with the life after death, which is to say that its scope exceeds the competence of any reviewer.

Third, it is possible that the book is noteworthy more for its historical than for its historiographical content. Unfortunately for Schwantes, only the latter is assessed here; but in fairness to him I shall digress to the substantive portion of the book in order to bring us closer to its author’s established expertise.

The saga of freedom is a bewitching theme, and our teaching would be

enlivened by the illustrations which Schwantes supplies. He penetrates the Egyptian mind of the Amarna era in order to identify the momentary decline of polytheism and the concomitant upsurge in "the notion of freedom under law" (pp. 74-75, 83). He criticizes the corporate tendency in Mesopotamian civilization, but finds among the pastoral Amorites, especially Hammurabi, a "stress upon individual freedom" (p. 83). Cyrus of Persia becomes "the free agent of a divine providence to set in motion influences which would promote the cause of freedom everywhere" (p. 96). Alexander the Great propels the world to yet "a higher stage of political and moral freedom" (p. 104), for in his era the city-state is gone — that institution so often considered the matrix of democracy, but in reality so deleterious to democracy.

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So it goes. The hazards of corporation notwithstanding, the Christian Church becomes the instrument of freedom par excellence; but of course the Church apostasizes, constricting freedom, plunging man to a nemesis in the actualization of his nature. Yet the Reformation of the sixteenth century, abetted by nationalism and humanism, turns the tide in that search for the "freedom which makes men truly human" (p. 181). The crescendo of the Reformation precipitates the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century and the constitutionalism of the nineteenth.

Where are we at present? Has history as a sort of purifier emancipated man from tyranny and become his saviour? Not quite, for technology, although "providentially guided" (p. 191), threatens freedom. Besides —

the historical trend toward greater freedom for the plodding masses has been wrongly interpreted as signifying that man's redemption is effected by the historical process. . . . Man is a rebel in chains which cannot be broken, because they are forged with the refractory links of alienation from God. Only through reconciliation with his Creator are man's Promethean bonds effectively and permanently broken. History may, at best, create the environment in which this reconciliation takes place. It does so by surrounding man with a climate of freedom in which moral decisions are possible [p. 178].

Following the "trail of freedom" with Schwantes is an energizing experience, and one is tempted to square it with the charts. But, to repeat our third and lengthiest qualifier, the perspective of this paper is historiographical and not historical. With that perspective we must now measure the argument of Schwantes the historiographer.

God in history, which I acknowledge in faith, is not deepened as an affirmation, nor improved in utility, by the device I shall hereafter call the freedom device. The failure of this device to deepen affirmation, which will

not concern Schwantes because it was not his purpose, lies in what for me is the already unequivocal nature of that affirmation. Its failure to improve the utility of a belief for the working historian, however, which I think *was* Schwantes' central purpose, becomes the main shortcoming.

Making God the impulse behind every quest after freedom, then identifying the freedom-fighter, then claiming a breakthrough in the disclosure of God, acquires utility only if (a) it can be shown to be valid and (b) it can be shown to be not only valid but also desirable. The accuracy of a theory renders it usable; appeal assures that it will in fact be used. We must examine the work of Schwantes from both standpoints.

With respect to validity, the freedom device, as I read it, is extremely weak, and this is because it violates a central antithesis in Christian thought — namely, the portrayal of man as both free and determined. Schwantes would prefer that man be either/or. For him, we resolve antitheses by declaring their components identical, when in fact we do it, if at all, only with cognitive power.

At times, it is true, Schwantes attempts to balance the picture, to maintain and define both freedom and its limitations, but the attempt results in exactly the imprecision that we would expect from so large an undertaking. Are we really better off for Schwantes' having said that "it is possible to admit a general providence guiding the broad outlines of history, yet allow a broad scope for individual freedom" (p. 31)? Does it help to say that "the Biblical view of history rejects causal determinism, . . . rejects the view that history is completely undetermined . . . [and upholds the view] that history remains ever within God's reach" (p. 32)? Is it very meaningful to call God "the guarantor of the intelligibility of any given historical event . . . [and] the guarantor of history for all time" (p. 35)?

Understandably, Schwantes aborts this effort and shifts to the either/or thrust that seems to invalidate the book. On the one hand, he implies that man is not really free at all. History is not its own saviour. An extrahistorical force shapes and patterns it; this force is Providence, and God's role involves not only the creation of circumstances in which man can be free but also the periodic activation of man's quest after freedom. Saying that God wills something is tantamount to saying that man acts *because* God so wills. Therefore, man's end may be freedom, but the means to that end seem to fall short of freedom, and the commonplace indictment of providential history, namely, its denial of freedom, would seem to pertain here. Indeed, we have a philosophical counterpart of that strange imperial urge which forces men to be free.

On the other hand, Schwantes suggests, and I think more strongly suggests, that man is entirely free, which is surely the biggest surprise of a book that claims to be a theology of history (p. 135). Our first glimpse of this tendency is the author's unexpected appreciation of sixteenth-century humanism (pp. 172-173), but the point is argued in the abstract as well.

To exercise moral freedom, we are told, man requires a climate of freedom, which is to say, *other* kinds of freedom. It is not my intention to question the relationship which Schwantes posits between the exercise of a moral decision and the climate of freedom in which one lives, although I personally believe the relationship is as likely to be inverse as it is to be direct. Parenthetically, I think of Martin Buber's assessment of the Jewish mind under duress. Rather, precisely because those "other freedoms" lack specification, they bespeak absolute freedom and thus the author's penchant for either/or.

But let us suppose that our estimate of Schwantes in this regard is unfair. After all, one might argue that the all-or-nothing handling of freedom, or the ambivalent handling of freedom, actually attests to the author's struggle with a thorny problem and shows his appreciation of, rather than his neglect of, the central tension between freedom and determinism. If *this* interpretation of the book is true, its validity stands, pending further examination, and we can turn to the question of desirability in order to see whether what might be usable has sufficient appeal to recommend one's use of it.

To appeal to the working historian, a thesis must be valid — and I have some doubts about this one. But a thesis also finds its appeal or lack thereof in the historian's own predilections. In this regard, not many will rush to Schwantes. The freedom device retrogresses to monocausality; to a politicized, libertarian, or Whig interpretation of history; to a simplistic and romanticized dialectic; and to that fondness for eulogy which we call filiopietism.⁴ The argument is replete with the polemics against government and corporation that spring so readily from evangelical Christianity.

But with the question of desirability, as with that of validity, second thoughts arise. I am not ready to condemn the freedom device or, more generally, the providential view of history, as undesirable. My reason provides the perspective in which I want to leave Schwantes.

What inclines me toward his viewpoint, while wishing it were more validly constructed, is the situational crisis that historians face today. I need not belabor a special dimension of this crisis encountered by Seventh-day Adventist historians, for we are fully aware of the urgent demand on us,

due in part to the cost factor, to render our courses sufficiently unique (i.e., Christian, if not sectarian) to warrant their increasing price.⁵ The providential view of history is a way of doing this that should not be rejected unless and until a better way is found. Certainly it can be said that alternative methods of Christianizing our courses are not coming forth in any plentitude, either (a) because there are no alternatives, or (b) because we fail to see alternatives that do avail themselves, or (c) because we doubt the need to Christianize our courses in the first place.⁶

But it is the more general antihistorical or ahistorical bent of our era that concerns me here. History as a discipline, unlike so many others, begs almost in vain for legitimation. We are no longer servants of a profession whose utility is proved and widely assumed. As any freshman class in civilization reminds us, we are practitioners of a lost art whose dissemination now seems puzzling and irrelevant. In the words of *Phi Delta Kappan*: "For most students, courses in history close rather than open doors to the past. The content seems to bring answers to unasked questions, to supply materials that one does not need, to explain that which has not yet troubled the reader, and to satisfy where there is no curiosity."⁷ The German-American historian Hans Meyerhoff speaks of "a strange loss of historical appetite."⁸ The great British historian J. H. Plumb writes that "few societies have ever had a past in such a galloping dissolution as this."⁹

When we look at the thwarting factors around us, it is little wonder that history as a valuable enterprise suffers. There is existential philosophy, that ubiquitous villain and the factor that prompted Schwantes to write his book. "The indifference for past history," he laments, "is the recognized hallmark of existentialism" (p. 134). We know that the alienated person locates the meaning of life not in what he considers a capricious and uncongenial history but in that last resort which happens also to be a starting-point, namely, the individual self (although we admit that such melancholy often arises from and is maintained by a powerful scrutiny of the past by existentialists).

