

Does God-Talk Make Sense Today?
The Rise of a New Adventist History

SPECTRUM

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THE CHURCH AND THE ARTS

The Holiness of Beauty

The Trashy Novel Revisited

God the Storylover

Plus New Poems, Paintings and Music

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About This Issue

As of now, the arts have not achieved eminence in the hierarchy of recognized Seventh-day Adventist concerns. No one would disagree with this assertion, and artists themselves, whether musicians, painters, poets or whatever, would probably see it as a kind of droll understatement. Yet in the epigraph of the article that begins on page 7, the poet William Blake exclaims: “A Poet, a Painter, a Musician: the Man or Woman who is not one of these is not a Christian.”

These are, as we say, strong words. For the author proposes, not that it would be a nice thing to have a concert series or to buy a painting, but that having the heart of an artist is essential to genuine Christian life. It is something to think about as you read the large special section on the church and the arts that appears in this issue of SPECTRUM.

John Wood's article on popular fiction of the nineteenth century takes us back to the historical context out of which arose our church's traditional opposition to the reading of novels. Then James J. Londis, a pastor whose preaching often reflects his own love of fine literature, explains why God himself may be said to love stories.

This section also contains original musical compositions, original poems and an illustrated talk on the subject of abstract art. Ottilie Stafford, of our Board of Editors, deserves thanks not only for her article on the holiness of beauty, but also for working on this special section through most of the past year.

In his article on God-talk today, Richard Rice explains the difficulty in telling the Gospel to what one writer calls “the complete twentieth century man,” that is, the person who has done his best to squeeze the last traces of orthodox religion from his soul.

Gary Land, also of our Board of Editors, takes up the difficult question of how the Christian historian (who believes in the providence of God) should approach his scholarly work.

With this issue, we welcome one more member to the SPECTRUM Board of Editors. Tom Dybdahl, already known to readers from having written two SPECTRUM pieces in the past year, is a graduate of the Columbia School of Journalism and press aide on the congressional staff of Representative Ned Pattison of New York.

The Editors

Providence and Earthly Affairs: The Christian and The Study of History

by Gary Land

Seventh-day Adventist historians, particularly those who teach in the church's colleges and universities, face a dilemma. Although they have been trained in the critical method, which holds that historical interpretation must be based on carefully examined documentary evidence, church leaders¹ expect them to present a peculiarly Adventist view of the past, one that traces "the hand of God in history." These two approaches to history present a dilemma because they do not seem to go together. Documentary evidence reveals only what occurs within the space-time continuum and nothing of what occurs in the eternal or spiritual sphere.²

Attempts have been made to resolve this dilemma but success seems far from sight.³ One reason for this failure is that no distinction has been made between a philosophy of history—more properly in this case, a theology of history—and history. As Jacques Barzun has recently written, there are four criteria of history: "Narrative, Chronology, Concreteness, and Memorability."⁴ In contrast to these criteria, "The philosophers of history utilize the raw material of the historian, they direct their gaze upon the total process of history itself and seek to abstract from the process those laws or patterns that they feel give meaning to the process of history."⁵ The Christian theologian of history further differs from the philosopher in that he learns the patterns and meaning of history from God's revealed Word, which he takes on faith.

Gary Land, a member of the board of editors of SPECTRUM, took his graduate education at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and now teaches in the history department at Andrews University.

These distinctions are exemplified by the fact that most of those who write about the ultimate meaning of history are either philosophers or theologians rather than historians.

To make these distinctions, however, does not necessarily mean that history and the theology of history have no relation to each other. But the two must be distinguished in order to understand their proper relation. Our failure to do this seems to have resulted in both a faulty theology of history and a faulty history.

Up to now, Adventist discussion of a theology of history has revolved around the problem of providence, or God's intervention in human affairs, and has put emphasis upon the selectivity of God's actions. Adventist historians have pointed to such events as the destruction of the Spanish Armada and the escape of the British at Dunkirk as examples of Divine intervention. However, emphasis on selectivity posits an almost deistic image of the relationship of the supernatural and the natural, one in which the world goes its course except at those special moments when God intervenes. Probably no Adventist historian consciously adheres to such an image, but the failure to distinguish between theology and history seems to have produced this view.

In contrast, the Bible presents a God who is both immanent and transcendent, who both created and sustains the world. This view is reflected in a number of Biblical passages: "He [Jesus] reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power." (Hebrews 1:3) "He [Jesus] is before all things, and in him all things hold together." (Colossians 1:17) "In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind." (Job 12:10) "In him we live and

move and have our being.” (Acts 17:28) “There is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.” (1 Corinthians 8:6)

This means that God is in all historical events, for it is only by his sustaining power that any event can take place. As one Old Testament scholar writes,

Basic to Israel’s faith is the conviction that God is not aloof from the world of daily affairs, or bound by an iron chain of cause-and-effect relations. The Israelites had a sense of the immediacy of God’s presence. They believed that any event—ordinary or extraordinary—could be a sign of his will and activity. To them an event was *wonderful* or *significant*, not because it abrogated a natural law, but because it testified to God’s presence and activity in their midst.⁶

If we understand this concept of God’s immanence in the world perhaps we can better understand what we mean when we speak of providence, or God’s unique actions in human affairs that give evidence of his transcendence. If it is through God’s creative and sustaining power that the world is maintained in existence, then a unique action of God is not a qualitatively different event. Richard H. Bube’s use of this idea in his discussion of miracles seems applicable to the concept of providence in history.

When miracles are recognized as a particular form in the outworking of God’s purpose in the world, when they are associated with the preaching of God’s Word, the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the manifestation of God’s witness in the world, they become clearly distinguished from the world of magic and sorcery. Then it becomes clear that miracles are not arbitrary violations of natural law to impress the people involved, but that they are appropriate evidences of God’s free activity in making himself known.⁷

If this concept of God’s immanence and this parallel between miracle and providence are accepted, we can no longer speak of God’s “intervention” in history. (There would be no history at all without God’s active involvement.) We can more accurately say that God and his will are more fully revealed in some events than in others. The historian’s problem is not thereby

solved but we are perhaps coming to a deeper understanding of a theology of history.

Beyond this concept of immanence and transcendence, the Bible gives history a pattern. In its view, the key events are creation, the fall, the choosing of Israel, God’s fullest revelation in the person of Jesus Christ, God’s continuing revelation through the Christian Church and the Second Coming. This pattern which theology gives to history is the point of transition from the theologian of history to the historian.

The problem which Adventist discussions of a theology of history have posed for the historian is that in the confusion of theology and the study of history we have tried to identify specific events in which God has intervened. However, the theology of history presented here asserts that while God’s will is revealed more in some events than in others, God is involved in all events and hence there is no qualitative difference between the unique and the general. Furthermore, such a statement is theological

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rather than historical. As the noted biblical scholar G. Ernest Wright states regarding biblical interpretations of historical events,

Historical and archaeological research can uncover the factual background in ancient history. But the meaning, the interpretation, the faith which in the Bible is an integral part of the event itself—this no one can prove.⁸

Another Old Testament scholar, Bernhard W. Anderson, writes,

To be sure, the central testimony of the Biblical account concerns the revelation of God—but it is in the concrete affairs and relationships of people that God makes

himself known. No external historical study can demonstrate that the Exodus was an act of God; but to Israel this "political" event was the medium through which God's presence and purpose was disclosed.⁹

Another writer suggests that while the revelation is in the events, it is only recognized through interpretation inspired by the Holy Spirit.¹⁰ These statements make clear that interpretations of God's presence and action in history are of a different nature and have a different source from historical interpretation.

The historian, therefore, interprets history at a different level than the theologian. Richard H. Bube writes, "*There are many levels at which a given situation can be described. An exhaustive description on one level does not preclude meaningful descriptions on other levels.*"¹¹ For example, the sentence "I love you" can be described on the level of alphabet, phonetics, words, grammar, context and ultimate content. Within each level, the description can be exhaustive but it in no way detracts from or invalidates descriptions on other levels.¹² Similarly, the historian interprets the actions of man in terms of what the documentary evidence reveals through application of the critical method, but does not thereby invalidate theological statements about man's actions. The historian interprets man's actions according to the principles appropriate to the historical level, while the theologian interprets man's actions according to the principles appropriate to the theological level. It should also be recognized that the historian and the theologian can be the same person, yet he should make clear both to himself and to his audience the role he is playing.

Despite this distinction between levels of explanation, however, there is a point of contact between a historian's theology and his history. The preoccupation of Adventist historians with the theological level seems to have prevented them from being aware of the areas in which the Christian historian might make a unique contribution within the historical level of explanation.

Every historian approaches his subjects with presuppositions and values that shape his interests and judgments. As a result, written history is the product of a dialogue between the historian and his facts. Similarly, the Adventist historian approaches history with the firm belief

that the first Advent of Christ and the Christian religion are the most important events in the history of the world and the significance of all other events is measured by their relation to them. Furthermore, he gains from the Bible a view of man as a creature created in the image of God who rebelled from his maker and has since been characterized by a continual warfare between his noble and his sinful aspects. The idea of sin also carries with it a transcendent moral standard by which human actions are to be judged. These assumptions that the Adventist historian brings to his work are, though different in content, not different in kind from those of the non-Christian historian.¹³ The presuppositions of the Adventist may also differ from those of other Christians, perhaps most importantly in his views of the unitary nature of man and the significance of the Second Coming.

As a result, the Adventist historian may ask different questions of his material than would someone else.¹⁴ For example, in approaching a political reform movement he might be particularly interested in the interplay between sincere ideals and self-interest. Reinhold Niebuhr, a theologian whose books suggest many insights that the historian can apply to scholarly history, carries this approach even deeper when he speaks of the irony of American history. Our age is involved in irony because so many dreams of our nation have been so cruelly refuted by history.¹⁵ History when approached in this way becomes a witness to the truth of the Christian revelation concerning man's true nature and his only hope.

The Adventist historian will also be interested in what might be called patterns of significance. Siegfried Schwantes in *The Biblical Meaning of History* speaks of certain significant religious and political developments that prepared the way for Christianity.¹⁶ Although he moves back and forth without notice between the historical and theological levels of explanation, his ideas are suggestive, for the Adventist will be particularly interested in the way in which political and cultural events were related to Christ. One does not have to invoke the hand of God to understand how the movement of empires in the Mediterranean world created the conditions which surrounded the life of Christ.

In this sense, prophecy calls our attention to the significance of certain events rather than giving us a causative explanation.

It should also be recognized that cultural and social developments are just as important as political ones. Schwantes calls our attention to the significance of religious belief,¹⁷ an idea which may be fruitful if explored more fully. The

“The approach suggested here will not be a Christian history in the sense of carrying a label on it. In terms of method, it should be the same as any other scholarly history.”

Adventist historian will be particularly interested in what happens to man’s concepts of himself and his world as a result of both accepting and departing from Christian beliefs¹⁸ and how his beliefs affect his actions. Moral judgment also plays a role in historical interpretation, and though one must always be cautious in making such judgments,¹⁹ Christian morality is a suitable standard which perhaps can also be a tool in understanding human failure.

An approach to history such as suggested here will not be a Christian history in the sense of carrying a label on it. In terms of method, it should be the same as any other scholarly history. Yet because of the questions asked and the emphases made there will arise from it Christian implications. The great Christian apologist C. S. Lewis has made a statement regarding science that seems equally applicable to history.

What we want is not more little books about Christianity, but more little books by Christians on other subjects—with their Christianity latent. You can see this most easily if you look at it the other way round. Our Faith is not very likely to be shaken by any book on Hinduism. But, if, whenever we read an elementary book on Geology, Botany, Politics or Astronomy, we found that its implications were Hindu, that would shake us. It is not the books written in direct defense of Materialism that make the modern man a materialist; it

is the materialistic assumptions in all other books. In the same way, it is not books on Christianity that will really trouble him. But he would be troubled if, whenever he wanted a cheap popular introduction to some science, the best work on the market was always by a Christian.²⁰

What Lewis says regarding “cheap popular” introductions holds equally true for more ambitious scholarly endeavor.

If an Adventist historian should approach history in the manner suggested here, he might develop a fuller understanding of both history and theology. By carrying into his historical study biblical insights concerning man’s nature, morality, and the significance of certain events, he will find that the interplay between his presuppositions and the historical record produces rich intellectual and personal benefits. In other words, not only will certain theological presuppositions inform one’s historical understanding but the historical record will also inform one’s presuppositions.

It might be objected that this approach to history does not fit Ellen White’s statements in *Education*²¹ and therefore does not really help solve one of the problems of Adventist education. However, when the purpose of Mrs. White’s comments are understood and their historical context recognized there is no real contradiction.

Mrs. White was speaking of a theology of history which, as has been noted, is a different intellectual endeavor from history. Furthermore, the history courses taught in the Adventist colleges of her day, as witnessed by the textbooks used,²² were in reality courses in the theology of history and have little or no relation to the purposes and content of the academic history courses taught today. Adventist historians are now engaged in a different enterprise than the Adventist history teachers of 80 years ago. The teaching of history in non-Adventist schools has gone through a similar change.

Ellen White’s call for a theological approach to history is still legitimate, though, and should be carried out. Perhaps every world civilization course should include special attention given to a theology of history and every history major should take a course in the field, preferably

taught by both a historian and a theologian. In approaching the subject of a theology of history, the distinction between levels of explanation and the epistemological differences between a theology of history and history should be made clear. There would be no danger of a complete separation between the two fields, however, if Adventist historians began to approach academic history in the manner suggested here. The implications of history would raise questions which would lead the student to the different level of explanation given by a theology of history.

In essence, what is suggested here is that Adventists should shift the focus of their discussion of a theology of history. It should be recognized that the problems associated with the concepts of immanence, providence, free will and evil are essentially theological. When historians address these problems, they are taking on the mantle of the theologian, which is perhaps best left to the professional. The Adventist historian will be on firmer ground if he asks instead how his presuppositions can provide unique insights applicable to a professional, scholarly approach to history. The possibilities of such an approach need to be explored.

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8. G. Ernest Wright and Reginald H. Fuller, *The Book of the Acts of God: Christian Scholarship Interprets the Bible* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1957), 22.
9. Anderson, 15.
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11. Bube, 26. Emphasis in the original.
12. *Ibid.*, 29-35.
13. Essays discussing the relationship of a historian's presuppositions and his interpretation of history will be found in Robert Allen Skotheim, ed., *The Historian and the Climate of Opinion* (Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1969) and Hans Meyerhoff, ed., *The Philosophy of History in Our Time: An Anthology* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959), 87-224.
14. This approach is also suggested by Numbers, 67.
15. Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962), 2. Niebuhr's discussion of the nature of man is very suggestive for the historian. See, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation, Vol. 1, Human Nature* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941).
16. Schwantes, 63-118.
17. *Ibid.*
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20. C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed., Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), 93. It might also be noted that Lewis denies the possibility of a philosophy of history apart from revelation. See, *Christian Reflections* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), 100-113.
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22. For example, see Alonzo Trévier Jones, *The Great Empires of Prophecy: From the Fall of Babylon to the Fall of Rome* (Battle Creek: Review and Herald Publishing Company, 1898). Alonzo Trévier Jones, *Ecclesiastical Empire* (Battle Creek: Review and Herald Publishing Company, 1909). Emmett K. Vande Vere indicates that Jones' books were specially prepared for college history courses. See, *The Wisdom Seekers* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1972), 74.

Note: This is a revised version of a paper presented to the Andrews University chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, national history honors society, May 11, 1972. I wish to thank Jonathan Butler, Roy Branson, Walter Utt and Joseph G. Smoot for their criticisms of the original although they do not, of course, necessarily agree with the ideas presented here.

The Holiness of Beauty, or Why Imagination Matters

by Otilie Stafford

*"A Poet, a Painter, a Musician, an Architect:
The man or Woman who is not one of these
is not a Christian."*

—William Blake

Imagine a world where all variety and color have disappeared, a world where it is not possible to watch the earliest gold of spring turn into rich green, where there are no flowers, no irregular mountains and hills, no inletted shoreline, a world where trees are uniform and identical, a world with nothing to rest the eye, delight the imagination, fill the viewer with wonder and surprise.

Imagine a world where language is only "newspeak" and committee reports, where no sense of power or imagery or complex symbolism or emotional impact can be put into words, a world where it is not possible to "articulate sweet sounds together."

Imagine a world where sounds are only noise, never music, where the "spontaneous particulars of sound" have no ordering effect on a period of time, where the journey of the mind and emotions that takes place when the listener enters into the great work of music can never occur.

Imagine a world where there are no graceful motions, no birds gliding and "rebuffing the big wind," no delicate sweep of willow branches, no autumn leaf drifting in a fluttering ballet to the ground, no proud tilt to a lovely chin, no hands and arms held out in welcome. Imagine a world where *everything* is unpleasant, ugly, unvaried,

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expected, uniform—a world with no aesthetic experience possible.

Such a world would be the appropriate geography for a modern *Divine Comedy*, but in such a world a *Divine Comedy* could not be written, for the beauty of the poetry and the interpretive structure that gave meaning to Dante's vision of hell would have no language to express them. None of us would want to live in such a world. Certainly, the vision of life contained in the biblical pictures of a splendid and redeemed world are antithetical to such a world. It is a world without beauty, without imagination and, therefore, if our religious writers and philosophers can be believed, a world without any way to express or understand truth and goodness.

There is a short film entitled *Chromophobia* in which the black and white forces of uniformity and inflexibility are at war with the forces of differentiation and of color. One by one flowers are killed, balloons and circus tents are replaced by identical straight poles and uniform angular buildings, until the whole world has become colorless and as unsurprising as a telephone directory. But it lasts only temporarily. A flower does somehow grow. A child, delighted by the flower, breaks out of the ranks of marching children and flies a balloon again; someone paints his unidentifiable house with stripes and polka dots, and soon the world is again an exuberance of color and changing forms and joy.

It is in our most deeply rooted instincts as creatures of a creative God to imagine, to construct, to rise above our environments and to change them, to order them, to delight in their endless variety. Writers and artists of all kinds have been both evidence and affirmers of man's ability to create as his most basic human instinct. Many have expressed the belief that the

human spirit's participating in the creative is evidence of man's being the creature of a creative God. They suggest that such participation is itself a form of worship, and that worship is the spontaneous reaction to the fact that "the world is charged with the grandeur of God." These ideas are expressed in such varied forms as the following three.

First, a part of a poem by Wallace Stevens:

The poem refreshes life so that we share,
For a moment, the first idea. . . It satisfies
Belief in an immaculate beginning

And sends us, winged by an unconscious will,
To an immaculate end. We move between
these points;

From that ever-early candor to its late plural

And the candor of them is the strong exhilaration

Of what we feel from what we think, of
thought

Beating in the heart, as if blood newly came,

An elixir, an excitation, a pure power.¹

Next, a passage from Alfred North Whitehead:

The order of the world is no accident. There is nothing actual which could be actual without some measure of order. The religious insight is the grasp of this truth: That the order of the world, the depth of reality of the world, the value of the world in its whole and in its parts, the beauty of the world, the zest of life, the peace of life, and the mastery of evil, are bound together—not accidentally, but by reason of this truth: that the universe exhibits a creativity with infinite freedom, and a realm of forms with infinite possibilities; but that this creativity and these forms are together impotent to achieve actuality apart from the completed ideal harmony, which is God.²

And finally, a strophe from the Old Testament:

Let Israel be glad in his Maker,
let the sons of Zion rejoice in their King!
Let them praise his name with dancing,
making melody to him with timbrel and
lyre.

