

Adventist Town Meeting on Jewelry, Abortion, and Creation

Some topics we feature in *Spectrum* generate passionate and informed responses. During the past few months we have published essays on abortion (Vol. 19, No. 4), Creation (Vol. 20, No. 1), and jewelry (Vol. 20, No. 2). Since then, readers have sent us long letters and short essays. As we have occasionally done before, we here publish several of these edited responses as a readers' symposium.

— The Editors

Jewelry

I read with interest Gary Land's article in your recent *Spectrum* on "Adventists in Plain Dress." My great-great-grandfather, Jonah Lewis, was one of the original 10 families in Battle Creek, in fact lived next door to the Whites. I have photographs of him and his wife, their children, grandchildren, et cetera, all church members, and many with jewelry. I am enclosing copies of the ones that come readily to hand.

The first is the wedding picture of Jonah's youngest son, Thomas Ogden Lewis, called Od, when he married Letta Sterling in 1886. Definitely a chunky necklace. She wrote for the *Little Friend* for many years, and told of meeting Od, who sang in the choir and lived next door to the Whites.

Jonah's youngest son, Theodore Bogardus Lewis, was my great-grandfather. When a young man, he worked for J. P. Kellogg's broom factory, and later had his own. He was a custodian for the Dime Tabernacle for many years,

and we have his diaries, one in 1864, the year he married, and then 1880 through 1923, when he died.

The second is a childhood picture of his oldest daughter, Nellie Gertrude Lewis. The third picture is of one of his two baby daughters, Carrie Eunice, who died. The picture was taken in about 1870. A necklace with a pendant of some kind.

The fourth picture is of Nellie, who married Oscar Beuchel, manager of the Sanitarium Laundry for years. This was taken before she married, I believe, in about 1883.

My mother, Eleanor Lewis Bossert, graduated from the eighth grade at Battle Creek



Wedding portrait, Thomas Ogden Lewis and Letta Sterling Lewis, 1886.

Academy in 1919, and she has a beaded chain on in the pictures [not shown] taken at the farm. She can't remember if she wore the chain to graduation, but it is there in the pictures.

Also, Jonah Lewis's diaries mention riding bicycles all over—sometimes taking the train back if it was too far—recording how far they rode, and how long it took them, et cetera. And they [the bicycles] couldn't have cost as much as all that, because Theodore made my grandfather one from parts or something.

My personal belief, after reading how much fun they had, how far they rode, and how often they went out, is that perhaps bicycling wasn't "sinful" per se, but the time spent was the considering factor. Time they could have spent in church? Or they enjoyed it too much?

Lila Jo Peck
Marshall, Michigan

Tasteful Jewelry

Hurrah for the photos of Ellen G. White in the last issue of *Spectrum* evidencing that she felt more comfortable



Nellie Gertrude Lewis, circa 1883. She later married Oscar Beuchel, manager of the Battle Creek Sanitarium Laundry.



Left: Nellie Gertrude Lewis; right: Carrie Eunice Lewis, circa 1870.

with jewelry than most Adventist church leaders today.

On more than one occasion I was asked to remove my wedding ring when playing the church organ, or was taken as an "outsider" when meeting a new minister and yet I was one of those church members who went about "doing good."

Tasteful and simple jewelry does not need to be costly and yet adds to the overall attractiveness of an ensemble. There is no need today to invest extravagantly in gold and precious stones as in the 1800s.

Perhaps the unpretentious attitude of my former boss, Barbara Bush, who proudly wears fake pearls, does not color her grey hair, and repeats her wardrobe on state occasions, will be a real example of what elegant and feminine simplicity is all about.

Best regards to AAF from Mexico.

Virginia Murray Mendoza
Guadalajara, Mexico

The Double Standard

I well remember my confusion as a new Adventist to find the pearl cuff links of my pastor being most acceptable, while the same attached to a woman's dress was a "no-no."

While at the seminary, I quietly discarded all my cuff links (even the one with a watch on it!) in aggravation that it discriminated against women.

I commend you for the sense and balance in the four articles on "Jewelry." I only wish they could have appeared in the *Review*. Would that they were reprinted in pamphlet form for the church at large to read.

Thank you for your continued nurture ministry.

Dr. Charles Mitchell
Palm Springs, California

Cocaine and Pearls

It was with a heavy heart that I concluded perusing the December 1989 issue of *Spectrum*. It would appear that basically you are saying that it is OK to wear jewelry and that we should abandon our traditional stand against it.

Gary Land writes, "It appears that Seventh-day Adventists have inherited, particularly through Ellen G. White, a 'plain tradition' rooted in earlier Christian movements." The fact of the matter is that the Lord, through the Holy Spirit, revealed to us what should be our stand on this issue.

In the article by Charles Scriven I find these questions: "Can a pearl be intrinsically evil? Can a vein of gold?" I ask, "Can cocaine be intrinsically evil?" It is an excellent anesthetic that ENT specialists use regularly. "Can nicotine be intrinsically evil?" It makes an excellent insecticide. It is the misuse of these things that makes them evil.