Then there is the rapidity of fundamental change, or, in Schlesinger's words, "the constant acceleration in the velocity of history."¹⁰ So bewilderingly different is the present from even the recent past that students increasingly and quite naturally doubt the relevance of a past they pretend to have superseded. In addition, the misuse of the past by radical historians of the New Left, though not only by them, construes and discredits it. Their impetuous search for a "usable past" reminds us of Plumb's axiom that "where the service of the past [is] urgently needed, truth [is] at a discount."¹¹

Furthermore, the antiauthoritarianism of our time either necessitates or at least accommodates a rebellion against history, the thing which in addition to religion and philosophy traditionally buttressed authority. Diplomatically speaking, our enumeration should also include America's very early and very moralistic repudiation of Europe and Europe's past, although this factor somewhat contradicts my belief that the requiem of history is a recent development. Seemingly, we never *did* have a taste for history here in America.¹² Finally, as I said at the outset, history is less purposeful when more reliable. That is, a discipline that is exacting, critical, analytical, antiquarian, and in all respects professional, easily jettisons the claim to meaning, law, or design.

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In the aggregate, these factors seem, at least in the minds of the current generation, to nullify the traditional values of historical study. The pleasure, adventure, and discipline of the detective-historian may remain, although these were at best side-benefits. It is also true that history as a major literary form is untouched, if not better off. Nor do these factors disallow for the peculiar nostalgia for the past that of late has become a commercial bonanza.¹³ But the essential values of history were its ability to orient in time and to exploit a meaningful past for the purpose of predicting the future, and these values are severely jeopardized by the factors mentioned.

III

Are we therefore a beached whale, helplessly and odorously floundering in an unfriendly habitat, or is there yet a passage into the current of time? To such a jugular type of question, the kind that impugns our reason for being, there must be an answer, for we cannot wish it out of existence. I contend that the providential view of history, revitalized by Schwantes, provides an answer that should not be rejected unless and until a better way is found. It is a fact worthy of both illustration and explanation that a suprahistorical view is especially suited to antihistorical times.

Anyone cursorily acquainted with contemporary historiography knows that "Christian interpretations of history, in the Augustinian tradition, have reasserted themselves strongly."¹⁴ To the general public, but also to the specialist, Christian solutions to the problem of history satisfy as they have seldom satisfied in the past. The names of Karl Löwith, Reinhold Niebuhr, Christopher H. Dawson, and Arnold Toynbee are sufficiently representative.

To say why there should be such a juxtaposition of antihistorical and suprahistorical thought, we need only consider the obvious. History's burden of proof is staggering, and escape into faith conveniently restores meaning

to history while avoiding the seemingly fruitless search for meaning *in* history. By acquiring meaning (never mind the method), history acquires value, for meaning opens up predictive possibilities which restore to humanity one of the mainstays of its earlier confidence. History again becomes serviceable to society.

I conclude this description and evaluation of Schwantes' work with five brief propositions.

1. Empirical science and moral freedom, which preclude much historiographical work, are no hindrance for Schwantes. Instead, they are the basis of his work.

2. Recoiling from what we might term deistic historiography, Schwantes seeks to demonstrate the utility of belief for the historian. It is a gigantic undertaking.

3. The degree of success with which he does this depends on the strength of his thesis in terms of its validity and desirability.

4. I have taken a mixed position with respect to each, primarily in order to relate his work favorably to the crisis in legitimation faced by the history profession today.

5. We are left with a warning: either the providential theory solves this crisis, or the crisis will be solved in other ways — for our courses must be somehow Christian, and history must somehow reclaim its value. I would only hope that these needs could be met in alternative ways that exact lesser prices than a leap into faith and a surrender of history to art. In my judgment, the search for alternatives must therefore continue, and we can thank Siegfried J. Schwantes for his probably unintended acceleration of that search.¹⁵

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 Two essential essays on historiography from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective are Ronald L. Numbers, *In defense of secular history* (a review of George Edgar Shankel's *God and Man in History*), *SPECTRUM* (Spring 1969), pp. 64-68; and of Gary Land, *History from an Adventist perspective* (a review of Jerome B. Clark's trilogy on *1844*), *SPECTRUM* (Summer 1970), pp. 81-84.
- 2 The book in question is Siegfried J. Schwantes, *The Biblical Meaning of History* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association 1970). Professor Schwantes is chairman of the department of religion at Middle East College in Beirut, Lebanon. He received the bachelor of arts from Pacific Union College in 1938, a master of arts from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in 1949, and a doctor of philosophy from Johns Hopkins University in 1963. In 1965 he published *A Short History of the Ancient Near East*, for which he was awarded first prize by the Baker Book House of Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is the author of two other books and of numerous articles.

- 3 Bernard Ramm, *Special Revelation and the Word of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1961), p. 97.
- 4 The heroes of this book are Amenhotep IV (Ikhnaton), Hammurabi, Cyrus of Persia, Alexander the Great, Paul the apostle, several figures of the Reformation, and Max Planck. Prominent villains are Karl Barth and the pontiffs of the Roman Catholic church.
- 5 I wrote of this imperative in a *Review and Herald* article entitled We will pay the difference when we see the difference (January 14, 1971), pp. 14-15.
- 6 I proposed an alternative method in an article, Christian aspects of diplomacy: some conceptual guidelines, *SPECTRUM* (Summer 1970), pp. 29-42.
- 7 Edgar Bruce Wesley, Let's abolish history courses, *Phi Delta Kappan* 49:3-8 (September 1967).
- 8 Hans Meyerhoff, editor, *The Philosophy of History in Our Time: An Anthology* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company 1959), p. 22.
- 9 J. H. Plumb, *The Death of the Past* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company 1970), p. 15.
- 10 Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Crisis of Confidence* (New York: Bantam Books 1969), p. 151.
- 11 Plumb, p. 32.
- 12 This, of course, is a central argument of the "consensus" school of American history. See Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harcourt 1955), p. 285. See also William Pfaff's article, Contempt for the past: it's nothing new for Americans, in the March 28, 1971, issue of the *Los Angeles Times*.
- 13 Marcia Henning, It's nostalgia time, *Press-Enterprise* (Riverside, California), March 28, 1971.
- 14 Meyerhoff, p. 23.
A good summation of neo-Augustinian work appears in Robert Paul Mohan, *Philosophy of History; An Introduction* (New York: Bruce Publishing Company 1970), pp. 34-50, 143-161. But one should also consult the three standard historiographical surveys: Harry Elmer Barnes, *A History of Historical Writing*, second edition (New York: Dover Publications 1962); James Thompson Shotwell, *The History of History* (New York: Columbia University Press 1939); and James Westfall Thompson, *A History of Historical Writing* (New York: Macmillan Company 1942).
- 15 This paper was prepared for delivery to the Association of Western Adventist Historians, third annual meeting, Sunday, April 4, 1971, Riverside, California.

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I shall limit my remarks to three questions raised by Ross's paper: Schwantes' use — or more accurately abuse — of science in support of his theology, Schwantes' views on human freedom, and Ross's plea for the Christianization of history.

Schwantes' entire thesis hinges on a peculiar interpretation of the principle of uncertainty or indeterminacy, the fundamental principle of quantum mechanics formulated by Werner Heisenberg in 1927. This principle states that any measurement of the position and momentum of an atomic body must result in uncertainty equal at least to a very small quantity, Planck's constant divided by 2π (1.0×10^{-27} erg-sec). According to classical physics, it was possible to predict where a moving body would be found in the future if, and only if, one could obtain the necessary initial information: the position and momentum of the body at an earlier instant of time.