Suggested in all of these passages is the belief that worship involves experience and expressions

quite apart from the practical, utilitarian, rational expressions of our ordinary life. It grows out of a consciousness that God is a creator; that as his creatures, created in His image, we share in the creative potential; that creation is a "pure power," to be responded to with meditation, with joy. As Giles B. Gunn notes,³ it calls forth the feeling of Ishmael in *Moby Dick*, who watched the deep pool at the center of the whirling maelstrom during a tornado in the Atlantic, and found "a mute center of calm and joy."⁴

This kind of experience, whether it is found in the contemplation of an El Greco, the careful notation of the exact shades of blue in the delphinium, the physicist's observation as he looks into his spectroscope—whatever creates the experience—is the aesthetic in operation. It is whatever frees us from the materialistic, the practical, the self-absorbed, the expected, and allows us to burst into a world both harmonious and self-contained, where we see coherent visions of life's truths and respond with mind and feeling.

For the most part our lives are lived haphazardly without a sense of structure or of order. We fill our troubled days and sleepless nights with worries about our children's schoolwork, our unpaid bills, our car repairs, our political involvements small or great, our jealousies and ambitions and disappointments. We are parts of institutions that crumble and decay, living chaotic lives that rush us along without time for consideration or meditation or care. We see a world around us in which, as Yeats described it,

Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon world.

And we feel the pressures of the society turning us into an extension of our electric typewriters, our computers, into "fine specimens of hypermagical ultraomnipotence," into parts of a robot world. All institutions of our modern world seem to be pushing us in this direction — the church included. We have omitted beauty from the set of values we pursue, and so we educate our minds, strengthen our bodies, and leave our emotions immature and disordered.

But He whose spirit moved upon the face of the chaotic waters and divided darkness from light has made man as a creature who is not just

a statistic, or a norm, or an economic unit, but who can respond to beauty. And the divine command is to restructure our world, to “sing a new song,” to put something new and fresh into our daily experience, to transfigure our experience by imagining a restored world of perfect beauty and shaping our lives by that vision. The Christian doctrine of man implies that a part of every person’s nature is his creativity, his ability to produce something fresh and different from the ordinary, to break through the crust of the familiar and to be original. Worship on the seventh day particularly should remind us weekly of that doctrine, because it is a reminder

“If our culture makes it impossible for us to dance before the Lord, perhaps we can find ways in which we do more than sit and doze.”

of the creation, a promise of recreation, and is, therefore, an affirmation of this part of our natures. The aesthetic experience, and the arts as the most powerful conveyors of this experience, belong in the church as a profound revelation of man’s nature as a creature of God and a response to his understanding of his Creator.

The Seventh-day Adventist church has spent much effort to understand and put into action each person’s need for a body that can testify to God’s presence in our physical experience. The church has spent much effort to understand and interpret doctrine, has spent much effort to educate the minds of its youth because it sees the importance of a thoughtful and trained membership. The church has stressed moral purity and ethical responsibility for its members. Truth and goodness are not argued about. But the aesthetic development of its members has been shockingly neglected. There seems to be a feeling that this is a luxury that cannot be afforded, a triviality that cannot be included in the serious life, a secular realm for which dedicated Christians have no time.

But art is essential to the church. Without it, the church risks being weakened in many ways.

Art draws men together into communities of shared experience. Analysis and intellectual pursuits tend to isolate and alienate, with each individual on his own island and around him the

“unplumbed, salt, estranging sea.” Worshippers singing a great hymn with attention to words and music, a group of worshippers within the defined space of a well-planned church building, an audience whose emotions parallel one another’s as they watch a beautifully done film, have all been a part of something greater than any single one of them—an experience that unifies.

Elie Wiesel, in *One Generation After*, describes a Hasidic wedding celebration, the celebrator’s shaken by memories, threatened by tears, each individual lost in his own experience and memories, until Professor Abraham Heschel, who was present

. . . takes the initiative by turning toward the guests: “What! Don’t you people know how to dance?”

The Hasidim ask for nothing better. Quickly they move tables and benches out of the way. No sooner has a circle been formed than a powerful song rises from the entire congregation; a rapid torrential song, full of rhythm and fire, a dizzying call to fervor, a song so vital it imposes its mark on the earth. They dance, hand-in-hand, shoulder-to-shoulder, their faces aflame, their hearts filled with joy. The circle gets larger and smaller in turn. The dancers part, come close again, lose and rediscover each other; they become one with the song, they become song.

Song has won a victory over silence and solitude: we exist for each other as well as for ourselves. And so we sing to cover the noise of all those years reverberating in our memories. And also to show our ancestors: Look, the chain has not been broken. We take up the same song ten times, a hundred times, so as not to leave it, so as not to leave each other. . . Louder, faster! May the song become dance, and motion become song. May joy come to orphans and their friends, a joy at once ancestral and personal, violent and serene, a joy that announces and is part of creation.⁵

The modern experience described here is a reminder of the ancestral experience described over and over again in the Psalms, which frequently move from personal emotion into com-

munal experience, the beauty of poetry, the music of the performed poem, the shared emotion of the music, words, perhaps dance, drawing the congregation together and uniting them, in a way that individuals listening to a sermon in the separate walled-off cubicles of the colonial churches could not experience. Seldom do our church services deliberately plan to give the congregation such an experience. It is almost as though we fear it. Does the church really intend to separate its members so that communal warmth cannot be felt?

A church neglects art at the risk of disunity and fragmentation.

A church neglects art at the risk of becoming crass, materialistic, even violent. For the arts are the refiners of the emotions, the educators of the sensibilities, the sensitizers of the perceptions. They give, more than any other kind of experience, the feeling that there is a genuine value in the whole creation, that God's revelations move through the *whole* of our experience. Cast aside this concept, leave each person searching for some disembodied Nirvana as an escape from the world around him, and subjectivity is everything. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us," is the message of Christianity that gives us the sense of the redemptive entering into human life. Such a sense fills the world and its creatures with joy. A religious viewpoint that sees theological questions as separate from or antithetical to art and literature, that may even view art and literature as carnal and evil, would have had no part in the songs and dances and celebration of the returned Prodigal Son, but would have been found outside the banquet hall with the elder brother, frowning at what seemed to him a waste of money, time and attention. Within the Adventist church, there seems to be an especially sharp battle between those who see only the solemn as worthwhile, and those who would celebrate the promised redemption of the world through joyous expression. In this battle, as the book of *Revelation* clearly shows, it is song, motion and beauty that will win out over solemnity and austerity.

The maturing of the emotional responses, the development of compassion and understanding, the sensitizing of perception, which are the work of art, are necessary if the church is not to

become rigid, judgmental, given over to practical matters, evaluating by economic and material standards, allowing Right and Wrong to replace Good and Evil.

And, finally, the church rejects the arts at the risk of losing its ability to understand what the revelation of God truly is. For we respond to His revelation in the powerful language of the poetry and prose in the Bible, in the imagery and symbolism of its writing, particularly that of its great prophets and poets who burned the minds of their hearers with flaming imagery. We find a revelation of God in the sense of the possible order and harmony we see in all that is beautiful—whether it be found in the natural beauty of the world around us or in the *fictive* beauty of the artifact.

Churches these days debate whether or not to spend money on stained glass windows when there are illiteracy, unemployment, hunger, violence and disease two blocks away. One church recently dismantled its lovely old historical pipe organ and installed a cheap electronic

"Christian doctrine implies that a part of every person's nature is his creativity, his ability to produce something fresh and different from the ordinary, to break through the crust of the familiar and to be original."

organ because the money saved could be used for youth work within the church. Judged by monetary standards, such actions seem justified. We Adventists have consistently refused to invest vast sums of money in church buildings that are rich in stained glass, murals, sculpture, expensive organs, or other "luxuries." But who is to evaluate the soul-stirrings, the fleeting perceptions of divine majesty in a moment of time, the sense of being lifted out of oneself, the sense of the peace and the calm of a Sabbath time, the ability to lose one's troubles in the harmony of the work, the encouragement of freedom and human response—and for how many people—that are being sacrificed for the apparent saving

of money, even of money that might be invested in a practical and worthwhile cause?

If we choose to save money on the construction of buildings, we might at least give more careful attention to those things that don't cost anything but thought and effort: the quality of worship in our services, the environment that we give our children and young people that might encourage their imaginative and emotional maturing, the richness of the symbols and imagery and unifying parables. These shape our lives, whether we wish or not. And if we do not ensure the richness and meaning of the imagery that affects our lives, they will be supplied by Kojak, Anacin and Archie Bunker.

The Seventh-day Adventist church has almost entirely ignored this fact. Perhaps some of the observable drift to the secular, the materialistic, or the mystical is a result of this. Perhaps our overwhelming concern with right act and wrong act, our intense absorption in intricacies of doctrine, have left us with a thinness of spirit—with much knowledge but little power.

Why could not at least one of our colleges or universities have a department of religion and the arts? Why could not a workshop in the arts and the church be planned and held, rotating, perhaps, among our colleges, and available to ministers and others interested in the area? Perhaps opening up the subjects in which worship and art interact would produce some fresh approaches to liturgy, to church architecture, even to sermon style. We need to face the implications in today's subjective approach to the arts, and the fragmentation that such an approach causes. We need to discuss ways in which people are affected by the physical environment the church provides them, and what to do about it. We need to understand the purpose of music used in worship. We need to bring worshippers more centrally into the worship experience. If our culture makes it impossible for us to dance before the Lord, perhaps we can find ways in which we do more than sit and doze.

The object of such a study should be a fresh approach to worship, and an approach that expresses Adventist beliefs, traditions and hopes. Our worship has been mostly an assortment of liturgical features borrowed from other churches.

We have a common Christian belief, certainly, and common ways of worshipping are not inappropriate. But Adventist beliefs might give us a changed liturgical structure. We must respond to the injunction to sing a new song.

Constantly freshened expressions of belief are necessary in each age and in each church. T. S. Eliot wrote:

The soul of Man must quicken to creation.
 Out of the formless stone, when the artist
 unites himself with stone,
 Spring always new forms of life, from the soul
 of man that is joined to the soul of stone;
 Out of the meaningless practical shapes of all
 that is living or lifeless,
 Joined with the artist's eye, new life, new
 form, new colour.
 Out of the sea of sound the life of music,
 Out of the slimy mud of words, out of the
 sleep and hail of verbal imprecisions,
 Approximate thoughts and feelings, words
 that have taken the place of thoughts
 and feelings,
 There spring the perfect order of speech, and
 the beauty of incantation.⁶

What the church does, what the church says, how the church worships, how it responds to human experiences, are the most important of questions to the Christian. The church cannot be merely ordinary. It cannot be chained like other institutions to consequence and causality. It cannot be merely utilitarian. If it is to be a powerful channel of an experience that moves and changes us, it must be as extraordinary and as rich in its message as possible. The arts are not the only forces that can move the church in this direction, but they are very important forces. They can be used as vehicles to transport us to a desired kind of church and to a valuable kind of religious experience.

In an article in *Religion in Life*, Woodrow Geier wrote:

What is the nature of the church? We have to decide. The church may be a fallout shelter for tired and droopy spirits who want to evade the world with its terror, its pain, its surprises, its joy. Or the church may be the body of Christ, the extension of the incarnation, a center of freedom and reconciliation, where God's love of the creation is celebrated, where people refuse to turn their

backs upon the world, where the contagion of the gospel is shed abroad, and where Christians can sing because they are compelled by grace to celebrate life's grandeur and transcend its evil and its hurt.

If the church is this kind of place, it can appropriate the arts as a means of sharing in the work of the Creator and as a way to celebrate the goodness of the creation. The arts can help us see ourselves and our human situation. As a report on our inner world, they can prompt us to an openness to ideas and expose us to interpretations of man that are today being debated. The arts are thus one means through which the church itself may be challenged to recover its own depth.⁷

Imagine a world where everything is varied and beautiful and new, where the Sabbath rings slowly in the pebbles of the holy streams, and where, inside the city, the sons of Zion rejoice in their King and the luminous streets are filled with song.

Imagine a world where language is clear and honest, where image and symbol and parable coincide exactly with reality, where words do not break down under emotion, but are filled with "an Elixir, an excitation, a pure power."

Imagine a world where song has won a final victory over silence and solemnity, where music is motion and motion music, and both move about a center of serenity and joy.

Imagine a world where the redeemed, in perfect freedom and perfect harmony, are themselves a part of the beauty of the holiness about the throne of God.

Such a world speaks with power to our

imaginations. We recognize it at once as our lost homeland, our hope for the future, our strong conviction of what should be. It is *only* through the arts that such an imagined world can be communicated. Surely, a church that believes its purpose is to call men to a home in that world ought to use every means possible to make it real to men's hearts and imaginations. But where in our church do we find the great poet, the great artist, the great architect, or the great musician encouraged to speak of his Christian belief through his art and craft? There will be no great Adventist artists until our educational system places as much emphasis on literature as on accounting or chemistry, as much emphasis on music as on computer programming, and as much emphasis on art and architecture as on homiletics.

Then perhaps in song and in words, in architecture and in music, in sculpture and in landscape gardening, in liturgy and in the words of the preacher, the church may, even in this imperfect world, join together in that great song of praise to the Creator with the morning stars and the other Sons of God.

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'Enlightenment' and 'Pragmatism': New Songs by an Adventist Composer

Margarita Merriman, who has been writing music since she was a teen-ager, took a doctoral degree from the Eastman School of Music in theory and composition. Her work at Eastman led to her belief that the contemporary composer must "seek to avoid sentimentality, saccharine sweetness, lush orchestration, bombast and obviousness." Something fresh and appropriate to the twentieth century is what she is aiming for in her compositions.

Dr. Merriman has recently been commissioned to do a number of works which have been given a careful performance: *The Millennium* (an oratorio for soloists, chorus and orchestra), a cello sonata, a piano sonata and a song cycle, two songs from which appear in this issue of *SPECTRUM*. Her *Symphony No. 1*, written as a part of her doctoral dissertation, was premiered in November of 1975. In addition,

she is working on a bicentennial work for chamber orchestra to be performed during the New England Sinfonia's tour of the southeast this year.

Dr. Merriman says that not only has this emphasis on creativity benefitted her personally, but it has also spurred great bursts of composing activity among music majors at Atlantic Union College where she teaches. "There are several competent composers in the denomination, most of whom are engaged in teaching," she says. "There are undoubtedly others with latent talent waiting to be developed. This ability should not be allowed to lie dormant. The denomination needs the injection of musical life-blood its composers are eager to provide."

For the songs that follow, Dr. Merriman has drawn from poetry by Lynn Sauls, professor of English at Atlantic Union College. Dr. Sauls took doctoral studies at the University of Iowa.

ENLIGHTENMENT

L. Sauls
Virace

M. Merriman - 1974

mp

mp

Two children looked for

fire-flies.

mf

One

So caught one; The other, none.

dim.

But both kept right on look- ing.

cresc

mf

dim.

rall. e dim.

pp

Ped. - - - - - *

PRAGMATISM

L. Sauls

M. Merriman-1974

Andante *f*

Con-crete side-walks ru-ler like try to force men's

simile

mp *cresc.*

paths. Men's well-worn paths quite of-ten, though,

mp *cresc.*

f

show side-walks where to go.

f *no rit.* *simile*

sfz

The Trashy Novel Revisited: Popular Fiction in the Age of Ellen White

by John Wood

The following article discusses the context out of which Ellen White's statements about fiction arose.

The Editors

The state of creative writing in the second half of the nineteenth century, and especially of popular fiction, is generally unknown to the contemporary reader. This discussion will have a bearing on how Adventism has related to one form of the arts—literature—since that time.¹

In the background of popular nineteenth century fiction in the United States are eighteenth century English works such as *Pamela* now recognized as full-fledged novels in the modern sense. By the end of that century, the English novel had etched itself firmly into the colonial American culture. But the multiplying works of later writers did not maintain the high literary standards of the masters who had earlier popularized the form.

Unfortunately, a pattern of low quality and high production was firmly implanted in American reading and writing habits just as the new society's tastes were being formed. Between 1830 and 1850, five times as many works of full-length fiction were published in the U.S. as in the preceding 60 years. And after 1850, this figure increases dramatically.²

Publishers brought out a prodigious amount of popular fiction from 1850 onward; F. L. Moh was one of the first researchers to document this phenomenon.³ Various causes suggested by

John Wood, whose master's degree is from Andrews University, is assistant professor of religion and theology at Atlantic Union College.

research for the dramatic upsurge of fiction after 1850 include the influence of Dickens and Scott on the English and American reading publics, the tremendous growth of newspapers as the center of culture in the stabilizing republic (with their great need for filler prior to wire services), the growth of a public school system which created a newly literate and reading-hungry class, and the long, drawn-out process of immigration, which continued to keep first-generation readership high into the present century.

Thematic material for popular fiction was ready at hand in expansionism, with its constant frontier, the noble savage, the black, the new American war and frontier hero, and the new American household. However, one important factor absent in the new fiction was a literary tradition and its concomitant literary sophistication. Without literary canons, unfamiliar with literature as an art form and literary criticism as a technique, the public of the new nation absorbed the new fiction at a tremendous rate.

Unsurprisingly, the fiction that was produced under these conditions was, at the least, unartistic and clumsy and positively damaging in many ways. Rather than writing as an attempt to create or expose truth or reality, popular fiction became escapist, preparing the way for the pop movies and pop television.

A few examples, some abbreviated statistical information and a taste of the criticism leveled at popular fiction, will suffice to illustrate the topic. We will follow popular fiction from the midnineteenth century to the early twentieth.

The 1850s saw the tremendous growth in popularity of the "sentimental" or "domestic" novel. This subgenre centered on the American

home; its heroines were young girls and struggling wives who bore triumphantly with the trials of life by living a pure—that is, asexual—life.

As one critic aptly comments,

Its [the novel's] characters and their involvements were of the sort with which middle-class readers could identify themselves, and heroes and heroines who conducted themselves according to bourgeois ethics always made their way onward and upward in this world or achieved an earnest of salvation in the next.⁴

That literally millions of novels were printed by authoresses of major cultural influence, now virtually unknown, is somewhat surprising. But what is more important is the ludicrous, often vulgar, quality of this fiction. It is this generalized and constant unreality, coupled with thematic cheapness, which so distinguishes popular fiction from surviving works of that period that are designated "literature" by the modern texts.