And then there was the article by Madelyn Jones-Haldeman. In my opinion this was a hodgepodge of misapplication of principles and misinterpretation of the Scriptures. Simply because we do not promote the lack of adornment in our homes, cars, or property does not mean we should throw in the sponge. Rather, what we need to have is a reformation that includes, among other things, instruction in simplicity in every phase of our lives because we love Jesus and want to see his work completed.

I challenge the editors of *Spectrum* to print the instruction on this subject given to the

church by the Holy Spirit through Ellen G. White. This is found in *Evangelism*, pages 269-273.

Donald Casebolt
Farmington, New Mexico

Fellowship vs. Jewelry?

Recently we had a non-Adventist couple with several children who came faithfully to our church for several years. In spite of the wife's jewelry, our church welcomed them to take active parts in Sabbath school, and Home and School; and we were glad to have their children in our church school. They became one of our church's most active and admired families. Then they moved away, and within one year had stopped all activity with the Adventist church. Why? Their children kept coming home from their new church school telling their mom that their classmates said she would never go to heaven because she wore earrings.

Some people who wear jewelry may not make it to heaven. But I don't want to be put in the place of their judge. That's God's place. My part is to welcome them with open arms and not criticize anyone who wants to join with me in worship of a loving and fair God.

Jackie Hamilton
Cumming, Georgia

Abortion

Of all the articles in the "Abortion" issue of *Spectrum* magazine, I found Michael Pearson's to be the most disturbing.

I can most clearly identify with the first illustration that he gave of the student "without much prospect of support" who opted for abortion. I too had an abortion at the age of 18, when I found myself unexpectedly pregnant. I thought the easy way out was not to consult my

parents—or anyone else—and obtain a suction abortion. I continued on a destructive path of promiscuity and broken relationships until, 10 years later, a religious renewal led me to reexamine the source of my problems. I questioned the abortion decision I had made years ago. After the facts became clear, I realized what I had destroyed was, in fact, a child. Months of remorse and grief followed. I began to recover from anger and frustration by seeking avenues to prevent this tragedy from occurring in the lives of others.

I first became a volunteer counselor at the Crisis Pregnancy Center in Richmond, Virginia and then organized and became president of “Women Exploited By Abortion—Virginia,” which is affiliated with the National Right To Life of Washington, D.C. I’ve testified before the Virginia State Senate, conducted frequent workshops and appeared on numerous TV talk shows including “The Pastor’s Study” with Dr. Jerry Falwell.

One point that may particularly interest you is that my religious renewal took place within a Seventh-day Adventist church. I was a zealous new baby Christian and was baffled by the general lukewarmness within the church. No one seemed to care much about the abortion issue that was stirring up the “religious right.” So I positioned myself with the church leaders whom I trusted and labeled myself “pro-choice.” However, when my best friend, Patti McKinney, came to my church with some slides of what a 10-week fetus looks like, the facts suddenly collided with what I had been led to believe. The picture of a tiny fetus with its tapering fingers and toes (photographed incidentally, by a Seventh-day Adventist) was enough to cause me to wonder if this might in fact be a human being. My realization that this little being not only looked human, but also functioned like a person, with brain waves, heartbeat, and reaction to stimuli, together with my new-found faith in a God who created all humans with a purpose, left me no room for doubt. Even with the difficult personal and social situation I had been in, my abortion was taking the life of my innocent child. It had been

wrong, yes, even sin.

As weighty as that realization was, there was an element of relief. Finally, there was no more confusion. I knew that what I had done was not pleasing to God and had caused a rift of separation between us. But then, the Good News of the gospel manifested itself in a way more real than I’d ever imagined. Out of the pit that David spoke of, I found that my Saviour had died to make a way for my acceptance unto his kingdom. What amazing grace! For the past eight years, along with raising two small daughters and working a 40-hour week as an x-ray

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technologist, I have been active in supporting post-abortion women through W.E.B.A.

My husband and I also left the SDA church. We had been active in children’s ministry, music, and literature evangelism. But we could not continue to fellowship with a church that cared more about wearing a wedding band than aborting babies. We also began to realize that the presence of the Holy Spirit was severely lacking in our worship experience and that this accounted for both a lack of conviction about the abortion issue and positive action in helping women in crisis pregnancies.

I am shamed and disheartened, Dr. Pearson, to hear of your wife’s postnatal depression. Where were the “caring” brothers and sisters of the church? My family now associates with a group of believers whose mission is to minister to one another in ways I *never* found in the Seventh-day Adventist church. In “desperate” situations, we are called to surround one another with confident prayer for deliverance, from a God who is faithful to do just that! I

have found that it is a Spirit-filled church's job to impart God's strength by being his vessels during such situations—none of which is too “desperate” for him.