Heisenberg's principle denies that this information can be obtained in the subatomic world. Some individuals have inferred from this that future events can no longer be predicted exactly. But even if this inference is valid, future events are still predictable statistically. And these events are still determined by previous events; only our knowledge is limited so that we cannot say precisely what will occur. "The crucial point" of the uncertainty principle, wrote Heisenberg's mentor, Niels Bohr, "implies the *impossibility of any sharp separation between the behaviour of atomic objects and the interaction with the measuring instruments which serve to define the conditions under which the phenomena appears.*"¹ This being so, it is difficult to understand just what Schwantes means when he says that "the indeterminacy is not introduced by man in the course of experiment because of faulty apparatus, but it is objective in the sense that it is embedded in nature. It is there, whether observed by man or not" (p. 24). Schwantes, it seems, is missing the "crucial point" of the uncertainty principle.²

But more important than Schwantes' understanding of quantum mechanics is his use of it in defense of the concept of divine providence. The uncertainty principle, he argues, makes room for divine providence in two ways: directly in the physical world and by analogy in the historical world. Although he does not develop the idea at any length, Schwantes seems to

think that the demise of strict determinism in the natural world opens the door for an interfering God to manipulate physical events without seeming to do violence to natural law. And if natural events are no longer strictly determined, he says, then certainly historical events cannot be either. Here are his own words:

As indeterminacy seems to be inherent in the fundamental nature of things, the older view that the future of the physical universe is absolutely conditioned by the present is no longer tenable. If this is true of nature, it should be even more true of man who transcends nature by the power of thought. The view long held of strict determinism in history must be likewise replaced by the concept of the openness of history. At every turn of events history is confronted with innumerable alternatives. Which alternative will be taken is, from the secular point of view, purely a matter of chance. But from the point of view of faith, the alternative taken may be a matter of Providence [p. 25].

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Let us look carefully at this statement. First, Schwantes maintains that it is no longer tenable to say that "the future of the physical universe is absolutely conditioned by the present." This is not accurate. We may not be able to *predict* the future course of events in the subatomic world, but the future is nonetheless determined by the present. Only our knowledge is limited. Schwantes then suggests with an interesting non sequitur that if determinism is no longer true of nature, it should be even less true of man, "who transcends nature by the power of thought." But if mind really transcends the natural world, as he claims, why should we assume natural laws to be applicable to the mind at all? Finally, Schwantes proposes that God may "direct the course of events" in history by selecting one of several alternatives open to him. The so-called accidents of history thus become manifestations of divine providence — but only if the accidents are favorable to God's plan. All Schwantes is offering us is a new "God of the gaps."

The dangers inherent in such tactics should be obvious. It has never been safe to build one's theological beliefs upon the prevailing cosmology. Newton, we recall, based his belief in God's providence on the necessity of periodic repairs in the solar system to correct irregularities that would have resulted in the system's destruction if left unattended. When Laplace and Lagrange in the eighteenth century showed these irregularities to be self-correcting over long periods of time, the Divine Mechanic was no longer needed. Similar episodes have occurred time and time again, and there is no reason to believe that the present cosmology will prove more enduring than its predecessors.

Admittedly the uncertainty principle seems relatively secure today, but we should not forget that such pioneers in quantum physics as Planck, Ein-

stein, and Schrödinger all believed that determinism would eventually be restored to physics. Recent work in high-energy physics has raised questions that cannot be satisfactorily answered in terms of quantum mechanics. A new theory of the structure of matter is already needed. If we judge from past experience, there is every reason to believe that such a theory will represent a radical change in our thinking. No one today knows whether or not the uncertainty principle will survive the revolution. If it doesn't, then what will become of the Schwanteses and their students disillusioned by *The Biblical Meaning of History*?³

I fully share Ross's concern with Schwantes' "freedom device." Frankly, it makes little sense to me, theologically or historically. Schwantes never answers the question of man's freedom in a world controlled by God. He claims, "Providential forbearance allows man to build a profane order in opposition to the divine order" (p. 40), but never explains why God would resort to such drastic measures as a universal Flood to prevent men from opposing his will.

History, as Schwantes sees it, is the story of man's struggle for freedom. Divine providence guides the historical process in the direction of greater political freedom for the greatest number, while "demonic powers have always made this advance toward freedom as difficult as possible" (p. 164). Apparently the Christian historian needs only to label events correctly in order to solve the problem of causal explanation. Certainly no historian worth the name would resort to such a methodology.

On a strictly historical basis Schwantes' thesis bears little resemblance to historical reality. Take, for instance, the following statement: "Through His providence God acts toward preserving and expanding the areas of freedom. To reverse this trend would be to defeat His redemptive purpose for man whose response to the divine call must ever be a response in freedom" (p. 184). The implication is strong that God would not permit the trend toward greater freedom to be reversed. Yet every one of us can think of periods of greater and lesser freedom. Many maintain that communism is reversing the trend even today. Schwantes chooses to ignore this.

In conclusion, I must take strong exception to Ross's contention that the providential view of history revitalized by Schwantes, provides an answer "that should not be rejected unless and until a better way is found."⁴ I much prefer honest agnosticism to pious fraud. I can see no justification for historians to pretend to discern something in the historical record that simply is not discernible — namely, evidence of divine providence in history. Ross explains that "the misuse of the past by radical historians of the New Left

. . . construes and discredits it.”⁵ I agree. But the misuse of the past by over-zealous Christians will produce exactly the same effect. The fact that Christian solutions to the problem of history are currently satisfying should influence us no more than the fact that Marxist solutions are likewise satisfying to a sizable element of the world’s population.

I also reject Ross’s argument that in order to justify Christian education “our courses must be somehow Christian,” if by this he means Christian in content.⁶ Are we going to demand Christian calculus of the mathematics department, Christian French in the department of modern languages, and Christian thermodynamics from our physicists? Perhaps. But I do not see how the Christian element in such courses can be anything more than an extraneous sidelight. If history is going to be saved in Adventist schools, I suggest that we ask pertinent questions related to problems of current concern instead of providing ready-made answers like those offered by Schwantes. Rather than telling our students *the* meaning of history, why not let each of them discover his own meaning, whatever that might be?

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REFERENCES AND NOTES

- 1 Niels Bohr, *Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge* (New York: John Wiley and Sons 1958), pp. 39-40.
- 2 The uncertainty described by Heisenberg is directly related to the wave-particle nature of atomic bodies, but it is not a totally objective phenomenon, as Schwantes would have us believe. Although the wave-particle duality prevents the exact measurement of position and momentum, the uncertainty does not exist until an observer attempts to determine these quantities.
- 3 I strongly suspect that Schwantes’ own belief in human freedom and divine providence is only incidentally attached to modern physics, and that he would manage without difficulty to retain his convictions even if the uncertainty principle were to be discarded.
- 4 Gary M. Ross, The historiographical work of Siegfried J. Schwantes, *SPECTRUM* (Winter 1972), p. 50.
- 5 Ross, p. 50.
- 6 Ross, p. 52.

The stimulating papers by Ross and Numbers have dealt quite faithfully with Schwantes' book, and there is little I would add to their critiques. The implications for the classroom teacher, however, do raise questions with which I would like to deal at greater length than my colleagues did.

History is *choice*, the enlightened conscience the key. If choice is to mean anything, individuals, groups, and nations must perpetually exercise judgment in a range of meaningful opportunities. Otherwise, there is nothing but a cosmic puppet show. History is mildly didactic, occasionally entertaining, often rather discouraging. It considers the ways in which men and nations react to situations. To the extent that these reactions are fixed in advance by determinism, choice (and therefore personal responsibility) must be the central issue.

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If there were one concept a historian should learn from history, it would be that of multiple causation. This concept would not in any way exclude the divine from history; but it would recognize that complexity is the rule in any historical process, and that God works through rational or natural processes. Did God not so work, choice would be a terrifying matter of trying to cope with unpredictable and arbitrary forces. In our secularized age, the religious element is downgraded in explaining historical phenomena. To restore the religious element as a monocausal explanation, excluding the other factors in the interest of promoting "Adventist" history, would be an equal distortion. Pat, one-shot answers, even a "quest for liberty," when dealing with the complexities of human beings and their motives, must be suspect.

The Christian teacher will "know" by faith that behind it all is indeed the Divine Ruler; but no matter how earnestly he wishes to uphold the Good Cause, he will not force on others intuitions or insights beyond what the data will bear. He should restore for his students the imbalance in perspective consequent to this secularized age, suggesting the relationship of human history to the great drama of the controversy, but tentatively when he does not know, and humbly as he realizes his limitations in understanding the purposes of God. He will avoid caricature and exaggeration lest the disillusioned student may discard the entire concept later. This is substantially what professional historians were driven to do in the past century when repudiating the theologized assertions of their predecessors.