The domestic novel neither needed nor encouraged originality. Readers wanted no surprises, but confirmation of what they believed—that right won and wrong lost—and instruction in how to meet domestic crises such as drink, violence, improvidence, and misfortune. The novels soon developed a roster of stock characters: the Other Woman; the Loose Woman; the Handsome Seducer; the Sick Husband; the Crude Husband; the Weak Husband; the Brave Wife; the Old Sweetheart; the Dying Child; the Martyred Wife; the Woman of Finer Feelings, and so on. . . .⁵

No other type of popular fiction of the nineteenth century, not even the "wild west" stories later in the century, were so concerned with sex roles. It was perhaps no accident of coincidence that the male image and sexuality generally were treated negatively, since the authoresses who succeeded

. . . shared curiously similar backgrounds. Almost all were women of upper-middle-class origin who began very early in life to write, frequently under pressure of sudden poverty. Several published while still in their teens (usually a temperance tale). A majority lived or visited in the South. Most important for

many of these women, somewhere, sometime, someplace in her past some man—a father, a brother, a husband, a guardian—had proved unworthy of the trust and confidence she placed in him. This traumatic experience, never resolved, grew into a chronic grievance. . . .⁶

Another critic calls the typical domestic plot "a code quickly understood by the female reader, with plots built about husbands who drank and chased, or erring runaway daughters, sons who strayed, or sickness, poverty, and insecurity."⁷ Perhaps it is too much to accuse these popular novelists of calculated feminism, but the acceptance of their works by the million certainly suggests a widespread cultural phenomenon was at work.

How widespread is ascertainable in cold figures. Susanna Warner's *The Wide, Wide World* sold over 500,000 copies. Maria Cummins's *The Lamplighter* sold 40,000 copies in its first eight weeks, 70,000 in its first year. Hart tells us that a work of Mary Jane Holmes sold 2,000,000

"Rather than writing as an attempt to create or expose truth or reality, popular fiction became escapist, preparing the way for the pop movies and pop television."

copies in a decade, that Elizabeth Oakes Smith wrote a novel that went through 12 printings in 1854, that Caroline Lee Hentz saw one of her works sell 93,000 copies in just three years.⁸

But none of these writers compares with the master of them all—whose name once was a household word. Her works were awaited breathlessly by a loving public; she almost single-handedly made William Bonner the richest publisher in America. The name E. D. E. N. Southworth is a case study in psychological ills and social crazes:

The most popular authoress in the annals of American publishing was Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth. Her two foremost novels—

Ishmael and *Self-Raised*—sold more than two million copies each, and *The Hidden Hand* must have come close to that figure. In all, Mrs. Southworth wrote over fifty novels, and nearly all of them sold in six figures.⁹

We could cite many more representative figures. It must be borne in mind that these have to be interpreted against the far lower population and literacy rates in the U.S. from 1850 to 1870 before their full significance becomes clear.¹⁰

As we noted, the “loveless marriage” was a favorite theme of these works. The heroine bravely endured the hated situation for the sake of a lost lover, a family secret, or some other sort of melodramatic situation. Coincidence was a favorite device in developing such themes.

Immediately beneath the heroine on the domestic’s scale of purity, original sin to the contrary, was the child. Their dear little souls were as yet uncorrupted; it has been noted in other contexts (American religious history or social history, for instance) that the child was a favorite symbol in nineteenth-century America. Little Lord Fauntleroy was only one such saintly (and very republican) figure to achieve tremendous popularity.

The plots, devices and symbols of this first type of popular fiction thus suggest a growing naive naturalism at the base of popular American thought. While it would be unsafe to generalize solely on the basis of popular fiction, parallel studies in other aspects of American social history have suggested similar conclusions.

In a sense, the 1850s were a literary turning point in America. The unexpected sudden popularity of the domestic novel marked an abrupt and premature end to the development of a genuine native literature. The so-called “flowering of New England” was cut short, its authors overshadowed and its critical insights ignored. Hawthorne, in disgust and bitterness, retired to Italy. He replied to his publisher’s plea for something that would sell with the famous comment:

America is now wholly given over to a damned mob of scribbling women, and I should have no chance of success while the public taste is occupied with their trash—and should be ashamed of myself if I did.¹¹

The fifties set the pattern for what followed for decades; it would be nearly 40 years before a group of American authors could capture public

attention and begin again shaping American tastes to the work of serious literature. Reading as escapism had won the day.

After 1860, a new form appeared. Novels were now serialized in the “storypapers.” These were first brought out by their publishers in weekly, biweekly, or monthly editions. They were often called “newspapers.” They looked like newspapers; their formats and style were often the same as the newspapers, even to the inclusion of an editorial page. But they were actually vehicles for serializing new novels.

If the novels running in installment form were exciting enough, sensational enough, or sentimental enough, the storypapers sold well. The sales success of the individual issues thus became an index to the popularity of the novels being serialized. Later, after appropriate lapse, the publisher could rerun the novel (under a new title), or alternatively publish it cheaply (five to 65 cents) in a paper binding. Later, it would often be republished in this form or bound more expensively in hardcover with embossed covers and gilt-edged pages.

“We must recognize the frequent use of the terms ‘novel’ and ‘fiction’ as pejoratives by a broad spectrum of commentators on the social conditions of the period.”

If a novel was successful enough to arrive eventually in the beautifully embossed and gilt bindings of this last stage, it was considered “high class” fiction. Advertisements referred to it as such, fit for the shelf of the fine lady or gentleman. Thus popularity became an index of worth.

This brings us to an immensely important definition of “novel.” The term was applied indiscriminately to popular fiction from 1850 to 1905. A story from 30,000 to 90,000 words was a novel whether published as a serial in a newspaperlike periodical called a storypaper, or as a

comic-book format (the so-called “dime” novel), or as a paperbound book, or as a beautifully produced hardback. These were differences of form rather than content. Many popular novels worked their way up through these stages after 1870 if they were popular.

We must recognize the frequent use of the terms “novel” and “fiction” as pejoratives by a broad spectrum of commentators on the social conditions of the period. In the mouths of newspaper writers and ministers, the terms were

incident and an instinct to develop such incidents swiftly and in strong colors. There is something satisfying—to the simple mind, at least—in a villain who is thoroughly evil from his crown to his toes, incapable of a single good impulse. And how gratifying the idea of a hero who is slightly more perfect than King Arthur, St. Francis, and Daniel Webster rolled in one! . . .

This typing of characters, resulting in *dramatis personae* all in lily white or Stygian black, was not acceptable to minds somewhat more subtle than that of Mrs. Southworth.¹²

Among the special concerns of the novelists on the storypaper staffs were the Civil War (once it had become history), the Indian wars and need to annihilate the Indian (a view which the novelists neither doubted nor felt embarrassment over), a naturalistic rags-to-riches stereotype, and the good pioneer versus the bad, bad outlaw.

Mott writes:

A fair sampling of the serials reveals that some three-fourths of them contained anywhere from one to four abductions apiece. In the thousands of serials published, the number of frustrated abductions must have run to colossal figures. Fancy, too, the number of babies swapped in the cradle, the number of wretched working girls restored to their fortunes. As to the number of Indian's killed, the total must have been many times the total Indian population of the United States. The story papers took the plots, the characters, the settings that had always proved themselves to be the people's choice.¹³

We should note that one form of pop art that the storypapers and dime novels popularized was the giant woodcut illustrations. Most of these are quite dramatic, running to such themes as war scenes, stage robberies, massacres of or by Indians.

Storypapers in England and the U.S. ended the influence of literary journals for popular consumption. Their place would be taken, before the close of the century, by the lineal descendant of the storypaper, the periodical “magazine” of fiction and miscellany.¹⁴

Despite its mawkish and frequently violent

SATURDAY NIGHT.



HE HANGS THE CHILD ALIVE AND DROPS IT FROM THE SKY.

talking about. Oh! I remember now. Mr. Mott says that the name is "The Girl in the Wood." I have seen that name in the paper. I suppose he did not bring his family with him. He brought his wife and child. I returned the traveler in a moment.

meant to describe *popular* fiction and be synonymous with another of their favorite appellations—*trash*.

Storypaper serialization is the cause of the usually terrible plotting of popular novels from the last century. The reader must remember that he is sampling a written-down soap opera in order to explain the vast stock of wooden characters and the frequent dramatic pauses. Mott characterizes the leading Mrs. Southworth as having . . . a strong feeling for melodramatic

subject matter, storypaper fiction was bound in by a rigid code of "morality." What the Victorian fiction writer meant by morality were the arbitrary conventions of the time. Readers will recall Ellen White's diatribes against the so-called "religious sentiments" supposedly upheld by the popular novels. Says one commentator:

Even the villain was somewhat handicapped in his villainies. The heroine being what she was, he could not even attempt a seduction. He could only propose marriage and rape as the alternative. At this point the hero came in. True, the villain was allowed more liberty than most people. He might, for instance, shoot his wife directly in the back of the head, or he might quietly knife his older brother; but he definitely was not allowed to have a long dragged-out argument with his father—that would have had a bad effect on the younger readers of the family story paper.¹⁵

Once the storypaper had become popular, the next form was virtually inevitable. This was the simple but fruitful idea of Erastus Beadle in

1860. He published one whole story in a single issue, cut it down to appropriate size, and sold it for a dime. Sales soared during the Civil War. By the 1880s, the enormous competition on these salable items had cut the cost to a nickel. At the end of the century, the "dime novel" boasted the use of four-color process on its covers, becoming, as one historian puts it, "an atrocity." In this century, these "novels" develop directly into two forms, the comic book and the sex-and-detective paperback that grace today's paperback bookracks. This clearly traceable line of development accounts for the dual meaning of the term "novel" as a serious art form and as paperback trash.

The dime novel sold. In the sixties a single dime novel, *Seth Jones*, sold 600,000 copies.¹⁶ While Mott is generally more conservative than more recent critics, he can nevertheless speak of "literally millions of boys" collecting whole "libraries" of "dimes."¹⁷ The author has a large collection of dime novels, and can testify that they are probably the most numerous documents available to the collector of nineteenth century writing. The same types of speed-induced errors are evident that others have

VOL. VIII. DAVID & ELIZABETH, S. W. OF RICHIE, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1870. TERMS: 10 CENTS PER ANNUM NO. 11
IN ADVANCE

Mabel Vane; OR, THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.
 By DR. WM. MASON TURNER

"THEir soft, white arm was now torn and bleeding, and it was only a half foot from the terrible door."

CHAPTER I.
 THE MURDER IN THE MILL.
 "Quick! quick!" he shrieked. "Mr. Trenton! Mabel is in danger! Save her! Save her! Save her!"

CHAPTER II.
 A NIGHT'S WORKING.

CHAPTER III.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER IV.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER V.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER VI.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER VII.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER VIII.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER IX.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER X.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER XI.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER XII.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER XIII.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER XIV.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER XV.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER XVI.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER XVII.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER XVIII.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER XIX.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER XX.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER XXI.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER XXII.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER XXIII.
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CHAPTER XXV.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER XXVI.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER XXVII.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER XXVIII.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER XXIX.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

CHAPTER XXX.
 THE MILL OWNER'S VILLAINY.

noted: a gun in a villain's hand in one paragraph may have turned into a knife by the next paragraph. Many of the stories were written from standard plot books at great speed. One of the most popular "dime" authors, Prentiss Ingraham, a man who wrote over 600 titles, once wrote a 40,000-word novel in 24 hours.¹⁸ Obviously, research, editing, the serious contem-

"One of the most popular 'dime' authors, Prentiss Ingraham, a man who wrote over 600 titles, once wrote a 40,000-word novel in 24 hours."

plation and aesthetic intent necessary to literature, were not part of the "dime's" format.

The "dimes" were responsible for the Popularization of such all-American heroes as Billy the Kid, the James Brothers, Wild Bill Hickock, Buffalo Bill and many more. It can be said safely that books about them were major contributors to the recognized American tradition of violence.

Dime novels [writes one student of the phenomenon] were to be tales of dread suspense. . . . In their pages, during the next four decades, tons of gunpowder were to be burned; human blood was to flow in rivers; and the list of dead men was to mount to the sky. They delight in violent action; in sudden death and its terrors. . . .

Other differences [from the "highbrow" novel], apart from the shorter length and cheaper price of the dime novel, are differences of degree. The books for the masses are more exciting, more melodramatic. There is more blood, and more thunder in them. The action is swifter; . . . Characters are more wooden and incredible; conceptions of human nature, absolutistic and crude.¹⁹

The peak of interest in the domestic novel had been in the late 1850s. Then the story-paper-magazine took the field, and shortly thereafter the dime novel reached its zenith. It should be emphasized that none of the forms dis-

appeared or even ceased to be generally disseminated. Rather, other forms grew beside older types and appealed to new classes in the growing reading public.

The fiction and miscellany magazine periodical presaged by the weekly "dimes" came into full prominence in the eighties. Collation shows about 700 known journals in 1865, 1,200 in 1870, 2,400 in 1880, 3,300 in 1885, 4,400 in 1890, 5,100 in 1895, 5,500 in 1900 and 6,000 by 1905.²⁰ Many of these monthlies and weeklies had a quarter to a half million in circulation. They "flooded" the country, a common contemporary description that has been used ever since for the great publishing glut of the 1890s.

At this time, we began to see the glorification of the city in popular fiction. The closing frontier, increasing wealth, immigration and consequent urbanization, the destruction of the Indian by the reservation, the receding prominence of blacks, industrialization and the growth of leisure all make the turn to the city an expectable phenomenon.

The trend is visible in the titles of the period. The hero is not now an Indian tracker or settler or cowboy or even an outlaw. He is, instead, a city detective (or thief) or a young man smashing his way from poverty to the top of the financial empire (the Horatio Alger stereotype).

In the nineties, a new current appears. There is a marked return to romantic sentimentalism in the form of the long-ago-and-far-away romance. These were produced in the hardback form as it again became more popular than the various types of paper fiction. Some of the most beautiful specimens of bookbinding as an art come from this period. They produce an odd effect as one opens these fine books and is confronted by their shallow contents.

Causes for this new trend are varied. The absence of copyright and the resultant overproduction of cheap pirated editions have been documented. Certainly, compulsory public education, a larger reading class, the Carnegie library movement, literary societies such as Chautauqua, and the generally romantic mood of the period are contributing factors.²¹

Historical romance flared up about the time of the war with Spain, and produced a

score of immensely popular novels. . . . The years 1889-94 forecast almost all the developments of the more fecund years from 1896-1902 which was the most active school of historical romances the U.S. had yet produced. . . . Such of these narratives as dealt in any way with the present generally took their slashing, skylarking, and robustly Yankee heroes . . . off to remote or imaginary regions for deeds of haughty daring and exotic wooing.²²

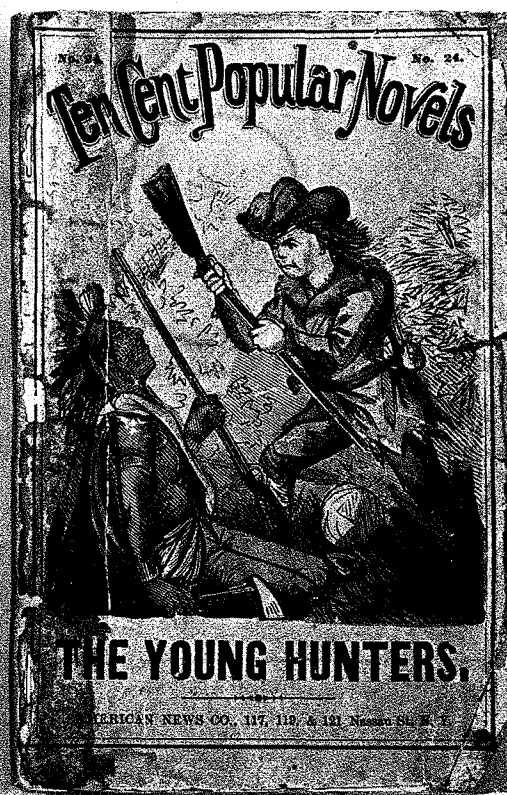
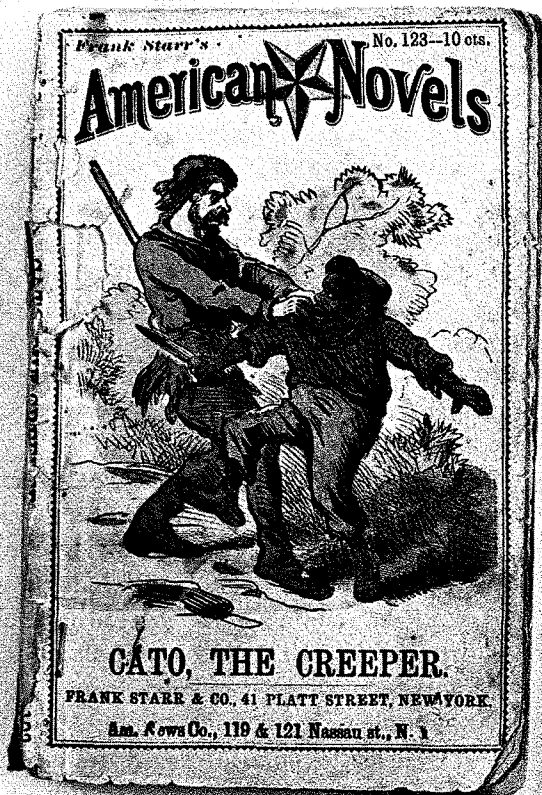
Eben Holden sold 400,000 copies during this period, and *Trilby* (which set off yet another social craze) 200,000 in its first year. *Quo Vadis*, a piece of religious romance, even outran its popular predecessor *Ben Hur*, selling 600,000 in its first 18 months, and 1,500,000 by 1915.²³ Along with this growth, circulation figures for the general interest and fiction magazine had increased dramatically. *The Ladies Home Journal* led the field with a circulation of up to 700,000 in 1893.²⁴ Curti describes in detail an "almost unbelievable" growth of magazines "designed to cater to average and below average tastes."²⁵

The overwhelming popularity of the historical romance in this later period was helped along by the religious press and the church

library movement, copied after the public library pattern. This is an important facet of the discussion, since it influenced Adventist activities and necessitated some of Mrs. White's strongest statements.

Some religious fiction was of liberal orientation, reflecting social concerns and the "new" theology of the times. While it was not quite "infidel," it was not quite orthodox in the traditional sense, either. Some well-known surviving examples include Robert Sheldon's *In His Steps* (1897) and Winston Churchill's *The Inside of the Cup* (1912). Here we can see a move toward serious literary techniques.

The more popular type of religious fiction was fostered by the Sunday School and church library. Religious novels of the *Ben Hur* type were bought for local church lending libraries and circulated from week to week. Novels were likewise serialized in the Sunday School papers to keep the young parishioners returning each week. The pages of the leading *Youth's Companion* are filled with typical religious fiction, ranging from maudlin to swashbuckling.