Schwantes on "Providence and Freedom" (chapter three), as I read him,

seems to insist on two extreme positions only — a biblical view that requires the rejection “of any [nonbiblical] causal determinism as undermining personal responsibility” and also the rejection of purposeless history, history “completely undetermined.” But then he goes on to claim divine supervision to be “as pervasive as the air,” though “admittedly discreet” so as not to thwart man’s freedom (p. 32). We are back to will-eneebing causal determinism again, divine this time. Unless some of the nuances of his reasoning escape me, Schwantes has said that the discreet (invisible) divine control leaves the historical actor the responsibility (and guilt feelings) for a choice that in reality he could not have made, inasmuch as he was under this “discreet” control.

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Nothing, says Schwantes, can just happen; there is no place for Christian fortuity. We are back to E. H. Carr’s “joker in the pack of cards” — the procedure by which, when puzzled, we simply foreclose argument by playing Providence as the joker.¹ For all the sweep of Schwantes’ rhetoric, we are no further in resolving the problem of human will in history than we were before he wrote his book.

Must we be forced, then, to choose between absolute determinism and no determinism? Can there be intermediate ground, including *real* chance? No, says Schwantes. “Chance” is not a Christian option (pp. 33, 35).

Is there a place in our sinful society and damaged natural environment for man to be affected by what would “naturally” just happen, without specific intervention? The rain falls on the just and the unjust; the defective tower at Siloam kills impartially those passing beneath it, regardless of their virtue. Under the terms by which the great controversy is fought, obviously divine interposition must be frequently withheld. In a sin-cursed world good things happen to bad people and vice versa — nature takes its course. How much better institutional affairs would go (and closed doors be opened) if Schwantes were correct that there is no such thing as chance!

God appears to leave much to our decisions, deplorable as many of them prove to be. If we believe in free will, what alternative do we have? The question of determinism may be in the same category as the nature of the Trinity, inexplicable in our present knowledge. It may be wisdom to leave such matters for the New Earth and meanwhile exercise one’s capacity to live with ambiguity. Yet the question of human will — freedom of choice, and attendant responsibility — *is* basic to salvation. If it *must* be assumed that Providence so closely guides that the outcome of each war, election, or vote in a committee is determined, then freedom and responsibility for human beings become myth.

However, I do support Ross's view that Schwantes should be commended for trying this discouraging task. History and social studies majors and minors at Pacific Union College are required to take a seminar that is concerned with problems of causation. Whatever the faults of the book in question, it is indeed the best we have, and it is required as one of the texts for the course. In the class discussions, however, the book is not treated as though it were verbally inspired. We will continue to use it, *faute de mieux*, while waiting for someone around the circle to come up with a better one.

To consider further the problems of teaching, I find myself sharing Numbers' distrust of "Christian" history classes. We have an almost irresistible urge to work out details beyond the data. Tens of thousands of unread pages (written by those who do so) gather dust in libraries. (Historians who persist in this kind of adventurism cease therewith to be historians, whatever else they may become.) In the sense that both Numbers and I understand Ross's appeal for "sufficiently unique, i.e., Christian" history, "Christian" history could be to history as astrology is to astronomy.

The Adventist historian suffers from an identity problem. As a professional, he likes to see himself as a social scientist (or committed to a scientific method, in any case). The Adventist constituency tends to see him functioning as a sort of confidential secretary to Prophecy, explaining the past and foretelling the future. (Which of us has not been asked to endorse a twenty-page document clarifying the role of Henry VIII, the atom bomb, and the future movements of the Soviet Mediterranean fleet — all from the Old Testament prophets?) Not willing to be either quantified or like Nostradamus, the history teacher may feel painted into a corner.²

The Adventist history teacher feels that there is indeed a providential element in history, but his troubles come when he tries to demonstrate. How many "providences" per class period would be necessary to qualify him as a providentialist historian in good standing? He is on fairly safe ground discussing Martin Luther as a demonstration of Providence in history. But should he also try to fit in the election of Warren G. Harding, the fall of Nikita Krushchev, and the eleven battles on the Isonzo? What if, in addition to Martin Luther, he tries to work in Martin Luther King? Those who attempt this kind of history teaching have more courage than perspicacity.

Most Adventist teachers have made their own adjustment to these problems, but some, in vexation over commonly used but rarely examined clichés, go to the other extreme and simply ignore the whole question of divine intervention.

Ross almost seems to suggest two kinds of history — one presumably a

parochial variety for the Adventist classroom to justify charging tuition in a church-related college, the other for “outsiders.” Assuredly when we teach or write for those not of our communion, we have an obligation to distinguish carefully between theological supposition (correct or incorrect but unprovable) and “history” in the professional sense. I would go further. To be honest, in an Adventist classroom as well, one should always make it quite clear what he is doing and should caution: “Here I leave history and enter speculation and intuition — which I personally think reasonable explanation of our problem, in the light of the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen White, but which is not verifiable historical fact.” Some would see such a teacher as recreant to his responsibilities. He should pronounce a prophetic what’s-what for any historical situation, and that should be that! He should impose answers, not ask questions. That would be, however, the worst of cop-outs. In my mind, that type of teaching tosses history out quite blithely and eliminates any need for investigation or analysis.

Perhaps I do not sufficiently share Ross’s foreboding about the disappearance of history as a teaching field. Having had in my time to teach political science, geography, and sociology, I am inclined to think history will adjust to the interdisciplinary pressures and possibly even be the better for it. In any case, it hardly seems that the discipline would gain from an attempt to “denominationalize” it by tacking on “theological predilections.”³

The Christian teacher should not employ shaky material that may lead to credibility gaps later. As Gary Land has so well said: “Christianity is a historical religion, basing its evidence to a large degree on historical events. It offers an interpretation of human nature and a morality by which to judge human actions. It denies the idea of progress, stating instead that man’s decline will be ended only by Christ’s Second Coming. In this light, it seems, the Christian historian can have a unique perspective unavailable to the nonchristian.”⁴

There is no necessity for “Christian” physics, Spanish, or mathematics. There *is* a difference between the Christian and nonchristian educational institution, but the difference is not necessarily, even primarily, in some special body of indoctrination. To argue that it is would be comparable to the argument that only in compulsory worship or religion classes can the Christian campus be distinguished from its secular competitor. If this be so, we might as well fold up the church college at once. The structured, indoctrinating, formal approaches may confirm some inert students in their previous pattern, but these approaches will have less effect when the student leaves and “faces life.”

The real difference is in the influence of and association with teachers *and* with fellow students in class and out of class, in all the campus situations. Like all his colleagues, the Christian history teacher has a witness and an influence in class, but far more outside the class — his commitment, his life-style, the concerns he has, and the questions he asks. The student who does not take advantage of his opportunity to circulate on the relatively small Christian college campus has missed much of what, presumably, he came for.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

- 1 Edward Hallett Carr, *What Is History?* (New York: Vintage 1961), p. 95.
- 2 Some of the problems of working within set presuppositions can be illustrated by examining the ups, downs, and convolutions of Soviet historiography in the past half century. This is not to suggest any similarity either in degree of surveillance or in essential truth, but only that a discipline which has its own standards of performance but must also operate with some externally imposed assumptions, tends to suffer a certain schizophrenia.
- 3 Gary Land, History from an Adventist perspective, *SPECTRUM* (Summer 1970), p. 83.
- 4 Land, p. 83.

An Evaluation of the Impact of Oriental Philosophy on Western Culture

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GEORGE R. JENSON

Oriental philosophy, in the mind of Western man, belongs to the Orient — bounded and contained by oceans and towering Himalayan Mountains, with the less objectionable but still heretical Islamic world lying as a buffer zone between East and West.

A consideration of Oriental philosophy from such a viewpoint is like trying to reverse a giant river in its course. To Western man, the impact of Oriental philosophy on Western culture is not what matters — but rather the impact of the Western way on the Orient. The sojourns of the Saint Thomases, the Nestorians, the Jesuits, the colonists, the capitalists, the military expansionists, the Moghuls, the Moslems, the Protestants, the Roman Catholics, the adventurers, and the Adventists within the borders of the Orient have captivated the imagination of Western man. He has flourished and cultivated a psyche that designates Western man and his culture as superior, bearing the impress and divine sanction of Jehovah God or Allah. Possibly nothing demonstrates this more clearly than the strenuous efforts of the West through commerce, religion, and militarism to achieve and maintain superiority and dominance over Asia.

Suddenly, in this decade of the twentieth century after Christ, Western culture is increasingly aware of the presence in its midst of myriads of Oriental ideas, symbols, and paraphernalia — some of which existed in the Orient twenty centuries before the birth of Christ. Like a mythological sea serpent that crawls up out of its ocean home to terrorize the Earth creatures, Oriental philosophy and culture have traversed the watery barriers of the Earth and have gained in Western lands a heterogeneous complex of ad-

herents who cherish an abhorrence of the Christian way of life, on the one hand, and, on the other, a fascination for a "new" socioreligious frame of reference. "New" symbolism, "new" litanies, "new" values, and a "way of life" almost wholly incongruous with the Western Judeo-Christian ethic have materialized right in the midst of "civilized," Christianized, capitalistic society! For some observers, an invasion of the Western cultural stronghold has occurred. More seasoned observers sense, rather, the popularizing of certain Oriental cults and ideologies which have been present in isolated pockets of the American scene for decades.

Social intercourse between East and West has not been a one-way association at all. It may be true that the forthright efforts to convert the Orient to Christianity find little parallel in the efforts of the Oriental philosophies to "evangelize" the West for Hinduism and the other Oriental philosophies. But the reason stems from the very nature of the epistemology of the Oriental philosophies and their inherent restraints that safeguard their particular "knowledge" from the uninitiated. We have had a confrontation, in fact, of the secrecy and mysticism of the Oriental philosophies with the "go-ye-into-all-the-world" complex of Christianity — from the days of William Carey until the present.

The Orient has retained its stoic, indifferent silence for centuries — apparently heedless of Western presuppositions and imperatives. Western culture is the Johnny-come-lately on the Oriental scene. For thousands of years the Indian subcontinent has been the scene of invasion after invasion by hostile civilizations and cultures. Oriental philosophies have experienced Mongolian intrusions, Islamic penetration and enslavement, British raj, and other forceful efforts to subdue and obliterate them. All the while, they have continued their existence without central authority or direction, financial experts, or centrally administered priestcraft. That these philosophies continue in today's highly scientific and pragmatic era is an enigma.

Although there has been little effort by the Oriental philosophies to penetrate the West in any organized way that could parallel the expansion of Islam in the seventh and eighth centuries or the expansion of Christianity westward throughout Europe, Western culture has not emerged altogether unscathed from its intrusion into Oriental society. Whether by design or not, for centuries the sophistries and wisdom of the East have gripped the imagination and intellect of some Western intellectuals. To seek to understand or evaluate the extent of infiltration is indeed an imperative to one who desires to find perspective in relation to the current rash of interest in Oriental phenomena in America and the rest of Western culture.

To evaluate the present impact of Oriental philosophy, one must view it against a historical backdrop of ancient origins of Indian thought and also of the subsequent evolvement of the various systems of Indian philosophy which, by this twentieth century, now form as complex a pattern as the most ornate brocade. At the same time, one must be aware that (a) orthodox Hindus are reticent to disclose the contents of their religious and philosophical systems, and that (b) the compromised teachings of neo-Hinduism of the last century have effected a hybrid strain of thought that is totally unacceptable to the orthodox but that tends to cater to the mentality of the West. Hence, the impact of Oriental philosophy on Western culture tends to pertain to certain historical trends or philosophical movements.

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Historically, many aspects of Oriental philosophy have enriched other civilizations. Students of ancient Mediterranean cultures know that unquestionably there was social and religious intercourse between those cultures and ancient India. Although present knowledge is sketchy, evidence of ancient Greek, Phoenician, Roman, Persian, and other foreign visitors has been unearthed in the Indian subcontinent. Coins, seals, pottery, paleolithic implements (demonstrating remarkable similarity to those found in south-east Europe, Turkey, and the land area west of the subcontinent of India), and other objects show the interrelationship of these nations.

Western society has been schooled to believe that philosophy began with the Greeks. This is an idea that many Indians fail to appreciate when they note the similarities between certain concepts of Grecian thought and those expressed earlier in ancient Sanskrit writings. The arguments are inconclusive, and the conclusions may still be held in suspension; but at least it is not unfair to state that Indian thought and other aspects of Indian life were exported Westward early.

Some Indians feel that there is a link between certain religious ideas that were developed and practiced in post-Christian times in the West and those that had their origins in the East. Monasticism (for both men and women) is frequently cited as having had its origin in the East. Similarities are cited in the sayings of Jesus compared with the sayings attributed to Gautama Buddha and with the still more ancient Sanskrit *sutras* (sayings). It may be impossible at this time to ascertain with any degree of accuracy just where a particular practice, saying, or religious discipline arose; but at least many evidences of interrelationship predate the Christian era.

Students of linguistics note an unmistakable relationship between ancient

Greek and Sanskrit as well as between other Indo-European languages. Some feel that Sanskrit is one of the earliest languages and has contributed largely to modern tongues. Certainly language has been the recipient of many words from that source — *bungalow*, *bandook*, *bund*, to cite a few of the literally hundreds of English words with their derivation in Sanskrit or Hindi.

Possibly even more effective in their influence have been such religious terms as *karma*, *maya*, *brahman*, and *samsara*, for which we have the Greek equivalent of metempsychosis, or rebirth. Whatever the relationship has been, Sanskrit is primarily a vehicle of religious thought and ritual. Hence, in any association with it, the other culture concerned was certain to be exposed to and probably impregnated with the religious concepts of which Sanskrit was the vehicle of expression. In fact, careful perusal may demonstrate that Sanskrit has contributed to many aspects of contemporary Western life. Although in literature, poetry, art, architecture, and other areas of achievement, a certain contribution has been made, still it is clear, when the evidence has been surveyed, that the signal contribution of Oriental philosophy to Western culture has been in religious and philosophical spheres. Thus it has always been.

In the empirical and scientific fields, especially, the East has failed to maintain pace with Western civilization. Oriental culture has always spurned emphasis on the physical pleasures or bodily comforts. The body is likened in Hindu scriptures to the skin of a snake, which is shed when the time has come, or to an overripe cucumber, which drops to the ground at the appointed time. Only in recent decades has much emphasis been given by a small portion of the Indian population to manufacturing and other aspects of industry. The impact of Oriental philosophy on Western culture, then, is in matters pertaining to the "unembodied self." This is the consideration of prime importance in all of the systems of Oriental thought.

These religious-philosophical concepts and the physical paraphernalia associated with them have captured the attention of Western youth in particular. Possibly this could be expressed as a fascination with anticulture prompted by disillusion with the pragmatism, commercialism, and militarism that have preoccupied the minds of so many.

In terms of American history, one may cite the visits of Swami Vivekananda and other Asian Orientalists a century ago. They popularized certain metaphysical concepts among the intellectuals at Harvard, New York, Chicago, and other centers of America. Scores of other Eastern visitors have followed, and many societies have been established to promulgate the ideals

and concepts of the Orient: the Theosophical Society, Divine Enlightenment Society, Self-realization Society, Christian Science, and Yoga centers are all across the nation. Zen and other Buddhist centers have gained a large and influential following in many quarters of America in recent times.

Apart from the visits to this country by Indian gurus, many other factors have contributed to the popularizing of Oriental philosophy in the West. One cannot minimize the effect of the overseas involvement of the armed forces during the first and second world wars and more particularly during the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. Literally hundreds of thousands of United States servicemen have had immediate access to the acquaintance with these philosophies and the way of life they represent. Dissatisfaction with their own culture and mores — a questioning of the whole Judeo-Christian ethic — has led many to search freely into the mysteries and mysticism of the East. Dissemination of Oriental literature by popular book publishers has increased greatly. Countless volumes of Oriental wisdom and philosophy have been widely distributed, and the universities have been quick to sense the popularity of these. There has been a marked increase in university course offerings related to Indological subjects and allied courses: extrasensory perception, parapsychology, mysticism, Yoga, and esoteric thought. (My personal observation is that many popular bookstores carry more works on these subjects than they do on biblical and Christian thought.)

Manner of dress, hair grooming, posture and breathing, diet, vegetarianism, exercise, meditation, burning of incense, wearing of amulets, beads, and other Eastern religious paraphernalia, reciting of mantrams or prayers, and use of prayer wheels have been adopted by countless Westerners. As a result, social practices, marriage, reading, and sexual concepts have been noticeably altered for many through exposure to and assimilation of Oriental thought.