The *Companion* was circulated interdenominationally; its circulation rose from about 400,000 in 1897 to over 500,000 in 1898.²⁶ Despite the continuing popularity of the secular papers, about *half* the juveniles of the day were Sunday School papers. They “catered to youthful desires for the excitement and sensation of extravagant adventure.”²⁷

Sunday-school libraries were filled with stories of dedicated girls who found and converted atheists with the same zeal that boys in the dime novels shot and skinned buffaloes. . . . All the large denominations supported similar organizations well staffed with dependable writers who could turn out material for the Sunday-school libraries, a large and important market.²⁸

Not all of the so-called “religious” press’s works were that religious. The Presbyterian Board even had to be threatened with suit (under the 1890 copyright law) by William Bonner’s storypaper, the *New York Ledger*, to keep it from serializing a pirated edition of E. D. E. N. Southworth’s useless melodrama *Ishmael!*²⁹ It is not particularly surprising that Adventist presses began to copy the other religious publishers in these practices. And it is to be expected that Mrs. White reserved some of her strongest denunciations for this situation. There is an almost comic quality in the picture of the great religious bodies as publishers of the fiction they had so earnestly denounced a few decades earlier.

If we can take Leisy’s suggestion of 1905 as the waning date for intense interest in historical romances,³⁰ then we should also note that the decade 1895-1905 includes the development of realism and naturalism among a small, sophisticated readership and a move in critical circles toward new techniques in writing. The move from innocence to experience in literature in America has existed at all times, but in the nineteenth century it is particularly significant. The torrent of unrealistic escape literature in the last part of the nineteenth century eventually led to questions about what reality literature should reflect. Twentieth century writers moved away from the sentimental and superficial views of life presented in the dime novels and sought their subject material elsewhere. Their approaches

have not always been ones that are compatible with the mainstream of Adventist theology, but this presents issues somewhat different from those addressed by Mrs. White.

The author’s study of every statement about fiction penned by Mrs. White suggests a basis on which to proceed, but that is outside the scope

“Among the special concerns of novelists on the storypaper staffs were the Civil War, the need to annihilate the Indian, a naturalistic rags-to-riches stereotype, and the good pioneer versus the bad, bad outlaw.”

of the present article. Here we have simply explored the literary background for Mrs. White’s very strong and oft-repeated counsels against fiction in general and the novel in particular.

In an incisive comment which summarizes what was happening on the popular level at the end of the half-century we have examined, Van Doren writes:

. . . whereas Cooper and Melville, much as they might invent, still worked upon a solid basis in a mood not too far from the mood of realism, their successors wrote romance pure and simple, even when they were most erudite. Romance was in the air. Not all the publishing enterprise which developed romances into best sellers and distributed millions of copies could have done so but for the moment of national expansiveness which attended the Spanish War. Now, with a rush of unaccustomed emotions, the national imagination sought out its own past, delighting in it, wallowing in it. Had the romancers who met the mood been more deeply grounded in reality and less sentimental, or had the national mood lasted for a longer time, some eminent masterpiece might have emerged. None did, and the gold lace and gilt [which] the narratives actually evoked began to tarnish almost as soon as the wind touched them.³¹

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God Loves Stories: A Theological Rationale for the Literary Art

by James J. Londis

Whenever we meet after long separations, we tend to tell stories: stories about our marriages, our athletic boys and hyperactive girls, what we have touched and been touched by. We talk about our work and how our dreams have fared. It is most unlikely that we talk in some abstract, philosophical fashion about the ideas and values we have embraced. Rather, I suspect that our concerns and intellectual pursuits would be hidden in our stories, there to be unearthed by anyone willing to make the effort to find them.

Story as a genre for humanistic expression has always received attention from literary critics, but today it is the subject of a considerable amount of theological discussion as well. The Scriptures tell us that "without a parable [story] spake he not unto them." Increasing numbers of thinkers are impressed with the fact that Jesus was a superb storyteller who used stories not only to articulate the nature of the kingdom of God but also to answer theological questions that contained an implied criticism. Instead of debating the question of "Who is my neighbor?" with the religious intellectual, Jesus told the story of the good Samaritan using contrasts, radical imagery, action and tension to produce the shocking and surprising revelation of man's religious and ethical responsibilities for others. Jesus never engaged in any discourse remotely resembling that of Aquinas or Barth; that is why we have no systematic theology in the gospels or, for that matter, in the Bible as a

whole. What we have are stories, poems, letters, narratives of all kinds.

One of the theologians immersed in the "story and theology" motif is Robert MacAfee Brown, who related this personal incident at the 1974 meeting of the American Academy of Religion:

At the beginning of a recent leave of absence, I had set myself the rather pretentious task of beginning a Systematic Theology for Our Times. Not only did I soon decide that the time was not ripe for system-building at least (if not especially) by me, I also decided that the time would never be ripe until we *got behind the systems* to whatever it was that had led to their development in the first place. And my growing intuition of what did lie behind them was confirmed most of all by a growing friendship during the Vietnam years with Rabbi Abraham Heschel. I began to notice that every time I asked him a theological question (which I was doing with considerable frequency during those confusing times) he would reply, "My Friend, let me tell you a story. . . ."¹

Cynical religious leaders have quipped that "story and theology" is the latest fad in the never-ending procession of fads to appear on the religious stage and it, too, will make its exit. Such critics are mistaken, I believe; this is not a fad but a major new direction for theology away from an exclusive interest in systematic and analytical questions and toward the more experiential bases of our reflections. What some theologians and philosophers are arguing is that the fundamental structures of thought are metaphorical and practical, not analytical. Our

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“stories” are not detours around precision of thought but the road signs by which we must judge the reliability of our theorizing. Poets have always sensed this. In his essay “Education by Poetry,” Robert Frost suggests that “by studying poetry the student enters into the world of metaphor and, through metaphor, learns what it is to think. . . .”² The metaphor, or parable as an extended metaphor, is what Sallie TeSelle calls *embodied language*.

The human organism is a body that thinks, and in all thinking the mind unites with a figure-language—of its own devising: “A body that thinks”: this description of human life would satisfy Rubenstein and Keen, it is the assumption of all metaphorical language, and it is also basically and radically Christian. The modern post-Cartesian split of mind and body is radically anti-Christian; meaning and truth for human beings are embodied, hence *embodied language*, metaphorical language, is the most appropriate way—perhaps the only way—to suggest this meaning and truth.³

Such a language cannot and should not strive for the precision of “direct propositions,” for its power resides in its indirectness, in “what Philip Wheelwright calls ‘soft focus’ or ‘assertorial lightness.’ This is the case because, as Wheelwright says, ‘the plain fact is that not all facts are plain.’”⁴

Furthermore, while in the Christian tradition God’s being is analogous in many ways to our own, His ontological uniqueness makes precision of language impossible; one must ultimately fall back on metaphor. This means that metaphors have both emotional and *cognitive* value. As TeSelle argues: “Although metaphor is uncertain and risky, it is not expendable; one must live with the open-endedness since there is no way to get at the principal subject directly.”⁵ One unveils a new meaning via the fresh metaphor and the two are so intertwined that the new meaning cannot exist without the metaphor!

A critic, when asked what a metaphor “means” is finally reduced to repeating the line of poetry or even the entire poem, for there is no other way of saying what is being said except in the words that were chosen to say it. Poetic metaphor is used not as an embellishment of what can be said some other way, but precisely because what is being said is new and cannot be said any other way.⁶

This is especially true when one is probing qualities like God’s mercy and graciousness. One must “feel” the power of God’s graciousness and care, the weight of His concern. Whitehead once remarked that “in the real world it is more important that a proposition be interesting than that it be true. The importance of truth is, that it adds to interest.”⁷ Information, as such, is, therefore, not the genius of literature. In the stories of Dostoevsky, Wiesel and Solzhenitsyn, for example, we do not learn facts about suffering or how to solve its mystery vis-a-vis God’s love, but to feel the crush of its agony when

*“Only when he heard the story
of the ewe lamb stolen by one
whose flocks were full did David
see his sin. No philosophical
treatise would have struck
the king with such force.”*

God seems to be silent. Idinopulos says it well: “More than educating us, the artist transforms us by what he says and makes us feel.”⁸ He goes on to point out that Dostoevsky’s facts in Ivan’s “story of horror came from the Russian newspaper [children murdered by soldiers before their mother’s eyes, an incorrigible boy thrown to savage dogs for punishment]. What Dostoevsky perceived in this destruction of children is man’s capacity for ultimate evil. For the crime against the child, unlike any other, is man’s crime against his own very being.”⁹ Such atrocities cannot be explained, Ivan argues, by either man’s freedom or God’s atonement.

Elie Wiesel haunts us with the same profound pathos. In his *Night*, Wiesel tells his own story of being taken from the little Hasidic community he knew in the mountains of Transylvania and shipped by train to Auschwitz. What he depicts is not a series of horror stories but the *feeling* of losing his faith in the Creator-Father of his childhood. In one tale, a boy is suspected of sabotage and is hanged alongside two adults. Wiesel writes:

The SS seemed more preoccupied, more disturbed than usual. To hang a young boy in front of thousands of spectators was no light matter. The head of the camp read the verdict. All eyes were on the child. He was lividly pale, almost calm, biting his lips. The gallows threw its shadow over him. . . .

The three victims mounted together onto the chairs.

The three necks were placed at the same moment within the nooses.

"Long live liberty!" cried the two adults.

But the child was silent.

"Where is God? Where is He?" Someone behind me asked.

At a sign from the head of the camp, the three chairs tipped over.

Total silence throughout the camp. On the horizon the sun was setting.

"Bare your heads!" yelled the head of the camp. His voice was raucous. We were weeping.

"Cover your heads!"

Then the march past began. The two adults were no longer alive. Their tongues hung swollen, blue-tinged. But the third rope was still moving; being so light, the child was still alive. . . .

For more than half an hour he stayed there, struggling between life and death, dying in slow agony under our eyes. And we had to look him full in the face. He was still alive when I passed in front of him. His tongue was still red, his eyes not yet glazed.

Behind me, I heard the same man asking:

"Where is God now?"

And I heard a voice within me answer him:

"Where is He? Here He is—He is hanging here on this gallows. . . ." ¹⁰

As Idinopolous puts it:

The art [of such writer] does for us what the disciplines of theology, psychology and journalism cannot do: It gives us a personal relationship to what we cannot otherwise grasp intellectually. The stories of these authors make us perceive with our senses and our emotions the impenetrable darkness of another's pain. ¹¹

In other words, the horror that cannot be conceptualized can perhaps be exposed through the story of Wiesel's life. That is why "a Chris-

tian autobiography ought to be a metaphor of God's action, and even Paul's 'boasting' is for precisely that purpose."¹² Our own lives have a narrative quality and structure, so much so that as Alasdair MacIntyre has suggested, when there is a radical break in the continuity of that narrative, people are tempted to commit suicide. Conversely, when we encounter the reality of God, the ordinary takes on an extraordinary, new significance, making daily transactions the scene for God's redemptive activity. According to this view, God's self-revelations are not limited to radical *intrusions* into the ordinary, but extend to the most routine events of our lives.

Contemporary theologians like TeSelle who see the parable as an "extended metaphor" argue that it is no accident that Jesus' teachings were parabolic in nature, or that He in His person is a parable of God's grace. Parables must be read and interpreted *as* metaphors. They must be read with literary insight until the story penetrates us, "rather than look around for possible interpretations of it."¹³ This will lead to "de-forming our usual apprehensions in such a way that we see reality in a new way."¹⁴ This gives "parable" a confrontive quality that demands a decision involving radical changes in our values. As Funk puts it:

. . . the word of God, like a great work of art, is not on trial. The work of art exists in its own right, to be viewed and contemplated, received or dismissed, but not reconstructed. The text, too, although shaped by human hands, stands there to be read and pondered, but not manipulated.¹⁵

As important as it is, theoretical, analytical discourse lacks confrontive power. Often boring and almost always tedious, it cannot create the drama necessary to invite ordinary men to take it seriously.

It is entirely natural or inevitable, then, that the realism of the parables is of a special sort, that it provides again and again "that certain shock to the imagination" which Amos Wilder mentions. The way this shock is conveyed initially is the assumption of the parables that important things happen and are decided at the everyday level. The parables again and again indicate that it is in the

seemingly insignificant events of being invited to a party and refusing to go, being jealous of a younger brother who seems to have it all his way, resenting other workers who get the same pay for less work, that the ultimate questions of life are decided.¹⁶

In our individual Christian lives and our communal life as a church is a story unique, powerful, arresting; it is full of passions, ideas and the record of the experiences that brought us to belief. Tournier has said that it is much more fascinating to know one person well than a hundred people superficially. And that, perhaps, is why Wiesel says: "God created men because He loves stories." And when we share our stories with each other we are changed.

My story—the story of me as an individual—is a blend of Greek and English parentage, the boardwalk of Coney Island and the streets of Brooklyn; white, poor, divorced parents and conversion at age 14 to Jesus Christ through the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. When I was converted, the story of Jesus became my normative story, the story that made the rest of my story and the story of all mankind intelligible.

What I did not realize until much later was *how* white and city-oriented my story was. In recent years, my black brothers and sisters have taught me that my Christian story has been tainted by my white story. Third-world people have shown me that I have assumed the American story and the Christian story were almost identical; and my female colleagues have showed me that *my* story, even as a Christian, has been a very masculine version indeed. Sharing our stories keeps us from having limited and distorted stories.

In the time of King David, God sent a story to David via Nathan the prophet because David's story had become corrupt. Only when he heard the story of the ewe lamb stolen by one whose flocks were full did David see his sin. No philosophical treatise on the immorality of adultery and murder would have struck the King with the full force of his sin. Only a story enabled David to see reality as it was meant to be seen, and not merely as his passions wished to see it.

In Russia today, the nation's ignorance of its story has driven Alexander Solzhenitsyn to tell

through his writing what he believes is Russia's true story. He does this, as does Wiesel, in the hope that his people will be reborn in justice, freedom and humaneness. These writers—along with the biblical writers—are sensitive to the ugliness and suffering of a world in which evil grows strong on lies and falsehoods. They know that only the truth—the true story—will unmask the deception of evil. In his Nobel lecture, Solzhenitsyn said:

Our twentieth century has proved to be more cruel than preceding centuries, and the first fifty years have not erased all of its horrors. Our world is rent asunder by those same old cave-age emotions of greed, envy, lack of control, mutual hostility which have picked up in passing respectable pseudonyms like class struggle, racial conflict, struggle of the masses, trade-union disputes. The primeval refusal to accept a compromise has been turned into a theoretical principle and is considered the virtue of orthodoxy. It demands millions of sacrifices in ceaseless civil wars, it drums into our souls that there is no such thing as unchanging, universal concepts of goodness and justice, that they are all fluctuating and inconstant.

At its birth violence acts openly and even with pride. But no sooner does it become strong, firmly established, than it senses the rarefaction of the air around it and it cannot continue to exist without descending into a fog of lies, clothing them in sweet talk. It does not always, not necessarily, openly throttle the throat, more often it demands from its subjects only an oath of allegiance to falsehood, only complicity in falsehood.

Proverbs about truth are well loved in Russia. They give steady and sometimes striking expression to the not inconsiderable harsh national experience: ONE WORD OF TRUTH SHALL OUTWEIGH THE WHOLE WORLD.

And it is here, on an imaginary fantasy, a breach of the principle of the conservation of mass and energy, that I base both my own activity and my appeal to the writers of the whole world.¹⁷

Is there any need to argue for the importance of knowing history, literature and the arts after reading Solzhenitsyn's statement? Can one who loves the truth revealed in Jesus Christ really

deny the centrality of the humanities to Christian education? It is not alone the body and mind that need educating; it is the feelings, the imagination, the senses. Can we who claim to be telling "the story" in its unique form during the eschaton minimize the importance of being imaginative in the *way* we tell the story, of knowing how to aid others in *feeling* the significance of our message and our age?

Most writers observing contemporary man's story are cynical about a happy ending to the nightmare we call human history. They have not given up hope that God will yet speak, but his silence mystifies them. Seventh-day Adventists can impart that hope. According to Robert MacAfee Brown, contemporary theologians have been afraid of eschatology, partly because they have been overwhelmed by the reality of evil in the world and partly because the vision of John the revelator is too wildly improbable to be believed. It is just a fairy story, they think, but it is our task to let the world know that joy can be affirmed in the end without minimizing evil along the way. Earth's story, our individual stories, can all have a happy ending in spite of Auschwitz and the Gulag. No one in our denominational history believed this more intensely than Ellen White whose last chapters in *The Great Controversy* are an inspired vision that the story's end will not disappoint us. She saw clearly that the symbol on which our Seventh-day Adventist story rides is the cross as mirrored in the holiness of the Sabbath. It is the promise of the present and eschatological Sabbath rest that Jesus died to give us, the rest from the burdens of sin and death, the rest from our attempts to save ourselves from our unbearable guilt.

As I have already mentioned, such stories, unlike exhortations and moralizations, force us to decision. Their power to illuminate our condition prevents us from remaining neutral. Through these stories the Holy Spirit convicts the conscience and calls for repentance. When Simon rebuked Jesus for encouraging the attentions of a fallen woman who washed his feet, Jesus told him the story of a king who forgave two debtors; one owed a great sum and one a small. "Who should love him most?" Jesus asked. The answer choked the indignant Pharisee. And it will do so today if we make these

stories *our* stories, incorporate them into our lives and then tell them with the conviction and competence God grants us.

Is it any wonder, then, that Yahweh commanded the Jewish people to tell their stories to their children, to allow the stories to work their magic on the young? (Even today the story is central to much of the life and thought of the Jewish people.) By the same token, we should not be surprised when Ellen White urges us to study our past history, to know the stories of the pioneers and to relive their experiences. Their lives were parables and stories telling the story of God's graciousness to man.

It is no different for us. We must *be* the parables we would tell, but we must tell them

"Such stories, unlike exhortations and moralizations, force us to decision. Their power to illuminate our condition prevents us from remaining neutral."

sensitively and powerfully. Perhaps our greatest need (after *being* what we proclaim) is for writers, artists and preachers who can tell their stories about Jesus Christ in a Seventh-day Adventist setting so creatively that moderns will be confronted with the importance of making a decision. This implies some fundamental changes in our definition of "evangelism," allowing more room for innovative programs and ministries that are centered in the arts, especially storytelling. It also implies the need for criteria that help us decide what is and is not "Christian" in the arts so that some kind of consensus operates when evangelism is done in this way.

If it is true that "God loves stories," then we should not disappoint Him.

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6. TeSelle, p. 45. See TeSelle's discussion of Gerard Manley Hopkins' "God's Grandeur" as an example of the unique power of metaphor, p. 17ff.

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8. Thomas A. Idinopulos, *JAAR*, "The Mystery of Suffering in the Art of Dostoevsky, Camus, Wiesel and

Grunewald," March, 1975, p. 52.

9. Idinopulos, p. 54.

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11. Idinopulos, p. 60.

12. TeSelle, p. 69

13. TeSelle, p. 70.

14. TeSelle, p. 71.

15. Robert W. Funk, *Language, Hermeneutic and Word of God: The Problem of Language in the New Testament and Contemporary Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 11-12. Quoted in TeSelle, p. 68.