Pornographic ideas borrowed directly from Indian sculpture, the *Kama Sutra of Vatsyayana*, and other ancient sex treatises, which in previous generations would have been barred from society, are freely distributed and read. The resulting breakdown of the traditional Protestant ethic of social behavior and its replacement with a new situation ethic and with permissiveness have been greatly influenced by the Oriental concept of life. One ought not to suppose that this is the only factor involved or even to suggest that situation ethics necessarily developed out of Oriental philosophy. But the casual, permissive Oriental social ethic seems to have been the very thing to satisfy the void created in the lives of many who have rejected the Judeo-Christian ethic.

II

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The impact of Oriental philosophy on Western culture seems to fall into two general categories. *First*, there are those more or less functional aspects that relate to the ritual or physical conduct of the Oriental way of life. These things have symbolic and mystical value arbitrarily assigned to them by those who were under the more binding claims of the philosophical and religious presuppositions of the culture concerned. *Second*, there is the thought content which undergirds the more physical manifestations of the systems of the culture. The present fad in which youth and others are obsessed with ritual and symbolic aspects (incense, chanting, meditating, prayer beads, mystical symbols) will doubtless be replaced by new fads stemming from Africa, Hawaii, or cowboyland! But the claim of the metaphysical and epistemological concepts of Oriental philosophy on hundreds of thousands of lives will not soon be displaced.

By its very nature, the current movement, the product of brilliant minds, both Oriental and Western, confronts Christian thought with Oriental philosophy. For some, this appears to be a conflict dating centuries back. For others, the confrontation is a subtle one in which both mentalities seek to find common ground, to effect a synthesis of the best of the two cultures. Hence, we have various degrees of orthodoxy on either side, with attempts at synthesis of thought in the middle. Unquestionably, the efforts of those individuals who seek to find common ground between the two systems have exerted a profound effect on Western culture.

As it is practiced in Oriental lands, Oriental orthodoxy is possibly too gross to find much sympathetic response in Western culture. But the efforts of the Theosophists, the Self-realization centers, the Yoga ashrams, the Indo-American Friendship centers, and most particularly the Western-oriented and Western-educated Oriental philosophers have succeeded in presenting Oriental thought in a way that has had an ever-widening appeal to a segment of Western culture, including a liberal sprinkling of intellectuals and sophisticates. Surendranath Dasgupta, Radhakrishnan, Vivekananda, and scores of others have successfully published their views to a receptive Western audience. Add to this the impact of the work of Western Indologists such as Lanman,¹ and Müller,² and scores of English, German, Russian, French, Dutch, American, and other philosophers — and the effort to familiarize the Western world with Oriental wisdom is impressive.

To state the extent of the impact of Oriental thought on Western culture in terms of statistical information would probably be impossible. It is sufficient to say here that the statistics would undoubtedly be far greater than

the casual observer might suspect, for the weaving of Oriental thought into the fabric of Western culture is now a fact that may not be ignored. Someone has said that three words may express the nature of at least a portion of this infiltration: *exotic*, *erotic*, and *esoteric*. One has only to note the keen interest, for instance, in *vegetarianism*, *respect for life*, *passive resistance*, and many other key expressions that have become common in Western culture to realize that indeed there has been more than a casual interest in these things. The interest in the esoteric may have had the most far-reaching consequences to Western culture.

Christian Orientalists cannot help noting the similarity between certain neosupernaturalist or existentialist ideas and those in Oriental teaching for centuries. It may be presumptive to attribute these ideas to Oriental origin; and yet, there is undeniable evidence that at least some of those concepts were borrowed directly from Oriental sources. In fact, to many students it is clear that certain of those who have given shape to mid-nineteenth-century and twentieth-century Protestant religious thought, and also to many political and social ideologies, derived inspiration from Oriental philosophy in varying degrees. Schopenhauer testified that he read the Upanishads for his morning devotions as others did the New Testament. Nietzsche, Marx, Beethoven, Hitler, Stalin, Einstein, J. Huxley, Menuhin, and numerous prominent world citizens drew from Oriental philosophy for some of their ideas. To some extent, it can be shown that certain leading theologians of the neosupernaturalist movement have derived their ideas from Oriental philosophy.

The burden of this discussion is not to cite the historical or other sources to demonstrate this historical involvement, but rather to cite briefly some of the theological and philosophical concepts that have emerged in Western society which seem incongruous with the teachings of Holy Scripture or historical Protestant theological positions. This change in the theological posture in the Protestant world, simultaneously with the popularizing of certain Oriental philosophical concepts in areas ordinarily thought of as being the Protestant stronghold, is more than coincidental.

One cannot help noting the decline of orthodox Protestant-evangelical theological positions in mid-nineteenth century and the rise of scientific, social, economic, and political ideologies. It is not suggested here that these necessarily grew from the seedbed of Oriental philosophy, but rather that some subsequent scientists, some subsequent social and economic reformers, and some subsequent politicians could fill the void left by the rejection of presuppositions of biblical theology by substituting concepts found in the

framework of Oriental philosophy: the idea of an impersonal force having control of the universe, the Atman-Brahman concept of Hinduism (an absolute monism more palatable to many than the monotheism of the Christian Bible, since the idea releases man from the basic ideas associated with the biblical concept of a personal God). Salvation, repentance for sin, individual accountability before God, judgment, and other biblical ideas are thus circumnavigated and ultimately rejected as pointless.

The imagination of man is still kindled by the immensity of space and the universe. The suggestion that there is a "supreme force," or "holy ground," or call it what you may, in direct but impersonal control of everything, is exciting. Add to this the natural conclusion that follows in an absolute monism — i.e., that the individual self is in fact to be identified with the Supreme or Ultimate Self — and many persons are captivated. There is no sin or evil or good or pleasure in such a concept. Everything is the One, and whatever happens is the manifestation of the One or its activity.

The idea that logically follows is that of determinism. For if everything is the one impersonal Supreme One, then everything which happens is its activity and is determined not by the individual's personal preference but simply by the occurrence of the manifest activity of the one Supreme Self. Where, then, if this Supreme Self is without characteristics or personality, is there room for individual identity or individual responsibility? How can the individual self have characteristics or attributes if the Supreme Self, with which the individual self is identified, has none? Thus there is a de-personalizing of deity and a dehumanizing of humanity.

What then is real? Where does it all lead? Here is where the literature of Oriental philosophy comes forth with its esoteric concepts. Karma, maya, and reincarnation seem the logical conclusions to reach in these instances. Immortality of the individual self is assured because of the identifying of the individual self with the Supreme Self, who, while lacking characteristics, IS — and is thus immortal. Because the Supreme Self is immortal, the individual self is immortal.

III

Summarizing, then, I may say that monism, determinism, self-realization, immortality of the self, and reincarnation are basic components of ancient Oriental philosophy that seem to be pleasing and acceptable in contemporary Western ideas. Today Christianity finds itself, on its own preserve, enmeshed in these alien considerations and phenomena. Hence Christianity can no longer ignore their presence.

Tragically, it may be acknowledged that a part of the Christian community not only doesn't ignore the presence of these ideas but seems to seek a theological fraternization with them. Having abandoned the traditional Scripture-based concepts of man and God, millions of evangelical and Protestant Christians are fascinated with and enraptured by the Eastern ideas pertaining to human destiny. That old lie first told in Eden, "Ye shall not surely die," is still exciting. The Oriental concepts of impersonal determinism, karma, and reincarnation possibly contain the most highly developed expression of these yearnings of the human heart.

The supernatural manifestations which for centuries have been part of the Oriental way of life, while not common, seem just enough to reinforce these views, and millions are confronted with occurrences for which their experience and knowledge offer no satisfactory explanation. Seventh-day Adventists must sense in the confrontation of primitive Christianity with Oriental philosophy in this generation another episode in the controversy in which mankind has been embroiled since the fall of Adam. Any effort at synthesis of these two concepts, in fact, results in the demise of one or the other. Primitive Christianity — the teachings of the Holy Scriptures — remains as unique today when compared with certain basic tenets of Oriental philosophy as did the voice of God compared with the suggestions of the serpent in biblical Eden.

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REVIEWS

Valid Questions?

DONALD R. McADAMS

WHY I LEFT THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

By Paul K. Freiwirth

New York: Vantage Press 1970 120 pp \$3.50

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Paul K. Freiwirth — a professor of history at Pembroke State University, Pembroke, North Carolina, and the holder of a bachelor of theology degree from Atlantic Union College (1947), a master of arts from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary (1958), and a doctor of philosophy (in modern history) from the University of Maryland (1961) — states in the preface of this small book that he had to write it because his “transiting Mars entered the 9th House and formed a conjunction with Neptune.”

Such a statement may put off many Adventist readers. Adventists take seriously the criticisms of opponents, and feel especially uncomfortable when an ex-Adventist, writing out of “love and sympathy for those who walk in the shadows,” claims to have found the light. Such attacks, however, are expected from the rationalist, the agnostic, or perhaps the member of another Protestant body. When an Adventist academic leaves the church for the charms of yoga, astrology, and graphology, one is tempted to put aside his book as the work of a crackpot who has lost all reason. To do this would be a mistake. Few readers of *SPECTRUM* will be tempted to follow in Freiwirth’s path, or even acknowledge any validity in his new faith. Yet the blocks he stumbled over may help identify and perhaps remove some of the less attractive features of Adventist teachings and practice.

Austrian by birth, and an orphan, Freiwirth was a high school student living with an uncle in New York when he enrolled in the Voice of Prophecy Bible correspondence course and subsequently joined the Seventh-day Adventist church. From there he followed the normal pattern of upward mobility common to new Adventists. He attended Atlantic Union College from January 1944 to June 1947. He was a hardworking student who labored long hours in the bindery, sold Adventist books in the summer, and lived on practically nothing. After his graduation, Freiwirth worked for five unhappy years in New York as a ministerial intern. In 1952 the conference sent him to Takoma Park, D. C., to obtain a master’s degree. Freiwirth’s interpretation of this move was that he was being fired because of his lack of productivity and was being eased into some other line of church employment.

After his year at the seminary, for five years Freiwirth worked in the editorial department of the Southern Publishing Association in Nashville, Tennessee, with particular responsibility for *These Times*. Apparently these were happy years: the job gave opportunity to read and, except for subscription drives, did not demand the

high-pressure tactics required of a successful "soul-winner." Also, Freiwirth acquired a wife. A desire for further graduate study led the Freiwirths back to Takoma Park. Here Paul studied a while for a bachelor of divinity degree before transferring to a PH.D program at the University of Maryland. By now he was having serious doubts about Adventism and was dabbling in the occult, but it was not until another decade and several jobs "outside" that he formally left the church.

Freiwirth's reasons for leaving come under three headings: disillusionment in the face of unethical practices by individuals and institutions; disenchantment with inconsistent doctrines; and the lure of the occult. Among the practices that bothered Freiwirth the most were meat-eating and coffee-drinking by some church workers (including a pastor), the color line in the South, the European junkets of editors in the line of duty, the false pretenses under which some Ingathering money was collected, the constant pressure on members and pastors for money and "souls," the deceit used to keep prospective members from discovering what church the evangelists represented, the seeming fact that a well-known conversion story (*The Marked Bible*) is fictional, and the fact (which probably few will dispute) that at the Washington Sanitarium and Hospital the doctors prescribed drugs and one dietitian was obese.

One may doubt the judgment of an intelligent and educated man who forsakes a church because some of its members or even leaders do not live up to the high standards professed. Although the church has never claimed perfection, Freiwirth usefully reminds Adventists of the influence of behavior and the importance of being scrupulously honest and Christian in all actions.

Freiwirth's theological problems are more difficult to summarize and less easy to dismiss. Most of them are a consequence of the rigid expectations he brought to Adventism. Evidently he expected to find complete truth nicely packaged and uniformly accepted. When he discovered that Adventist ministers and teachers disagreed on the meaning of Armageddon, or sometimes got caught on the wrong side of a prophecy (his two examples are on Israel and Japan, dead issues today), it disturbed him greatly. He had been taught to believe that only 6,000 years had elapsed since Creation, and then he was confronted with the evidence for an old Earth. Also he discovered what to him were real contradictions in some Adventist interpretations of the time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. He may be correct in concluding that on some points the interpretations are not significantly more plausible than others. More than occasionally he catches Adventist writers making rather poor use of proof texts, and of course he rejects the inspiration of Ellen G. White as evidence in support of traditional Adventist interpretations.

Freiwirth has his reasons for denying the inspiration of Mrs. White, but none of them seem substantial. (Frequently he has followed the D. M. Canright line of thought.) He charges her with plagiarism and claims to find considerable lack of agreement of *The Great Controversy* with modern historical scholarship. These objections are not surprising for one who had been led to believe that Mrs. White was infallible. But it is hard to understand why anyone would reject the inspiration of Mrs. White because she failed to expose the evils of undistilled water or because her handwriting showed unfavorable characteristics to a graphologist.

Freiwirth's doubts about Adventists, it seems clear, were being fueled by the appeal of the occult. "The answer" Freiwirth found to fill the need for absolute certainty

came through health fanaticism (no cooked foods, no drugs, no tap water, and no sex — it debilitates the brain), astrology, and a belief in reincarnation. To be fair, one should not ridicule the beliefs of others, no matter how absurd these beliefs might seem — yet it is hard to take too seriously the criticisms of one who has rejected Adventism for fanaticism and superstition. Nevertheless, Freiirth has raised some questions that merit consideration. Sometimes Adventist preachers and writers have claimed truth only for Adventists but error for others. Sometimes Adventists have credited Mrs. White with an infallibility she never claimed. And too often the practices of Adventists have not squared with the behavior one has a right to expect from God's remnant people, and have placed in the path stumbling blocks that weaker brothers have fallen over.

The book is not put together with the care one would expect from a scholar. Many claims are made without proper documentation; people and books are alluded to without clear identification; one note is missing; and there is no index. The book has the appearance of a memoir prepared without access to other necessary books or written records. The publishers, a vanity press, must bear some of the responsibility for not insisting on recognized standards of scholarship.

The Not-So-Brave World

LEONARD N. HARE

FUTURE SHOCK

By Alvin Toffler

New York: Random House 1970 505 pp \$8.95

Some contemporary futurists foresee a dismal tomorrow in which man will be overwhelmed by the giant institutions he has helped to create. Many look for Big Business, in its greed for larger profits, to push for increasing uniformity and standardization though it cost man his final measure of individual expression. Others anticipate that Big Government, with its insatiable lust for power, will foreclose on the remnants of personal freedom as it confines its subjects within the straightjacket of conformity.

Toffler does not agree. The message of *Future Shock* is that the Super-Industrialized Age we are now entering will be an era of diversity, innovation, and choice such as has never before been experienced. If the number of options open to individuals can be used as an index of freedom, then the people of the Super-Industrialized State will constitute the freest society the planet has ever supported!

The selection of an automobile will serve to illustrate the new freedom. There was a time when a person wishing to purchase a car would buy a Model T Ford. It came in one color — black. Today there are many manufacturers of automobiles. Each

manufacturer offers several basic "lines." Each line is available in several models. Several engine sizes are available for each model, and there are transmission options, power options, choices of body color, interior design selection, and countless more options. The total number of possible combinations soars to 25 million! Man of the Super-Industrial Era must choose not only his car, but his occupation, his friends, his hobbies, and his religion. In each category there has been a proliferation of options comparable to that of the automobile.

So inundated has modern man become with choice, so confused with conflicting value claims, and so bemused with the diversity of life styles available that he is frequently reduced to a state of blithering ineptitude. Indeed, not only the number of choices man is expected to make but the accelerating rate at which decisions must be made is rapidly approaching the upper limits of the adaptive capacity of his body and his mind. Toffler cites signs of breakdown resulting from environmental over-stimulation: the spreading use of drugs; the rise of mysticism; increasing vandalism, un-directed violence, and nihilism; and sick apathy.

It is imperative that strategies for survival be sought out. Toffler believes The Future is not to be avoided by turning back to The Past or by living only in The Present. The Future is to be ushered in — but on our own terms. Several tactics are available to ensure a "soft landing."

1. Coping with The Future can be achieved at the individual level by deliberately reducing the number of inputs that impinge on us at any one time. The concept involves "gradualism" and "half-way houses" for those who have fallen behind, and for those unable to adapt "enclaves of the past."

2. Education will provide the main thrust in preparing man to meet his Future. Toffler argues that our present educational system is a product of the Industrial Age and that our schools are modeled after factories. The raw material (the student) enters the factory (the school), where it is processed by the workers (the teachers). The finished product (the graduate) goes forth to the world to satisfy consumer needs and to help stimulate new markets. The Industrial Age was well served by the school it created, but Toffler argues that the intrusion of the Super-Industrial Age has rendered the schools obsolete. A new organization of education modeled on Super-Industrialism will prepare man for things to come.