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17. *Solzhenitsyn: A Documentary Record*, ed., Leopold Labedz, (Bloomington: Indiana U. Press), 1973, pp. 313-20.

A Trio of Poets

Cross-country

At thirty-thousand feet in the calm
comfort of air-conditioned, carpeted,
sea-level pressured cabin, I stared
out the window, ignoring the inflight movie.
Only the smell of instant coffee

In the dark noon of the deep Isthmus jungle

and the clink of silver and glass
from the refreshment cart rolling up the aisle
momentarily broke my dull reverie
reverberating with the sound of jets.

filled with pungent musks and muffled noise,
exhausted, dull-eyed men—brown

As I stared out the window, trying to see,
earth between wisps of white cloud,
no brilliant patchwork of vari-colored greens

bearers hacking with blunt knives
and white, plumed soldiers struggling
in their rusting armor—ignored

appeared—only a barren grey-brown land
spotted by the yellow haze of smog.

the dark-canopied swamps, the treetop
flashes of resplendent bird,
the screeches of the howler apes,
as they slowly chopped a narrow trail.

I arrived, yawning and bored, in Los Angeles.

In the oppressive, muggy heat, aggravated
by sweat sores, scratches, and cloying insects,
they struggled up a tangled hill
to gaze in quiet and awed surprise
before they shouted at the calm, blue ocean.

Charles Tidwell

Charles Tidwell, a graduate of Andrews University's master's program in English, is teaching at South Lancaster Academy in Massachusetts.

Cape Cod

grey wood, green duck flew
through wisps of blurred pine and mist
all day had been dusk

the faint smell of salt
mixed with humus, old cedar
and damp ocean fog

small brown-winged hawk floats
effortlessly above me
and the rough, dark earth

rigid bare-brown woods:
a yellow poplar dances
alone with the wind

black stumps, misshapen
reflections in a dark pool
deep brown and stagnant

sparkling water drop
jewel dripping from the tip
of red wax berry

only the steady
chirp of the hidden cricket
stirs the autumn trees

salt water inlet
the only sound was yellow
sun sinking on shore

Charles Tidwell

What Is Lost

there are no church windows
as beautiful as the sides of a trout

yet already on the table
the rose is fading

while the stones over the graves of children
cry out after the suicides

are there no crumbs left?

there are none

yet in the silence of the dream
I glimpse both fish and bread

and wine on the table

now the hands gathering and dividing
what is lost

Ben Jacques

Ben Jacques has published a number of poems in SPECTRUM over the past few years.

He is currently living and writing in Tucson, Arizona.

Remembrance

As the craftsman's hand,
still on the chair,
remembers the tool,
I awaken and rise before dawn, thirsty,
wanting to hear good music.
In the kitchen,
in the dark,
I fill my glass with sounds of water.
Tiny blue flames from the pilots
glow on the stove.
I turn to the window,
brush the curtain aside and see
a late moon has risen,
thin like a fingernail clipping.
Shall I say it is the trimming
from the bright nail of God?
Shall I ask
where, now, is His finger
and what does His hand remember?
With my hands on the sill,
something inside me remembers
what I have never seen or known.

Ben Jacques

Sheer Serenity

The folded lilies float, nest
 On splays of leaves
Like fragrant swans
 dreaming
Under calm wings
On midnight water.

Their roots are dark.
Their shoots pierce starkness.

They do not know each other.
They never drift together.
They do not know themselves.

(They would not have her called
The swan drawn moon; still
Strung along her own black thread,
She casts around them wet silk light.
Their wings block sight
Of all her pearl song.
False poets say she woos

These folded feather sovereignties.)

They will not hear her, or confirm dark water.
They do nothing for the shallow tide.
They do not feel the cold.

Phillip Whidden

Phillip Whidden, a graduate of Atlantic Union College, is teaching in Washington, D.C., where

he and his wife are active in the creative efforts of The Gate.

Serene Sphere

The long moon sings
 Like a pearl whole note
 piercing,
 Pierced with fragments of the night.

White on white on white she
 Holds one rigid, straight thread path
 (And not with swans' white wings);
 Sings a layered virgin's song,
 One tone in strictest flight.
 (Although her echoes fall
 In folds of cloth across the ponds,
 She has not willed it so.)

She does not know of lilies, roots or leaves.
 She does not sing to nectar lakes.
 She sings like silk, and she is deaf.

She sings herself of sovereignty,
 She does not hear if ponds have tides.
 She does not feel the cold.

Phillip Whidden

Clearest Serene

The lake lets black shine
 through
 its
 depths.
 Like polished nectar
 gleaming

Below the moon
 Beneath the night.

It does not wish to float white flowers
 on sprays of leaves.
 It does not dote on brocade songs.
 It does not flow, it will not flow
 Not even for itself.

And in its sovereignty
 In darkness
 It surely does not dream
 To love silk or swans.

It never will acknowledge piercing roots
 It never will accede to tides or notes.
 It never feels the cold.

Phillip Whidden

Abstract Art To the Glory of God

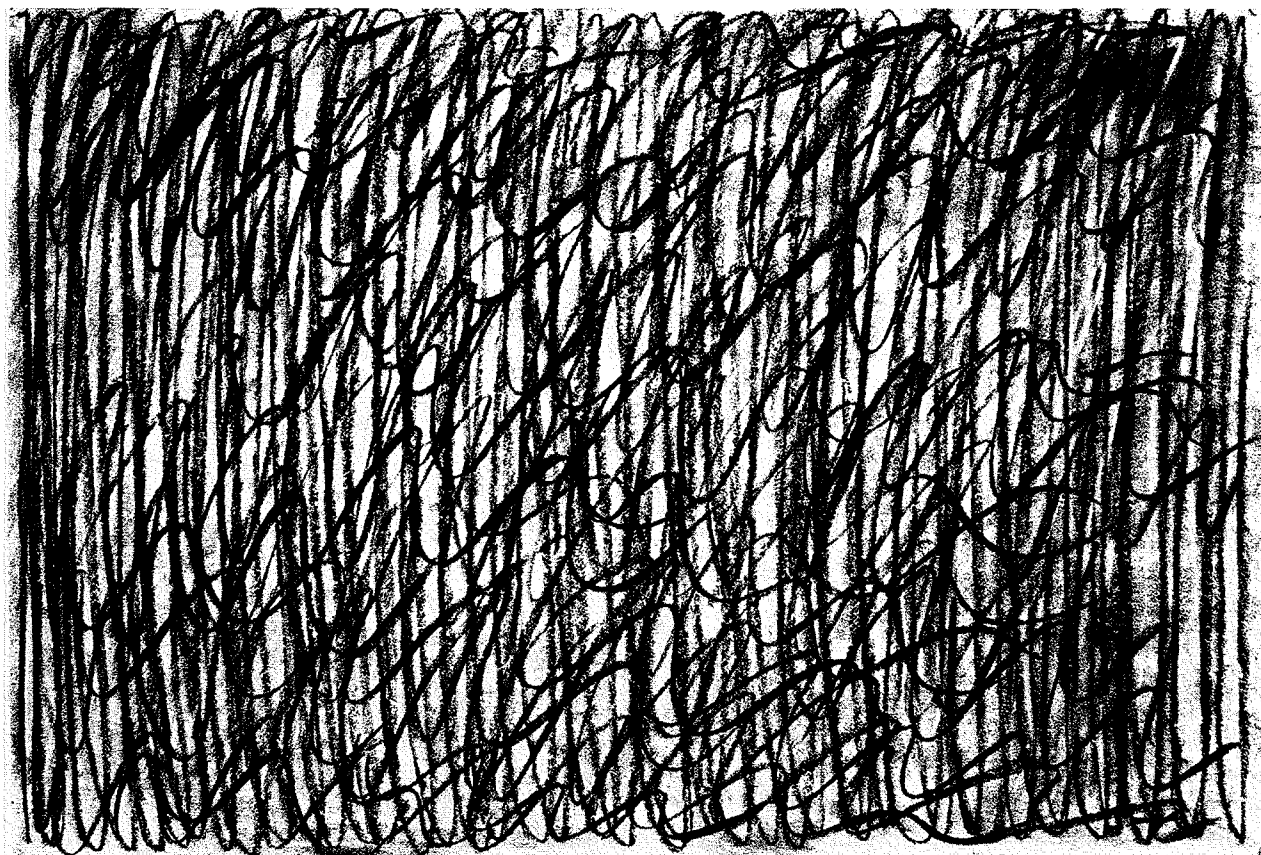
Jorgen Henriksen, an expressionist painter whose work, as he says, "combines complexity and simplicity," was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1945. His family moved to the United States in 1953 and resided in several cities over the next few years. Henriksen received the B.F.A. from the University of Illinois in 1970 and the M.A. in studio art from Hunter College, City University of New York, in 1972.

His paintings and drawings have been

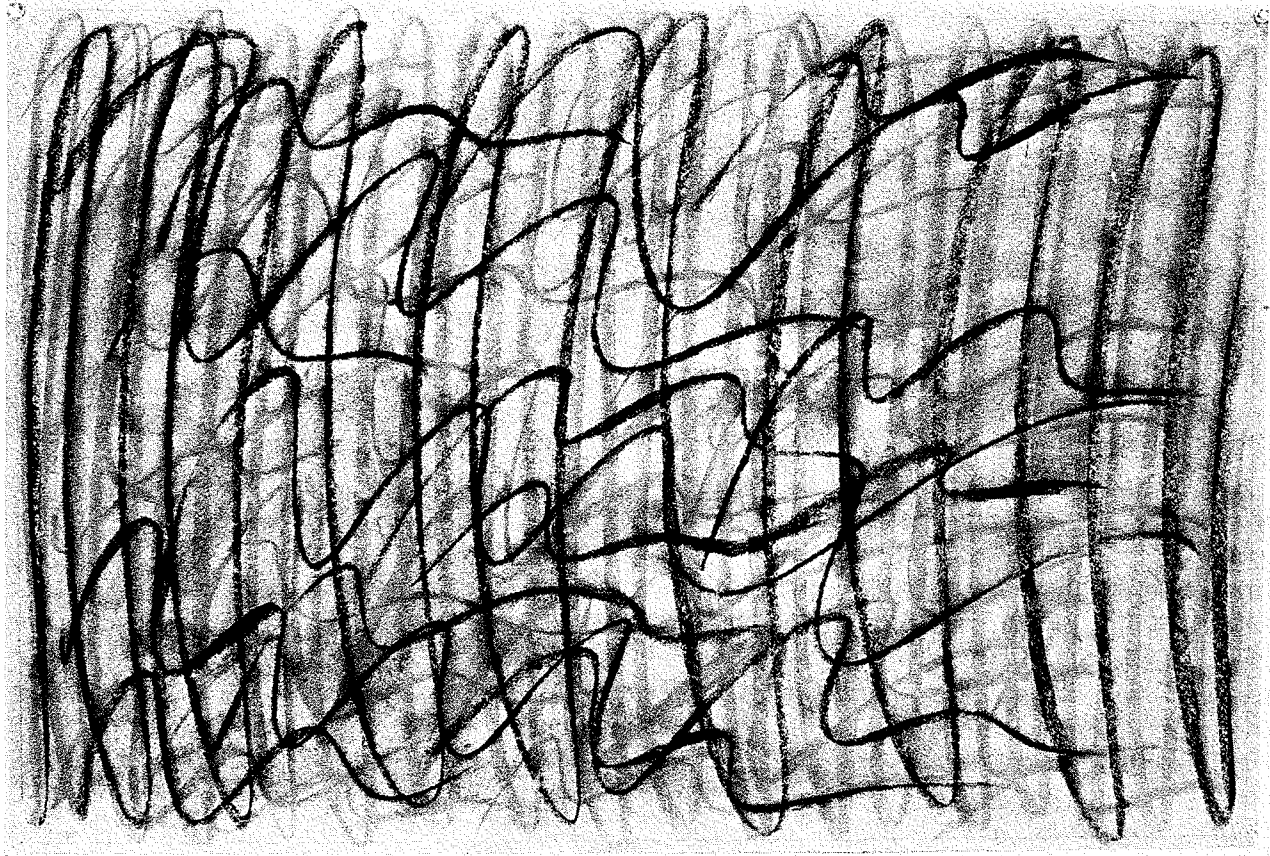
exhibited in a number of cities, including Copenhagen, New York and London. He is now teaching painting and drawing at the Brockton Art Museum School in Massachusetts.

The five paintings displayed on the following pages show the recent development of his style. The accompanying interview of the artist was conducted by two members of the SPECTRUM staff. Comments under the paintings are by the artist.

The Editors



Untitled, charcoal, 26"x37". "This drawing, and the next one, both made in 1971, show how line recedes or distinguishes itself depending on density."



Untitled, charcoal, 26"x37".

SPECTRUM: In your experience, do most people find abstract art difficult to appreciate?

Henriksen: Yes, this is the situation. All abstract art seems to be hard to understand for most people.

SPECTRUM: Why do people find abstract art perplexing?

Henriksen: There are several reasons. Most people have not been to art museums and galleries where they might have had a first-hand experience with abstract art. And most people have false notions about art that drastically modify their ability to evaluate abstract art—or any art, for that matter.

SPECTRUM: What are the commonly held false notions?

Henriksen: Just to mention a few: (1) that a particular style of art is better than other styles; (2) that the “indicator of artistic ability” is being able to draw or to paint in an accurate, realistic manner; (3) that “correct” perspective is essential to narrative art; (4) that only traditional and “respected” art media can be used in

the making of art; and (5) that abstract art is not concerned with beauty.

SPECTRUM: There are many different styles of abstract art. Do people in general find some styles more easy to understand than others?

Henriksen: Yes. Abstraction of simple composition and geometric composition are more easily understood because the compositional structure is very clear; however, complex compositions and organic compositions where the structure is not so clear tend to be more difficult for people to appreciate. For example, just recently, I found myself in New York guiding a group of SDA friends through an exhibition of William de Kooning’s paintings. They were large, about seven feet by six feet, and pure abstract. The paint had clearly been applied with expressive gestures, using large brushes, perhaps typical house painting brushes. The forms were interlocking and organic; the large range of colors were both cool and warm. And my friends admitted de Kooning’s work gave them a powerful sensual experience.

SPECTRUM: So what was wrong?

Henriksen: Well, one of my friends—who is no illiterate, by the way, in fact, quite knowledgeable in areas like music, theology and social science—said he was afraid he was “being conned” by the gallery’s pretending that these paintings were good art, or even art at all.

SPECTRUM: What did you say?

Henriksen: I assured him that he was not being “conned”; that there is an international consensus among artists, art critics and scholars that de Kooning is a master virtuoso.

SPECTRUM: But that didn’t satisfy him?

Henriksen: No. It only made it worse. I was pulling rank. So I began to talk about the paintings in detail. They were highly active; something like, in music, the polyphonic works of Bach. De Kooning’s basic arrangement of overlapping forms was similar in a certain respect to cubism (a style of painting which I knew my friend liked) with the difference being that the edges of forms were not straight but curving, giving the painting a feeling of organic, instead of geometric form. I admitted that the paintings came close to disorder, but de Kooning deliber-

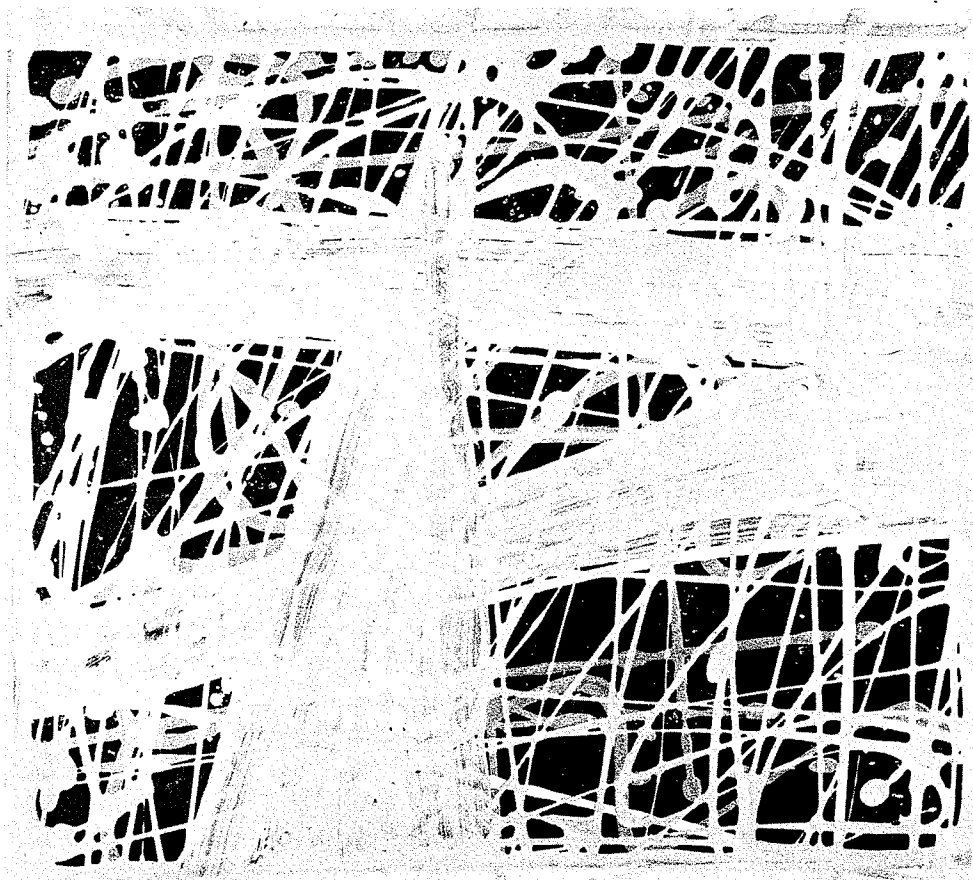
ately used techniques like painting with energetic speed, leaving splashes on the canvas, to create a feeling of spontaneity and emotional energy. Retaining order among all the organic forms that resulted took the skill of a very good artist.

SPECTRUM: Does such an explanation convince someone like your friend?