3. A third strategy involves deliberate manipulation of the rate of technological change to keep change within the physiological and psychological limits of man.

When the reader reaches this point he might wonder whether the temptation to manipulate human beings rather than the rate of technological change might not prove irresistible to the "World Leaders" or to "Big Brother." It would probably be easier and more effective and would surely plunge us headlong into Huxley's *Brave New World* with its conditioned contentment, engineered behavior, and programed euphoria — a world where huge hatcheries decant their daily quotas of identical Epsilons (with receding chins) predestined to work opposite other Epsilons (with protruding chins) in some factory at some time in The Future.

Even if the manipulators can successfully resist the temptation to tamper with the psyche rather than the economy, there is certain to be intense pressure from a source Toffler barely mentions, and that is the population. Overpopulation has rightly been

described as a "trap" and a "bomb." We may be approaching the upper limits of the *food production* curve now, although the upper limit of *people production* is nowhere in sight. Shortages are certain to result. Shortages will necessitate controls, and rigid controls will not produce the kind of world Toffler envisions.

One who jumps off the Empire State Building on a foggy day may be exhilarated by his acceleration due to gravity. He may report his progress in glowing terms as he passes the fiftieth floor, and he may speculate on how rapidly he will be moving in ten minutes' time as he hurtles past the twenty-fifth floor. But there below the fog is the ground that will thwart his progress and nullify his speculations.

LETTERS

Harold Clark's reply to "The Whole Truth" (Summer 1971 *SPECTRUM*) gives further support to Donald Hall's suggestion that writers on important and potentially controversial subjects in church journals be given formal and informal criticism of their ideas by qualified persons.

In discussing Hall's second point, dealing with soft-sediment slumping of the Grand Canyon walls, Clark purports to offer evidence from field geology and related activities; but in reality his evidence deals with other disciplines (physics and chemistry) and is faulty. Apparently the astrophysicist, Hall, understands the physical factors involved in sediment compaction better than the field geologist, Clark.

Water removal from soft, newly deposited clays (shales) on the scale of a geological formation is a very slow process because of the fine size of clay particles. Furthermore, the drying and hardening of the newly exposed canyon walls, if it would actually occur, would be confined to a relatively short distance from the exposed surface. On the scale of the Grand Canyon, this effect would be insignificant in modifying the bulk resistance of the surrounding sediment to deformation and flow.

The general supposition that rapidly deposited water-laid sediments harden slowly is well supported by physical and chemical reasoning and geological evidence. For an example of a sediment-like material that hardens quickly, Clark uses an unnatural product, cement, which is produced by heating limestone and shale to about 2700° F. It consists mainly of calcium silicates and aluminates that are unstable in water and hydrate, and therefore cause setting quickly. Clearly, such an example would not occur in a natural, water-laid sediment; nor, to my knowledge, has it ever been found. Unfortunately, this is probably the best example Clark can find to illustrate his thesis.

A writer discussing the geology of the Grand Canyon should consider the structure of the surrounding rocks. Field evidence indicates that these rocks have been up-warped, folded, and faulted. The differential vertical displacement of the Kaibab limestone, which forms the rim of a large part of the canyon, is about 6,500 feet in northern Arizona. The steep Kaibab monocline just north of the canyon accounts for 3,000 feet of this. The folding and faulting indicates that the strata eroded by the

canyon were fairly competent and hard before significant canyon erosion occurred, because these movements preceded and initiated canyon downcutting and controlled the actual pattern of erosion to some extent. See Edwin D. McKee and others, *Evolution of the Colorado River in Arizona* (Flagstaff: Museum of Northern Arizona 1967), as an entry to geological literature on the Grand Canyon.

Much of the subject matter of physical geology is little more than applied physics and chemistry. There are many well-qualified Adventist physicists and chemists who by their criticism of articles could help eliminate errors in reasoning found in apologetic literature.

ROSS BARNES
La Jolla, California

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Polygamy is an issue charged with pathos and sentimentality. One envisions the stern white missionary, book in hand, condemning the mores of the happy, innocent, naked native and his bevy of beauties and their offspring. Sunshine turns to storm as the harried native convert is forced to drive his lovely extras out into a world of shameful sin and suffering, and the little ones have no one to call daddy.

Cruelness in this world does not come from the gospel of Jesus Christ nor from the ministers of the gospel in foreign lands. Cruelness comes from the deceptive hand of Satan and his perversion of all that was meant to be beautiful. I respectfully suggest that one of the tragic problems met in mission work is not the [church] attitude toward polygamy — it is polygamy!

I have lived many years in societies where polygamy is accepted, both in Africa and in the Bible lands of the Middle East. Christianity had been in these areas long before I had. From the poor farmer who lived behind the Seventh-day Adventist compound with his two wives, to the Fon of Bafut with his 400 wives, all the polygamists I have been acquainted with knew of the Christian standards of marriage. Many polygamists were Christians, and several told me that their own fathers had advised them against taking more than one wife. But as the man's prosperity increased and his eye wandered over the form of a lovely unwed lass, soon he had a second wife, or more. All these men assured me that they were advising their sons against the practice. Whether in the structured form under native custom or in the free and easy way under American custom, lust and adultery are the same.

It is my opinion that the extra women are not truly wives. They are not of one flesh. Four naked women trudge down the path with heavy loads of firewood on their heads — while their "husband" rides behind on his bicycle. These "wives" are really slave labor on the farm. The rich merchant takes his eighth wife. She comes into a home where there are already children as old as she is, or older. She is willing to marry the man because he is "great" in the town and his name will be hers and her child's. After the excitement of the wedding dies away, she is given some cloth and other merchandise and is expected to go down to the marketplace to trade and earn her own keep and that of her child (if and when a child comes).

Only when one has lived in these countries, and has entered as a physician into the problems of these people, can one appreciate the blessing and beauty of the love between husband and wife in a Christian marriage. And this love *is* found in the homes

of Adventists and other Christians in these lands. In contrast, this love (possibly with rare exceptions) is not found in the polygamist's home. The mother's love is all-encompassing, and the child is only *acquainted* with his father.

When a man under spiritual conviction seeks to join a Christian church, in most cases he finds real problems. Usually the greatest problem is undoing something he knew he shouldn't have done in the first place — and even in our own enlightened land this is a hard task. The Adventist church is kind and understanding in mission lands. Missionaries are people with hearts of love. They feel that the gift of love between husband and wife is one of the greatest blessings God gave man and that it is worth great effort to preserve this gift in the church.

Space does not permit a complete answer to the problem presented (SPECTRUM Summer 1971). But I did want to join the editor in his perceptive and sensitive approach to a very real problem that is possible only in such a world as we live in.

WILLIAM WAGNER
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Competent observers of world needs make it clear that there is still a large unfinished task that cannot be completed by a missionary philanthropic program alone. Medical mission work has been established and continually expanded. But the problems have not yet been solved, and they seem even to have increased. Curative treatment is still needed, but the population explosion has increased poverty and created new health problems. The effects of increased population, insufficient food, superstition, and lack of education bring still greater challenge to the medical missionary. It is necessary not only to know how to treat the sick but to bring greater knowledge to solving the problems that cause the sickness.

Right after World War II, when needs were acute and great in most areas of the world, much was done; but rapid changes have taken place since then. Now the medical missionary works with the national medical personnel in the developing countries and cooperates with UNESCO, UNICEF, FAO, and other international organizations trying to improve the conditions of the underprivileged. For this work there is one important goal for him — "to follow in the footsteps of the Master Physician." More specialized Christian workers are needed in places that should be training centers. Where there is a shortage of doctors in large centers, self-supporting specialists who work with the upper classes can be positive witnesses for Christ. Doctors who are helped by their colleagues in the homeland can go further inland to less affluent areas, give curative medical and dental care, and teach principles of healthful living.

Has the concept of medical missions changed? Yes and no. With the increase of knowledge, missionary skill has to be much greater than it was a hundred years ago — but the objectives are the same. Medical missionaries are still needed to improve the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of all people. But the difficulties are greater and the approaches must often be adjusted to the needs and circumstances of these times. This ever-challenging task requires self-sacrifice and devotion to the ideal of following in the footsteps of the Great Physician.

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