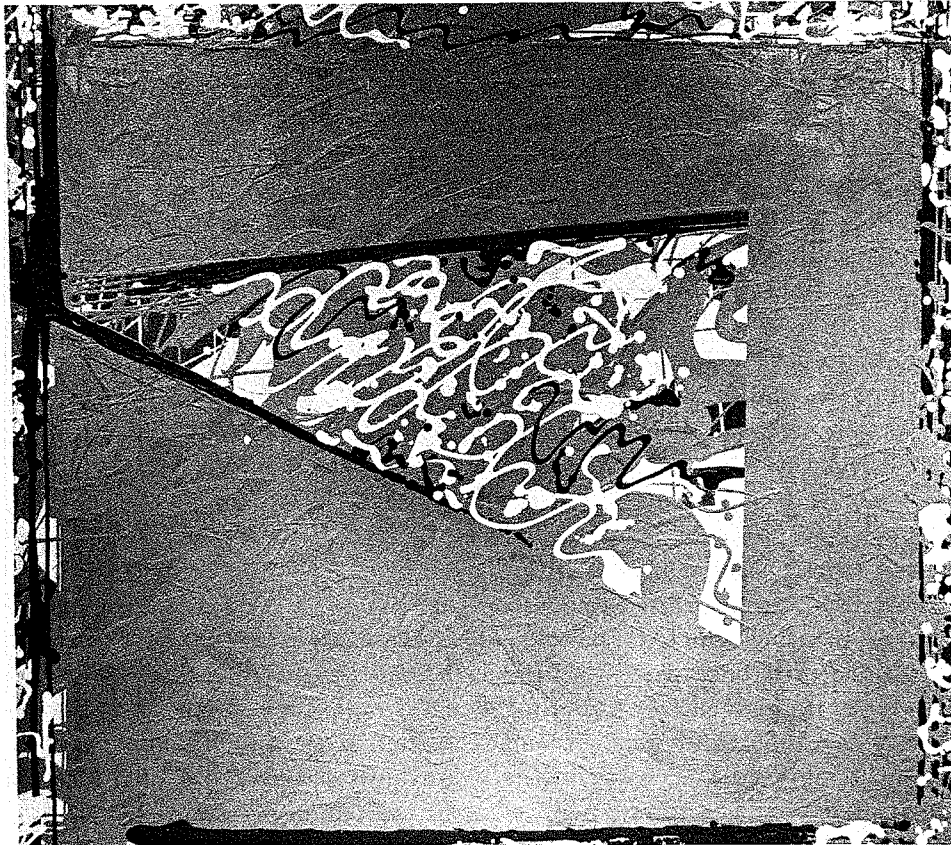
Henriksen: Not this time, unfortunately. Not then, anyway. But if he keeps studying the underlying composition of abstract “action paintings” he might get over his revulsion and he might (like many of my students and friends) even come to enjoy and be enthusiastic about abstract art.

SPECTRUM: Are Adventists more often antagonistic to abstract art than non-Adventists?

Henriksen: While I have not taken a sociological survey, my experience and that of other Adventist artists whom I know indicate that Adventists have more of a bias against abstract art than do non-Adventists.



“Red on Black, 1973,” acrylic on unstretched, flexible acrylic sheet, 15”x17”. “Here the visual effect of form and line are accentuated as they play upon each other.”



"North Red No. 6, 1975." acrylic on canvas, 47"x52". "This work shows an approach to the interaction of geometric form and organic form."

SPECTRUM: Why, do you think?

Henriksen: Because as a church we have a minimal interest in art as part of our religious experience, and also as conservative Christians we often suspect that what we are not familiar with in culture is evil. In fact, some SDAs identify paintings that happen to have a particular form—the abstract—with evil.

SPECTRUM: What do you mean?

Henriksen: Well, for example, a few years ago *The Ministry* had an article that talked of contemporary painting as a "crude portrayal of disorganized oblivion," and "of human disorientation," a "product of man's apostasy."¹ And *The Journal of Adventist Education* had an article soon afterwards that said "modern art as we know it today ... cannot be pleasing to the Lord."²

SPECTRUM: That goes even further than your friend looking at de Kooning.

Henriksen: Yes, it does. Of course, everyone has a right to express a preference in art, but it's another thing for leaders to condemn artistic styles as ungodly. That has an enormously dead-

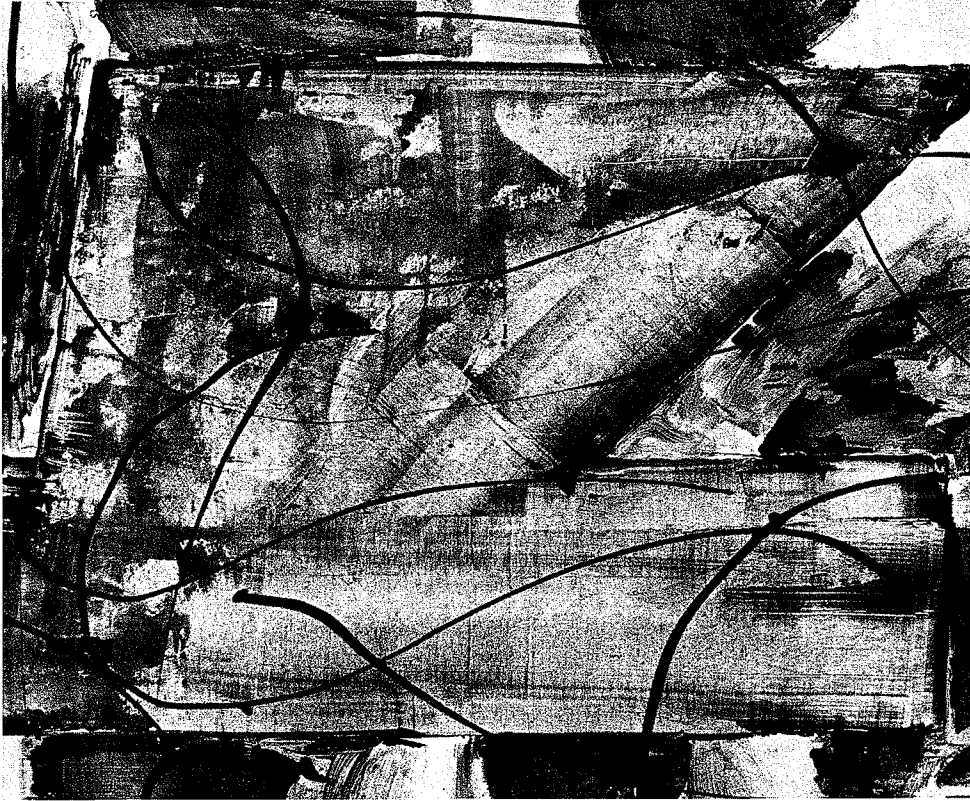
ening impact on an entire community's ability to appreciate what they see.

SPECTRUM: But if the writers are right, aren't they performing a service by saying so?

Henriksen: But you know they're not right! That's the point. They're wrong about at least recognized masterpieces of abstract or semi-abstract art. Works like that are *not* compositionally a "portrayal of disorganized oblivion." They are very carefully organized.

SPECTRUM: What about the point concerning distortion?

Henriksen: What does that mean? It is true that semiabstract painters like Paul Cezanne, Claude Monet, Georges Seurat and Henri Matisse did not paint "realistically" photographic reproductions. And it is also true that some paintings exaggerate or dramatize to combine visual elements with narrative to make a more forceful poetic statement: for example, many paintings of the crucifixion, such as El Greco's *Christ on the Cross*. Modern painters such as Auguste Rodin, Edward Munch, George Rouault and Picasso similarly explore the relationship of the



“Group 6, No. 38D,” acrylic on canvas, 4’x5’. “This painting, made late in 1975, again plays organic form against geometric form, the differences being the use of a very transparent paint, causing the visual characteristics of the paint to stand out more, and the less repetitive rhythmic quality of the lines.”

abstract with the narrative, but in order to make more focused, powerful statements, not at all to distort.

SPECTRUM: Of course, completely abstract art doesn’t distort because it isn’t even dealing with what we see in our ordinary lives, or at least think we are seeing.

Henriksen: Exactly. Pure abstract art focuses exclusively on visual elements without distorting or being distracted by narrative.

SPECTRUM: Pure abstract, you’re saying, doesn’t distort reality; it ignores it?

Henriksen: But in a sense abstract art *is* realistic. After all, it shows natural color and real, existing form. In fact, abstract artists probably can’t create a form that doesn’t exist somewhere in nature. The forms exist somewhere, only on a different scale.

SPECTRUM: And obviously, you think the ability to see that kind of reality is “pleasing to the Lord.”

Henriksen: Yes. Abstract art is spiritual by its very nature. It allows us to penetrate past symbols to the basic elements of visual experi-

ence, and to perceive how harmony is produced. As we contemplate abstract art, we can grasp the fundamental structures of visual reality. It can be the means through which we experience the God-given sensibility to organize and to create, to share in the basic harmony of creation.

SPECTRUM: Then, you wouldn’t think it sufficient if attacks on abstract art turned to mere toleration. You want the Adventist community to recognize that abstract art is religious in its very nature?

Henriksen: Yes. Art, for me, is partly a search—a search for truth in visual phenomena, and thus a means to better understand beauty. For me, art is a profound way of experiencing the gift of human creativity, and to enter both the variety and unity of God’s creation.

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1. E. E. Cleveland, “Modern Art,” *The Ministry* (May 7, 1971), p. 64.
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Does God-Talk Make Sense Today?

Facing the Secular Challenge

by Richard Rice

The experience of a young Seventh-day Adventist woman living in southern California illustrates how Christians are finding that they are making sense to fewer and fewer people.

I have a neighbor, a lady whom I consider to have more of those qualities of “Christian goodness” than most of us have or could hope to have. I greatly admire her for her gentleness, sincerity and genuine concern for the troubles of others. But she does not believe in God—any God.

I usually avoid becoming involved in discussions of religion because I have so little real education concerning my beliefs. But somehow we began discussing the existence of God. My first question was, “If you don’t believe in God, what do you believe in?”

She answered, “I believe in goodness.”

I then asked, “What for?”

She said, “Because I believe in Mankind, and I know that whatever I do for my fellow man is not wasted, but helps us to move forward to a time when man will be all that he is capable of being and all that he should be.”

Not knowing how to approach her, I then asked, “What do you feel caused our existence—why are we here? If God didn’t create us, who or what did?”

She answered, “I don’t know that we were ‘created.’ And neither does anyone else. They’re all just guessing and I have no faith in guesses. I am not sure that there are not many

worlds of thoughtful beings. There are many things of which I am not sure—but Man and his potential are real.”

I told her that I believe in God because I know that our intricate and complex world is not an “accident of nature,” but that it has a master plan and there is a purpose in the universe. And I said that I believe in Jesus Christ because I believe in God Himself. “There is no valid reason,” I said, “not to believe in Jesus, if one does believe in God. Who can say that it is too strange a thing for a God who made the heavens and the earth, to send His Son to the earth to help us? And who can deny the beauty and ultimate goodness of Jesus’ life?”

“Yes,” she replied, “that is reasonable to assume or believe, if there is indeed a God. But you base your beliefs on a faith in your heart. When you say, ‘I know,’ what makes you know? You see, I have no faith in what I do not know, but I do know that there is man—and I have faith in man. Does that seem reasonable to you?”

I tried to illustrate my faith in God by saying, “Love is a real thing but we cannot see it. Yet, we have faith in its existence. I know I depend on love daily—on my husband’s love, and on God’s love. God’s love is as real and tangible as my husband’s love for me and my love for my family. It’s there and I am very sure of it, even though I can’t touch or see it. Reason teaches us what we see, but faith teaches us the existence of that which caused the things that we see.”

She said to me, “I respect your faith, but there is only one thing I can be sure of—that life is a reality, that it can be beautiful, meaningful and important, or very ugly, depending

Richard Rice received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago Divinity School, where he studied with both Langdon Gilkey and Schubert Ogden. He teaches in the College of Arts and Sciences of Loma Linda University.

on how we live it. What man is depends on man; he can be just an intelligent animal, self-satisfying and living only for the moment, or he can be beautiful, having all the qualities that separate 'higher existence' from that of animals—those qualities of kindness, justice, desire for knowledge and love for fellow man.'

The conversation went on, but I found that I did not have words for this intelligent, articulate lady. I wanted to share my awareness of God with her—to prod her into some doubt of her beliefs, hoping at least to make her question enough to seek more answers. But I failed. What could I have said besides "I believe" and "I know"? What could I have done to open the door for further discussion? We had no "working assumptions" or common ground on which to meet. How can I "teach" someone to have faith? What should I have said?

This conversation illustrates how difficult it is to communicate religious commitment to people who object to beliefs once accepted by nearly everyone. Our society has undergone a change in religious outlook and this poses problems for Christian faith both numerous and complex. This article concentrates on one of these problems: the challenge to belief in God. It will examine the features of contemporary society which give rise to this challenge, the most forceful philosophical expression of this challenge, and finally, the various responses formulated to this challenge by representative Christian theologians. It should be emphasized that this article undertakes, not to resolve the problem, but to explore how the problem might be resolved, given the resources currently at hand.¹

No aspect of the religious outlook of contemporary society represents a more formidable challenge to Christian faith than the widespread absence of belief in God. For the reality of God stands among the most important of Christian beliefs, and, in the eyes of some, represents the very basis of any Christian affirmation whatever. One Christian thinker argues that the problem of God is not just one problem among several others, but really the only problem there is.² He believes that any attempt to provide a logical account of the contents of Christian faith is

doomed from the outset unless the essential religious idea—the idea of God—makes sense. Christianity, then, finds itself called upon to justify its very existence. Nothing can be taken for granted; nothing within the contents of Christian faith can be tacitly assumed as true.

Just why is the reality of God a problem today? The briefest possible answer to this question is one word—"secularism." One Adventist theologian, Fritz Guy, has made secularism an object of his own reflection. In a recent article entitled, "How 'Secular' Should Adventist Theology Be?"³ he identifies four main ingredients in contemporary secularism. The first is a conception of reality as limited to what exists in space and time. The real world is the world we can explore either directly with our senses, or by extending our sensory experience through the use of refined scientific equipment. The second ingredient is the assumption that knowledge is a matter of empirical fact. According to the secular mind, truth is what is capable of scientific verification, the final court of appeal. And what is incapable of scientific verification is not false, but simply meaningless.

Any supersensory or transcendent reality is excluded. Man is left very much on his own to solve his problems or attempt to find meaning

"No aspect of the religious outlook of contemporary society represents a more formidable challenge to Christian faith than the widespread absence of belief in God."

for his life. Thus, the third ingredient in secularism is a particular view of man. It is the notion that human beings seem to have almost infinite capabilities. The accomplishments of technology within our own lifetime seem to support this optimistic assessment of human ability. Man's successful ventures into space no doubt provide the most obvious examples. Finally, secularism assumes that value is entirely relative, centered in the immediate future with no reference to something beyond this life or world.

"This, then, is the picture of contemporary secularism in North America," Guy writes, "a combination of naturalism, humanism, and relativism."⁴

Having these essential characteristics, modern secularism expresses itself in both optimistic and pessimistic moods. In the absence of transcendent reality, some interpret man's situation as one of awesome loneliness, with the world an empty stage or a bleak, windswept wilderness. Others speak of man's liberation. Having rid himself of enslavement to mythical higher powers, he is free at last to explore and exploit the possibilities for fulfillment that the world provides. Thus, man's release from the transcendent has been both celebrated and bemoaned. In quite general terms, pessimistic secularism prevails in Europe, and optimistic secularism is more dominant in America.

If the contemporary view leaves man utterly on his own in a reality limited to what his senses perceive, then it is not hard to see why the idea of God seems irrelevant, and language about God so out of touch with our experience as to be incomprehensible.⁵

The contemporary spirit responds to talk about God not by saying "I disagree," but by saying, "I can't make any sense out of your words. When you speak of God, I have no idea what you are talking about. I hear arrangements of familiar syllables, but they have no intelligible content, so I find your utterances meaningless." The most forceful challenge to Christian faith today is not whether Christianity's claims are true or false but whether they even make sense.

Both the general intellectual outlook we have described and the particular challenge this outlook poses to theological language have received expression within a trend of modern thought called "analytic philosophy." In both its "logical positivist" and "linguistic analyst" branches, this philosophical movement is concerned about clarifying language and rejects any attempt to construct speculative philosophical or metaphysical systems. Instead of describing the nature of ultimate reality, analytic philosophers attempt the more modest task of analyzing our use of words. They talk carefully about the way we talk.

Ever since the movement originated about the

turn of the century, one of its major objectives has been to establish a criterion of meaning by which to tell whether sentences are genuine assertions. Do they convey information, or only appear to do so? One important attempt to formulate such a criterion is Antony Flew's principle of falsification.⁶ According to this principle, a meaningful assertion, that is, one that actually conveys information, implicitly denies something; it is incompatible with some conceivable state of affairs. In other words, a sentence has cognitive meaning only if it is possible to conceive of some sensory experience that would count against it. The crucial question in determining whether a purported assertion is meaningful is to ask, What counts against it? Under what circumstances would the statement be false? If it turns out that nothing counts against it, that it is compatible with every conceivable experience, then it is meaningless; it really tells you nothing.⁷

Flew illustrates what happens when the principle of falsification is applied to statements about God in the famous parable of the gardener.⁸ Once upon a time two explorers came upon a clearing in the jungle. In the clearing were growing many flowers and many weeds. One explorer says, "Some gardener must tend this plot." The other disagrees, "There is no gardener." So they pitch their tents and set a watch. No gardener is ever seen. "But perhaps he is an invisible gardener." So they set up a barbed-wire fence. They electrify it. They patrol with bloodhounds. But no shrieks ever suggest that some intruder has received a shock. No movements of the wire ever betray an invisible climber. The bloodhounds never give cry. Yet, still the believer is not convinced. "But there is a gardener, invisible, intangible, insensible to electric shocks, a gardener who has no scent and makes no sound, a gardener who comes secretly to look after the garden which he loves." At last, the skeptic despairs, "But what remains of your original assertion? Just how does what you call an invisible, intangible, eternally elusive gardener differ from an imaginary gardener or even from no gardener at all?" Finally, the statement, *There is a gardener*, turns out to be meaningless. It dies the death of a thousand qualifications.

According to Flew, the same thing happens to theological utterances about God. At first glance, statements like *God loves the world* or

God has a plan appear to be assertions about the universe. But when you ask what these statements *mean*, you have a hard time getting a clear answer. Those who make such statements allow nothing to count against them, not even the massive presence of evil in the world. As a result, there is no difference, discernible by sense-experience, between saying, There is a God who loves the world, and saying, There is no God who loves the world. Since statements involving God thus appear to be compatible with any state of affairs, Flew, epitomizing the reasoning of analytic philosophers, concludes that all talk of God is meaningless; it has no cognitive content.

The responses of Christian theologians to this major philosophical challenge have been widely varied. In the 1960s, a small group called "death of God" theologians more or less capitulated to the view that it is meaningless to speak of God and formulated theological proposals that avoided such language.⁹ These theologians attracted widespread attention and created an immediate stir in the popular press, but generated no enduring theological movement. Indeed, one wonders how they could have, since the announcement that God is dead seems more a form of theological hara-kiri than an invitation to constructive theological dialogue. At any rate, their views were subjected to devastating criticism, and passed swiftly from serious considerations.

Nevertheless, "death of God" theology did set in bold relief the formidable challenge of secularism. The prevailing intellectual climate not only obliges Christian theology to establish the intelligibility of theistic language, but also imposes strictures on any such attempt. Specifically, it rules out as question-begging any appeal to the contents of privileged experiences as grounds for the meaningfulness of God-language. It will not do to appeal to "revelation" or to "personal religious experiences" to establish the meaningfulness of talk about God, because the reality of God is necessarily presupposed as the source of such revelation and as the object of such experiences. The meaning of affirmations concerning the divine reality is precisely the point in question. Consequently, the challenge can be effectively met only by appealing to common human experience and by

demonstrating that God-language illuminates a dimension of reality as every human being encounters it.

In recent years, a number of Christian theologians have undertaken this task. We shall look briefly at the arguments of two of them, not to assess the relative success or failure of their proposals, but simply to analyze how their arguments proceed, and thus see how the challenge to theism is currently being met.

Langdon Gilkey and Schubert M. Ogden, two American Protestant theologians, share the conviction that an adequate understanding of human experience must include the recognition of a religious dimension as essential to human existence. Experience cannot be restricted, they say, to the deliverances of the senses. They argue for the meaningfulness of God-language by (1) calling attention to significant human experiences, (2) showing that these experiences disclose certain essential characteristics of human existence, (3) demonstrating that these essential characteristics point or refer to a transcendent reality, identifiable as God, and (4) concluding that God-language is meaningful if it gives expression to fundamental aspects of human experience. Both maintain that a careful examination of ordinary human experience in the world reveals that some of its essential characteristics have no explanation unless they are interpreted as referring to a dimension of reality that can be ultimately identified as God.

The first step in the central argument of Langdon Gilkey's major theological work, *Naming the Whirlwind: The Renewal of God-Language*, is to examine carefully certain phenomena in which the essential nature of human experience is vividly illuminated. Take, for example, the phenomenon of birth, "the concrete experience," in Gilkey's words, "in which the power and wonder of existence and of life have most directly manifested themselves to mankind."¹⁰

At the birth of a child, particularly that of one's own child, a person is acutely aware of the wonder and power of life. This experience of power and vitality has its negative counterpart, Gilkey observes, in the universal fear or anxiety that we could lose our existence, our power to be and to continue in being. In other words, we are also all aware that our existence is radically contingent, an awareness so basic to our experi-

ence that contingency represents an essential element of human nature.¹¹

In similar fashion, Gilkey identifies three other essential structures of human experience; relativity, temporality and freedom. He then attempts to show that each points to a dimension of what he calls ultimacy. He argues, for example, that human contingency is felt by us against a background or horizon of ultimacy, and is thus inexplicable unless the reality of the ultimate is affirmed. The same holds for the other essential characteristics of experience. Gilkey insists that this dimension of ultimacy finds expression only in religious language, and concludes his argument by describing such language as "an essential and creative aspect of secular culture."¹²

It is Gilkey's position, then, that religious language is meaningful, indeed indispensable, to secular self-understanding, because it alone expresses a dimension of reality to which all the essential structures of human existence refer. It is, therefore, evident that the dimension of reality to which Christian faith assigns the word "God" is intimately related to our secular life and all its essential elements.

In spite of his rigorous argument that religious discourse is meaningful within the context of secular human experience, Gilkey declines, in the end to identify the dimension of ultimacy he so carefully describes as God. This explicit identification, he feels, lies beyond the point where he has successfully advanced the argument, and this is why he describes his proposal as a "prolegomenon" to theology proper.

Schubert M. Ogden also argues that common human experience, particularly the lived experience of contemporary secular man, is unintelligible unless seen against a background of ultimacy. But he insists that this background cannot be understood as anything other than God. Ogden's rather striking claim is that "for the secular man of today, . . . as for any other man, faith in God cannot but be real because it is in the final analysis unavoidable."¹³ In other words, there is a sense in which everyone, whatever his explicit intellectual position, at the level of his deepest personal experience ultimately exhibits faith in God. Such faith is unavoidable, in his view, because the idea of God represents

"the most adequate reflective account we can give of certain experiences in which we all inescapably share."¹⁴ To understand Ogden's position, we must determine what these experiences are and how the idea of God serves as their most adequate reflective account.

Following the work of Stephen Toulmin, an analyst of religious language, Ogden observes that each fundamental human activity gives rise to certain peculiar questions which it is itself incapable of answering. Moral inquiry, for exam-

"Thus [argues Ogden] even an atheist believes in God, for his denial of this belief is contradicted by the deeper levels of his own experience."

ple, can suggest answers to a great variety of questions concerning how human beings ought to act, but no moral inquiry will provide a satisfactory answer to a question such as, "Why should I keep my promises, anyway?" or "Why be moral at all?" even though such a question naturally arises at the limits of man's activity as a moral agent.

Similarly, one might suggest, the various healing professions undertake to answer questions as to how man's physical well-being in all its aspects can be promoted and safeguarded. A reflective examination of such endeavors leads naturally to the question as to why, precisely, health is better than disease, or why life is better than death, and yet this is a question to which no strictly medical answer can be given.

Analysis of religious assertions reveals that their function is precisely that of answering "limit questions" such as these; questions which naturally arise at the limits of man's activities as moral actor and scientific knower. Religious statements respond to these limit questions by providing essential reassurance that man's moral and scientific activities are really worthwhile. Religious assertions measure man, Ogden further argues, because they re-present, or give expression to, a fundamental confidence that human

existence is meaningful.¹⁵ Basic to Ogden's argument, then, is the conviction that all human activity ultimately presupposes and, therefore, inevitably testifies to something religious language expresses, namely, "an underlying confidence in the abiding worth of our life."¹⁶

In the second phase of his argument, Ogden analyzes the idea of God in terms of this basic trust in the meaningfulness of life. The function of the word "God," as he puts it, is to "refer to the objective ground in reality itself of our ineradicable confidence in the final worth of our existence."¹⁷ In other words, "God" refers to what it is in reality that justifies our confidence in the worthwhileness of life.

Now, notice what follows from this line of reasoning. If, as Ogden has sought to demonstrate, all human experience proceeds ultimately from an unavoidable confidence in the final worth of our existence, and if the word "God" denotes what it is in reality that grounds this confidence, then there is an important sense in which everyone has faith in God. "At the deeper level of our actual existence," Ogden argues, "belief in God's reality proves to be inescapable."

Consequently, because all men believe in God on this fundamental level of their experience, any interpretation of human existence which ignores the idea of God is bound to be incomplete, and any such attempt which rejects the idea of God is bound, in the final analysis, to be self-contradictory. Thus, even an atheist believes in God, for his denial of this belief is contradicted by the deeper levels of his own experience.

Despite the differences between them, the arguments of Langdon Gilkey and Schubert Ogden exhibit an important similarity. Each defends God-talk by appealing to the phenomenon usually invoked to deny that talk about God makes any sense, namely, ordinary human experience. At the very least, their proposals demonstrate that it is possible today to argue for the basic claims of Christian faith in such a way as to demand a serious hearing even within a secular climate.

Recalling the conversation reported at the beginning of this article, we may ask what practical contribution this discussion makes. Chris-

tians who want to communicate their religious commitment today may learn at least two important points.

First, the challenge which the contemporary spirit presents to faith is unavoidable. Christians may not encounter it in a technical philosophical form, but they are bound to meet the view that belief in God really doesn't make sense for a thinking person in the modern world.

Second, Christians need not feel at a complete loss in facing this challenge. They may appeal to experience shared by believers and unbelievers alike to support their belief in God. They may argue, in effect, that the unbeliever's denial of God is contradicted by his own experience, and that the actual way he lives his life in the final analysis affirms the reality of God.

It is, of course, doubtful that such an approach will, by itself, effect conversion. But it will certainly show that belief in God can be argued for, rather than simply asserted, and that the question of God's reality is far from closed even within the prevailing intellectual atmosphere.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. In a later article, or articles, I hope to demonstrate not merely how effective arguments for the meaningfulness of religious discourse and for the reality of God *might be* formulated, but that and how such arguments indeed *can and ought to be* formulated.
2. Schubert M. Ogden, *The Reality of God and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1966), p. 1.
3. *The Ministry*, October 1974.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
5. Langdon Gilkey, *Naming the Whirlwind: The Renewal of God-Language* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1969), p. 61.
6. For the best-known attempt, see A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (2nd ed.; New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1952).
7. "Theology and Falsification," in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, ed. Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), p. 98.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 97.
9. See, for example, Paul M. van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel Based on an Analysis of Its Language* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1963).
10. *Naming the Whirlwind*, p. 317.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 319.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 365.
13. *The Reality of God*, p. 21.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

The Rise of a New Adventist History

Review by Ronald D. Graybill

The Rise of Adventism: Religion and Society in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America
edited by Edwin Scott Gaustad
Harper & Row, 329 pp., \$12.50

This book on *The Rise of Adventism* could have significance far beyond its contents. It is one indication of the possible emergence of a "New Adventist History."

The first phase in Adventist history was represented by James White and J. N. Loughborough. What they wrote might be called providential history. It was designed to demonstrate the direct and active leadership of God in Adventist experience. It ignored almost totally the general political and social history of the times which it covered.

LeRoy Froom and F. D. Nichol led the next wave of Adventist history writing. They wrote apologetic history, designed to defend Adventism against its historical and theological critics. Their histories were more conscious of historical context, more rigorous about sources, but still primarily defensive.

Both providential and apologetic history have a useful role to play in the church's life. However, if the New Adventist History can live up to the promise of *The Rise of Adventism*, its primary effort will be to place the record of the Adventist people and the Adventist church in the mainstream of historical scholarship. Those

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who write this history should strive to make Adventist history useful and credible to non-Adventist scholars. They will doubtless report the convictions of the pioneers concerning God's providential leadership; they will probably defend whenever defense is necessary for purposes of clarity and understanding; but primarily they will attempt to apply the best canons of historical scholarship to their religious heritage. They will attempt to write history that will be seen as a part of the general quest for the understanding of the past, not an outgrowth of purely Adventist interests.

It is not enough that this history strive to be dispassionate and objective. It must also be interpretive in the way that the essays by Ernest Sandeen and Jonathan Butler are interpretive in this volume. Sandeen attempts to show how Millerism was consistent with the needs and anxieties of the times in which it arose. Butler attempts to explain the shift in Adventism from a totally apolitical pessimism to a more accommodating political position. He sees the expansion of mission activity, changes in American politics, and the rising social status of American Adventists as factors in the shift.

The Rise of Adventism symbolizes what the New Adventist History could and should be in a number of ways. Non-Adventist scholars, experts in their fields, are, in this book, contributing information on the historical context in which Adventism rose. The book, published by a major publisher, has received favorable reviews in a number of scholarly journals. At the same time, it has been approved for sale in Adventist Book Centers. This latter factor is of no mean importance. If the New Adventist History is to succeed, it must continue to draw on the support and contributions of all members of

the church, as well as interested scholars outside the church.

The lecture series which lay behind *The Rise of Adventism* was originally the brainchild of Professor Ronald L. Numbers. Numbers' more recent work has aroused a good deal of controversy, but he should not be denied credit where credit is due—and a great deal of credit is due him for this book. Vern Carner, an Adventist scholar whose ideas and talents have sometimes run ahead of the rest of us, was responsible for actually organizing and bringing the lecture series to fruition. Carner, along with Sakae Kubo of Andrews University and Curt Rice of Aurora College, was also responsible for the enormously valuable bibliographical essay which occupies the final 110 pages of this book.

The content of *The Rise of Adventism* is more than just symbolic, however. John B. Blake's essay on Health Reform is a classic brief account of that subject. Timothy L. Smith's discussion of motivation in history is an important caution to those interested in Adventist history, where questions of motive are often so intriguing. Adventists have talked a lot about the theological implications of Spiritualism, but have paid almost no attention to its historical significance. Here R. Laurence Moore's essay is a valuable introduction.

Each essay has its contribution to make, but Jonathan M. Butler's is perhaps the most important one on Adventist history *per se*. Butler can sometimes let the creative richness of his language interfere with what he is actually trying to say, but in this essay he manages to sail smoothly through some rather troubled waters. He points to painful paradoxes, but he does it with such grace that the tension becomes a tonic rather than an irritant.

The promise of a New Adventist History, represented by *The Rise of Adventism*, the growing success of the journal, *Adventist Heritage*, the expanding research facilities of the church, and the number of scholars, both Adventists and others, who are willing to take Adventist history seriously, is a promise which may be broken. It can be broken if those engaged in it lose their trust in each other or in the value of the quest for a better understanding of our past. But if it is not broken, the next decade should be an exciting one indeed for the church's historians.

The following is a companion review, by Sidney E. Ahlstrom, a non-Adventist scholar, of the same volume.

The Editors

The ten chapters which constitute the heart of this volume," writes its editor, "were delivered during 1972-73 in the University Church of Loma Linda University in southern California." Since that university is a Seventh-day Adventist institution, the book's title would lead one to expect a unified focus on the rise and triumph of Adventist ideas and institutions. Quite the contrary, however, it is the subtitle which best describes the contents. What we have is a thoughtful, scholarly and provocative book on a momentous period in the life of American Protestantism. Since it appears during the bicentennial era, one should also note that several of these essays deal with movements and events that are crucial to the American patriotic tradition which fervent evangelicals were then reshaping.

Winthrop S. Hudson begins his opening essay with an account of John Quincy Adams, filled with fears over the advent of Andrew Jackson in the nation's capital. In essays that follow, there are cogent studies of Jacksonian America and the tumultuous religious events of the 1840s and 1850s, during which the notion of a redeemer nation's manifest destiny, in the North at least, grew ripe and succulent on the American tree of knowledge. On the other hand, by what seems to be a conscious intention, there is very little—almost no—emphasis on the South or on the winds of advocacy that during these years were bringing the old Federal Union to its dark and bloody end. Yet we know that story (more or less) and are thus benefitted by having our attention called to other controversies and visions—even dreams of a perfect realization of God's kingdom in America.

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In other words, we are given a clearer image of that age of innocency to which Henry James referred when he described the complex world with which postbellum writers had to deal. We are reminded again of the degree to which that was indeed an age of faith, a time of rejuvenated evangelicalism, when the rising claims of natural science were being shunted aside and the rational cosmopolitanism of the founding fathers was being lost from mind amid the clamor of conflicting eschatologies and apocalypses. Above all, we are reminded of the inescapable centrality of Protestant thinking for the life of the nation.

Perhaps the best way of accomplishing the difficult task of reviewing a composite work such as this is to take brief note of each contribution.

Winthrop Hudson, as already indicated, opens the volume with an animated and convincing survey of "A Time of Religious Ferment." John B. Blake then provides one of the best brief accounts of "Health Reform" and of the age's revolt against the purgings and bleedings of medical orthodoxy that I have yet seen. Of equal value is John C. Greene's analysis of "Science and Religion," in which, after a brief survey, the antiscientific biblicism of Taylor Lewis is studied with special care. Robert V. Hine's overview of communitarian experiments is extremely brief for so complex a subject, yet it is balanced and useful.

R. Laurence Moore's account of spiritualism then sets new standards of excellence in an area where lurid and uncritical studies abound; he sees the American movement losing its force and significance during the 1870s. In his essay on millennialism, Ernest Sandeen carefully places William Miller in the context of older, primarily British, speculation on last things and stresses the degree to which the Millerite movement fits more comfortably into the biblicistic atmosphere of the day than earlier historians were inclined to believe. William G. McLoughlin, in his essay on revivalism, provides an important synthesis of his own numerous writings on what is "one of the most original . . . contributions to Christian thought and practice made by the American people." He quite rightly sees revivalism to be so endemic and pervasive as to be

almost inseparable from the American Protestant tradition as a whole.

The remainder of the volume is devoted more specifically to Millerism, premillennialism, and the Seventh-day Adventist tradition, David T. Arthur dealing with the first subject and Jonathan M. Butler with "Adventism and the American Experience." Of special significance to American scholarship in this field is the final portion of the book, a 110-page "bibliographical essay" compiled and written by Vern Carner, Sakae Kubo and Curt Rice. This work by scholars and librarians in Seventh-day Adventist institutions is a contribution of lasting significance. It provides an extremely fitting final portion to a carefully planned, excellently edited, well-printed scholarly volume.

Omitted from my discussion so far has been an essay by Timothy L. Smith on "Social Reform," an area in which his own contribution has been very large. On this occasion, however, he chose to contribute a ruminative essay in which he discusses his own relationship to the major works that have appeared in this field, and in so doing pays an important and worthy tribute to the elder Arthur Meier Schlesinger's immense contributions, in his own work and through the many students he inspired. Smith confesses to a larger concern for consequences than for motives as he ponders the great stream of visionary and perfectionist aspiration that guided evangelicals in their labors. He closes with a quotation from William Sloane Coffin, Jr., that "the ethics of perfection have become the ethics of survival," and confesses that he now sees that observation as more penetrating than when he first heard it in 1967.

To a reviewer like myself who was reading this book during the last days of the American war in southeast Asia, the same basic question that troubled Coffin and Smith rose like a spectre. What are we to say of this whole long process of "Israelization" of America, this notion of a nation's divine election that stretches from Governor Winthrop's Arbella Sermon of 1630 down to the overkill reflexes of the Mayaguez incident in 1975? Even in this interrogative mood, however, one must return to praise the ways in which the essays of this volume inform and stimulate the inquiring reader.

Music in Life

Review by Edith Marie Land

The Christian and His Music

by Paul Hamel

Review and Herald, 159 pp., \$3.25

In this work, Paul Hamel, chairman of the music department at Andrews University, has "sought to present information that will make the reader more keenly aware of music's power and importance and that will assist him in developing a personal Christian philosophy regarding its use." Within the limits of his purpose, the author succeeds in provoking thought, but he could have made a greater contribution had he asked other questions of his subject.

After noting the omnipresence of music in modern life, Hamel examines music's effect upon the emotions. Drawing upon psychological studies, he argues that "music releases certain kinds of feelings or emotions, and . . . these feelings affect thoughts that prompt behavior. . . ." He believes these effects result both from the music itself and its lyrics and associations. From this standpoint, he discusses church music, opera and rock, and touches folk music and jazz briefly.

Because he believes that the greater the music the more adequately it can communicate truth, the author prefers hymns in church worship and gives a list of technical criteria for judging superior and inferior hymn tunes. He allows traditional gospel music a secondary place as an

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expression of personal experience but frowns on the use of contemporary folk and popular styles. As for opera, he finds the plots emphasizing "violence, passion and love." Therefore, "a sincere Christian would not habituate the operatic theatre." Rock music, however, receives his severest condemnation because of its big beat, sexuality, aggression and its association with drugs and social protest, among other factors. "Much of what can be said about rock 'n roll is true also of jazz," he states. "Its music is often extremely sensual, and the lyrics primarily immoral."

Hamel also offers practical suggestions concerning the use of music. In his chapter on music in the home, he discusses the age at which a child is ready to take music lessons and how to find a good music teacher. And he suggests the means of incorporating new hymns into a church service in order to widen a congregation's repertoire. The book concludes with guidelines for attending concerts, building a record library, and establishing music standards for one's own home.

Although the author contends "that to hear music is to respond to it," he documents only the fact that music affects emotions, not that it directly shapes behavior. Of the psychological studies he refers to, only two date from the 1960s, while the others are from the 1930s and 1940s. Furthermore, none of them seem to make a connection between particular styles of music and particular emotions. When it comes to rock music, the author relies heavily on *Time* magazine rather than psychological works. Because of these documentary limitations and because much of what he says is undocumented, his case

regarding music and behavior remains to be proved.

Hamel's judgments also seem to be shaped by his belief that only serious and sacred music are worthwhile. For example, he says, "Musically educated people tire of popular music more quickly than do those who are not so well educated, and conversely, they tend to have an increasingly pleasurable experience upon repeated performances of serious music." Classically trained individuals such as conductors Arthur Fiedler and Leonard Bernstein and critic Henry Pleasants would strongly disagree with the first part of this statement, for they recognize that popular music plays a different function from serious music. But more importantly, the author's prejudice against popular music prevents him from exploring whether entertainment music can play a legitimate role in the life of a Christian. On the other hand, his assumption of serious music's worth keeps him from discussing, apart from opera, whether one must use discrimination in that realm.

Nor is the author's case strengthened by his tendency to use extreme examples to support his views regarding opera and rock. After summarizing the plots of several popular operas he concludes that "tragedy, passion, illicit love and violent death are very essential ingredients in successful operas." He does not address the social and political contexts of these operas which are necessary to a complete understanding. Neither does he ask whether there is a legitimate place in the arts for these elemental aspects of the drama of human existence. After all, we do not condemn the Bible even though such acts fill its pages. Simply to include such things, even as subjects, is not necessarily to glorify them. A fuller examination of Christian esthetic principles in relation to this problem is much needed.

In examining rock music, Hamel refers to such extreme examples of hard rock as the

Doors, Jefferson Airplane, Rolling Stones and Janis Joplin. He has no difficulty arguing the association of drugs and sex with the life-style and music of these musicians. But he gives little attention to the varieties of rock from soft to acid and bubblegum to soul. Therefore, his analysis bears little apparent applicability to the music of such groups as the Osmonds, Carpenters and Simon and Garfunkel. But apart from lyrics and life-style, he also argues that rock music is sensual and, therefore, bad. He does not explain, however, what makes music sensual and why sensuality in itself is necessarily bad. Such a point needs discussion for it applies to serious as well as popular music. Also, the author does not ask to what extent crowd psychology, rather than the music, might explain some of the audience behavior he criticizes.

Finally, Hamel reveals his biases in his use of highly colored language that does little to advance understanding. For example, rock groups have devoted themselves to Jesus Rock, "asking the God of heaven to indulge in religious baby talk with them." Admired jazzmen of the 1960s played "to the accompaniment of booze and dark lust in big-city nightclubs. The alarms of the concerned were drowned in the moral cesspools of popular jazz." "All that seems to count is the new sound and its murderous mood." Although appearing most frequently in the chapter on rock, such statements occur throughout the book.

As the publishers note on the cover, "One of the most controversial areas in practical Christianity is that of music." Although *The Christian and His Music* does not resolve the controversy, it should provoke further thought and study. Such study should include both laboratory testing of music's psychological and behavioral effects and development of a Christian philosophy of aesthetics. Had such work supported the arguments in this book its contribution would be more substantive and lasting.

Letters from Readers

Despite our usual policy of publishing relatively short letters, we are publishing the following long communication.

The Editors

To the Editors: As one of the persons involved in the story of "Merikay and the Pacific Press," I appreciate Tom Dybdahl's accurate reporting and reliance on legal documents for the facts.

There is, however, one important aspect of the case that received scant attention in your report. And that is the Press's defense argument as defined by its lawyer Malcolm Dungan: "The Church claims exemption from all civil laws in all of its religious institutions." (Opening brief, p. 104.)

The Press reiterated this defense in its brief of August 22, 1975, pp. 4, 5, appealing the injunction against it: "Why then is the church here, defending itself against charges that it 'retaliated' against women for invoking laws against sex discrimination in employment, instead of meekly complying? . . . We are here . . . to uphold the right of a church to carry on its holy work free of governmental interference by courts, commissions, or any other arm of civil authority."

And still more pointedly in its appeal brief of July 6, 1975, p. 78, counsel for the Press announced: "The church is free to ignore, even to flout, measures which bind all others."

This marks the first time that any Adventist institution has claimed to be above all civil law.

To Press employees, however, PPPA management has continued to take the traditional Adventist view that the Press is indeed subject to the law and will obey it.

On June 25, 1973, Press Board Chairman R. R. Bietz told assembled employees: "I don't like the idea that's advanced now and then that we don't regard the law. We do regard the law. We Adventists are known as regarding the law. . . . We're not a bunch of violators, and we're going to be within the law."

On May 7, 1973, *Signs* editor Lawrence Max-

well publicly assured the employees: "If there is a law about wages, there'll be government inspectors coming around and they'll see the wages are corrected in harmony with the law."

On June 4, 1974, Press Manager W. J. Blacker wrote in a bulletin to employees: "The Press intends to abide by the law. All of its efforts in both of these lawsuits have been designed to see to it that the Press complies with the law."

These contradictory responses from management—assurance to employees that the Press would submit to laws against discrimination, and yet at the same time resisting efforts of law enforcement agencies—created the conditions for the filing of three separate lawsuits against the Press.

Those who try to justify these two divergent positions of the Press sometimes say that Merikay Silver did not "go through channels," as they understand them, prescribed by Matthew 18. Somehow they seem to conclude from that assumption that the Press was thereby relieved of all responsibility. But even apart from that unwarranted conclusion, the premise is wrong.

First, Merikay and then others tried, unsuccessfully, on several occasions in May of 1972 to persuade the manager of the importance of laws against sex discrimination in employment, as well as E. G. White's similar counsel in the book, *Evangelism*. Merikay asked her friend Joan K. Bradford to write a letter explaining the law to him. Ordinarily, Ms. Bradford, an authority in the field of employment law, receives prompt response to such letters and employment problems are then worked out amicably. She received no response at all to her letter to the Press.

When Merikay's supervisor suggested that she write to the board chairman and General Conference president, she did so at once. Month after month, in fact, Merikay, I and others talked and wrote to various members of the Press executive committee, the board, and the General Conference Committee.

It was not until nine months later, at the end of January of 1973, after an independent investigation by the Labor Department resulted in a

refusal by the Press management to comply with the 1963 Equal Pay Act, that Merikay filed a class action suit. She filed it under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (enforced by the Equal-Employment Opportunity Commission rather than the Labor Department).

A few months later, unbeknown to us, the Labor Department filed a suit against the Press for willful noncompliance with the law.

Even after these suits were filed, Merikay and I and others continued our efforts to discuss the issues with Press management and resolve them voluntarily. Ms. Bradford repeatedly requested settlement conferences. A few were held. Mostly, Press management remained silent.

When, during 1974, the Press began to bring increasing pressures to bear on Merikay, me and others, the EEOC filed suit for retaliation. In it the Commission named the General Conference Committee as "acting in concert" with the Press to retaliate against employees who claim their rights under the law.

It was at this point that the Press hired a new lawyer, who announced that the Press "claims exemption from all civil laws."

Yet, to this day, to Press employees, management continues to maintain that it *is* subject to employment laws. In a recent bulletin to "hourly employees" announcing a new rule requiring the use of a time clock, Press management cited a Labor Department guideline: "EMPLOYEES' CONSENT DOESN'T MATTER. Courts have universally held that *employees can't waive their rights under the Wage-Hour Law*. Even if they agree to an illegal pay scheme, the employer will be ordered to pay backpay and overtime. This may seem unfair to the employer in some cases. But any other rule would allow an unscrupulous employer to take advantage of employees—especially poorer employees—who either don't know their rights, or need a job so badly they'll agree to anything."

Ironically, in quoting this labor guideline, Press management in effect also described the reason why suits under the labor laws were filed against the Press.

Yet, in its concluding argument in appealing the injunction against it (appeal brief, July 6, 1975, p. 80), the Press protests to the court: "This is why we are being intransigent here. As an organized religious denomination, the

Seventh-day Adventist Church insists that it is 'wholly exempt' from the cognizance of Civil Authority, and that slight entanglements, practical exceptions, and 'reasonable adjustments' are not to be tolerated."

At the same time, the Press publishes Ellen G. White's counsel in *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 72: "Jesus bade His disciples, instead of resisting the demands of those in authority, to do even more than was required of them. And, so far as possible, they should discharge every obligation, even if it were beyond what the law of the land required."

One other point in the article should be noted. The settlement offer described in pages 52 and 53 was later withdrawn by the Press and has not been renewed. The affirmative action program which Press management said the General Conference now makes mandatory in all Adventist institutions, the Press has not yet made known or put into practice. Management no longer advertises job opportunities (as it had begun to do) in the house organ, *Informer*. In other words, the Press is not only resisting law enforcement—it is not complying with the law voluntarily, either.

It is true that in 1973, six months after Merikay filed the class action, unmarried women employees with dependents were paid in lump sum the difference between rent allowance for women and that for married men for one year. (Married men *all* received this benefit, whether they had dependents or not.) In addition, the July cost of living raise for that year was a little more than usual in the case of women employees.

As far as the rent allowance system is concerned, the label "rent allowance" was removed entirely in July 1973. Instead, the Press incorporated into the various "basic rates" the equivalent of the General Conference schedule of basic wage plus living allowance. As it worked out, unmarried men, who had been receiving 2/3 of the rent allowance paid married men, were raised to the equivalent of married men's rates. Women, married and unmarried, continued to be paid at a rate equal to the General Conference schedule of basic wage plus female living allowance—1/3 of that for men. Those women who received "head of household" rent allowance in lumpsum for one year were immediately cut

back, in effect, to their previous rate of rent allowance.

It is only when these and other facts regarding sex discrimination come to light that one can see the Press's basic resistance to systematic elimination of sex discrimination which the law requires. Hence the protest by Press counsel in its appeal brief of August 22, 1975, p. 31: "We need hardly speak of what would happen if EEOC were to attempt to enforce Title VII throughout the Press. Such a thing would involve interrogation of workers, auditing records, preparation and review of job descriptions, censuses, resolution of conflicts in viewpoint as to what is equal work and what is not, the whole range of activities involved in the enforcement of a regulatory statute. The auditing of a nun to see whether she teaches arithmetic by reference to crucifixes instead of cupcakes is pale by comparison."

Undoubtedly, "the preparation and review of job descriptions" would show that a good many changes would be necessary to eliminate sex discrimination. Press management prefers to claim that they are not subject to the law at all.

The results of setting a legal precedent for religious organizations—Catholics, Protestants, and others, as well as Adventists—to act outside the law would be shocking. Yet, calculated or not, this is what the Press's arguments to the courts, if accepted, would lead to.

It is hardly conceivable that Adventists, who in their teachings support obedience to civil laws (excepting only those that would violate the law of God), should spend hundreds of thousands of dollars and endless time and energy in an attempt to establish just such a precedent which Adventists have always abhorred.

Surely, it is for us rather to heed Paul's admonition in Romans 12:1, 2: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities . . . he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment."

Lorna Tobler
Spiez, Switzerland

Dybdahl (SPECTRUM, Vol. 7, No. 2), I am wondering where Dybdahl got his information. Did he contact knowledgeable persons on both sides of the question? The article, if someone doesn't know the facts, could be misleading. It is stated on page 50, "In their defense, the women argued that they had followed the biblical plan for dealing with problems, as outlined in Matthew 18, that is, they had gone to the particular brethren involved, first privately and then with others. When they received no help they had gone to higher authorities. Only as a last resort had they appealed to the law."

Just to clarify the issue a bit, I would like to state that it was on May 22, 1972 that Merikay first came to the manager of the Pacific Press, asking for the same compensation and monthly benefits as a married man. Eight days later, on May 30, 1972, she wrote a letter to the manager, asking for a response, in writing, before the end of the week. On June 1, 1972, the manager of the Pacific Press received a letter, certified mail, from Attorney Joan K. Bradford, drawing the manager's attention to Title 7 of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and stating that Merikay Silver was entitled to equal benefits of employment as those accorded to male employees in a like position.

In this letter she also stated, "We are now notifying you that all future communications to Mrs. Silver regarding her rights to equal employment benefits are to be made through this office." The first time that Merikay contacted the Board Chairman was on Aug. 14, 1972, two and one-half months after she had contacted the attorney. On Aug. 17, 1972, I responded to her letter by stating, "You should have contacted the Chairman of the Board about the matter before going to the outside. If the Chairman of the Board would not pay any attention to your request, then you should have gotten in contact with Elder Pierson, the president of the General Conference. In our church we always go to the next higher organization, and this you failed to do. In other words, if the administration of the Pacific Press failed, in your opinion, to meet your request, the next logical step would have been for you to bring this matter to the Board of the Pacific Press. The management of the Press is responsible to the Board. You, however, never contacted the Board, but went directly to the outside and in this matter you failed your

To the Editors: Regarding the article, "Merikay and the Pacific Press," by Tom

Church.”

The impression should not prevail that Merikay went to law only after she followed the procedure outlined in Matthew 18. She began with Matthew 18 but got only as far as verse 16 and there she evidently got stuck. You will notice, according to the dates which I have given, that Merikay went to the law almost immediately after she contacted Elder Bohner.

R. R. Bietz,
La Crescenta, California

Elder Bietz, a former vice president of the General Conference, was until recently chairman of the board of the Pacific Press.

Tom Dybdahl Replies:

I was not aware of the specific facts that Elder Bietz presents, and they may cast some doubts on Mrs. Silver's intentions. Her attorney, Mrs. Joan Bradford, was a personal friend, and it is true that they had discussed the employment situation at the Press prior to Mrs. Silver's discussion with the Press Manager, Elder Bohner.

However, contacting a lawyer or asking that correspondence be handled through a lawyer does not constitute taking legal action. It was a way for Mrs. Silver to show the importance and seriousness of her claim. No legal action was taken until the brethren involved had been contacted.

If there are any other important facts not included in the article, I would be glad to learn them. It was not always easy to gather information on this particular subject; two knowledgeable brethren refused to discuss any specifics with me.

To the Editors: Roberta Moore ("Fact and Fiction About Women and Work," Volume 7, Number 2) finds our denominational reading matter slanted against girls, and says, "One might well ask, however, what girls would like to read; our libraries do not contain enough stories about girls to give them any choice." She also says, "We found sex stereotyping in much of the output of Adventist publishing houses."

Reading these statements, I wondered if we

here at the Pacific Press had revealed unconscious sex bias through the years, shortchanging the girls. I examined our *Destiny* paperbacks, now numbering 56 titles, in which we have put most of our stories and biographies for the past dozen years. I found that out of 56 titles, 16 of them had a female as a heroine, and 27 books were about men. In most cases, the women depicted were strong, individualistic, brave women. The very first book in the series was *That Book in the Attic*, by Helen K. Oswald, the story of a teen-age girl who became an Adventist, was persecuted by her dictatorial father, ran away from home and became an Adventist worker. The next title was *Heart Cry*, the story of a lady who suffered a severe heart attack but was brave and strong throughout. The fourth was *Some Rain Must Fall*, about Dr. Carrie Robbins, a strong, courageous missionary M.D. with a minister husband. The fifth, *As the Stars Forever*, told of Emilie Levidis, a heroine if there ever was one, horribly persecuted by her family for her firm stand for God and truth. (The villain in the story was a male.) Other volumes were biographies of Maria Hirschmann, Elly Economou and Elizabeth Redelstein, R.N.—all strong, independent doers, achievers.

Examination of our *Panda* books for children reveals similar results. Seven or eight out of the 24 titles thus far are stories of girls, and although a few are cast in typical "feminine" roles of wife, mother or nurse, none is portrayed as weak, helpless or foolish.

These comparisons are, I think, remarkable when you consider that (1) this book series includes biographies of J. N. Loughborough, Dr. Harry Miller, William Booth, Percy Magan, George W. Carver, George McCready Price and other important "doers" in a traditionally male-dominated society, and (2) these books have been published with no conscious effort to avoid sexual imbalance.

I can't help wondering if Miss Moore read any Seventh-day Adventist books before writing the article. "We found sex stereotyping," she says. No doubt she did find some, but her blanket statement virtually condemns SDA books *in toto* as reactionary and unfair.

Roberta, please send me some of those poor girls who have nothing to read.

Speaking of reactionary publications, I wonder if you have noticed that SPECTRUM's

board of editors and consulting editors lists 35 names—3 women and 32 men. This means 91.4% men and 8.6% women. One of the three women, called “editorial assistant,” serves under two editors who are both men. The AAF executive committee and representatives consists of 14 people, of which 2—14%—are women, and 12 are men—86%.

I wonder if this heavy preponderance of men on the staffs of SPECTRUM and AAF is an illustration of what Roberta Moore exposes in her article: “Boys who are always doing things . . . and . . . girls who simply are.” “Boys not only are more active than girls; they come through as more alert and intelligent.” Is this the firm position of AAF and SPECTRUM, in view of the virtual male monopoly in both the organization and its mouthpiece? Curiously, this obvious bias is highly visible even in the special SPECTRUM issue devoted to the improvement of the status of SDA women.

Cannot the leadership of AAF do anything about its heavy sexist bias? Don't the editors believe that females have ability and good brains, and that they should have a voice in AAF and SPECTRUM matters?

Richard H. Utt,
Book Editor
Pacific Press Publishing Association

Roberta J. Moore replies:

When a SPECTRUM editor referred Richard Utt's letter to me, he did so with the comment that he was sure I could write a “gentlemanly” reply.

I discovered a long time ago that when a man tells a woman she thinks like a man, he expects her to feel complimented, and far be it from me to treat lightly the compliment implied in the editor's words. I cannot help wondering, however, if anyone would think of inviting Richard Utt to pursue the subject further in a “ladylike” reply.

In our research on sexual stereotyping, Mrs.

Berger and I checked the biographical section of the library in Clara E. Rogers Elementary School (College Place, Wash.). We read books about women. We checked JMV reading course books for several years back. We read books used in the first and second grade classes. We read several months of the Sabbath school papers: *Primary Treasure*, *Our Little Friend* and *Guide*. Then, when we should have had sense enough to end the project, we read the first 15 months of *Insight* (this was in 1971, when *Insight* was still in its infancy).

So I guess one could say that, yes, we did some reading. Since I condensed 18 pages of typewritten material into a column and a half for the SPECTRUM article, I did not support my statement that we “did exhaustive reading in books . . . and periodicals.” We also interviewed several persons, including teachers and a librarian. The latter told us, as I mentioned in my article, that there are very few books about women because “famous people are usually men, you know.”

On the basis of this research, I wrote that much of the output of Seventh-day Adventist publishing houses showed sex stereotyping. The stereotyping showed in two ways. First, there were but few books (or, in the Sabbath School papers, few stories) about women and girls. Second, what few there were too often presented a picture of roles and personalities with obvious sex bias.

We need, of course, to update this research, to see if the picture has changed since 1971. Pacific Press now lists under biography, for example, several titles published between 1972 and 1975; some are about women. Perhaps our publishing houses now consistently show girls and women in roles other than those of housewives, nurses and secretaries and with personalities not colorless and indecisive.

If this should indeed be the case, I shall be happy to publish a gentlemanly acknowledgment, with full documentation as to what I have read.