You also made a theological point about the Adventist doctrine of death. Many pro-choice advocates use the argument that we can't be sure when a developing fetus becomes a human or “a living soul.” Therefore, it is acceptable to abort in the interim—assuming that no one knows exactly when this occurs. I am sure, however, that Adventists *do* believe that humans are endowed with a soul—albeit not an

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inherently immortal one—and that is what differentiates us from the lower forms of life. This leads me to the opposite conclusion from those who are pro-choice. Since we do not “receive” a soul, but rather we “are” a soul, whatever is sacred about us is always with us from the moment we exist until we die. This does not diminish my respect for life; instead, it enhances it and makes life less expendable. We, having souls (however mortal) that can be saved, are of inestimable value to our Lord who died to save us.

The most distressing of all your assertions, Dr. Pearson, was your comment that the handicapped child who “moaned” and “jerked” during church should not have been born. First of all, no one—including physicians—can predict such things. Also, we cannot know all the ramifications of the life and death of a less-than-perfect child. I was born with severe deformities of the hands, but learned how to play the piano and sing to God's glory. I see beyond the obvious tragic birth of this child to a “haggard couple” who were not being ministered to by the Body of Christ, but were given impatient glances because their child disturbed the serv-

ice. This is *deplorable!* I pray with all my heart that this couple eventually found the Christian love and support they so deserve.

As to whether the child should have been born, I can only say that I have met hundreds of handicapped children (my firstborn is one of them) who were blessings to others in mystical ways that the casual observer can never know. This is to say nothing of how we grow as individuals when we step outside ourselves to serve the helpless who cannot return service. I am reminded of Mother Teresa who devotes her life to serving those who can never repay. It brings out the very best in us when we act in this way.

Let me close by saying that in my counseling experience, although I am totally convicted of my own pro-life position, I do not tell a woman or couple what to do. Interestingly enough, given all the facts *and* sufficient support, the majority choose to carry their babies to term. Most who abort do so not by “choice” but from the lack of choices. After that choice is made, it is my duty and privilege to stand by them and to impart God's unconditional love without judgment. He takes care of the outcome. But it is very gratifying to find that once women and couples find that we are willing to love sacrificially, many find enough hope and enough love to make the decision to give their children life.

Candace Banks
Richmond, Virginia

Redefining the Topic

Another phone call from a “Right to Life” group, this time regarding their screening of the film “The Silent Scream,” and once again I am thrown into a mental quandary over the issue of abortion. My gut feeling disturbs me. Why do I cringe when I hear the slogans—read of the films, lectures, walks—being conducted by the right-to-life people? Am I, inwardly, a “baby killer,” condoning mass murder of innocents, believing that the quickest way to solve the problem of unwanted birth is the best, even if, in all its

graphic detail, it is merciless, even grotesque?

But no, there is something else that disturbs me about this whole “right to life” emphasis. It is the focus, the attempt to stop action by piously inflicting guilt, which I find disquieting. Who has the authority to decide which individuals in today’s society are deserving of an added dosage of guilt? Whose job is it to ladle out shame?

It is not as if all of those who have had abortions need someone from the outside to prompt the feelings of remorse, despair, and helplessness. As a pastor’s wife, I am well acquainted with several women who have had abortions—women whom you would never select out of an average congregation as having aborted a child, women who attend church, struggle with their Christianity, live with the throbbing realization through darkened nights that they, at a time when alternatives narrowed and closed in on them menacingly, took the very life that drew its sustenance from their body. Are these women who need to be told, reminded? These women would do anything to abort from their minds, their spirits, the memory of the desperation that led to the killing of a very part of themselves.

So—where does that leave us? Do we just drop the whole issue of abortion, remaining mum whenever the word is mentioned?

We should start, I believe, by redefining the topic. The topic, in my mind, is not abortion. By making that the topic we limit ourselves to talking about morality versus immorality, medical definitions of life, saline solutions, and small vacuums. The topic, at its essence, is unwanted pregnancy, the seizing panic of a young girl heaving in the high school lavatory, the tightening fear of another mouth to feed.

Seen in this light, we can talk about alternatives. And the primary one, glossed over lightly in the majority of opinion pieces, new documentaries, and commentaries, is adoption. At a camp meeting recently I was shocked to hear a “family life” speaker insist that children who do not bond with their parents within the first five minutes of birth will never be able to experience a quality relationship with them.

When I raised the issue of adoptive children, I was told: “As far as adoption is concerned, don’t. . . . Unless, of course, you have to.” Not satisfied with the response, I pursued the point with the speaker after the close of the meeting. He recited a horror story about an adopted child he knew, inferring that adoptive children might come with “defective genes.”

Such misinformation about inability of infants to bond can cause young women to mistakenly fear adoption—women who find themselves in the unfortunate situation of being pregnant and unable to support a child emotionally, financially, or for whatever reason. Potential adoptive couples may back down, fearing genetically defective children.

A blatant letter which appeared in “Dear Abby” expresses the viewpoint which puts to rest this idea of “defective genes.” It reads as follows:

Dear Abby:

The vasectomized husband of “Loves Children,” who refused to adopt because he was afraid of “bad genes,” is using that as a cop-out.

We have three children. The first two were adopted, and the third natural child—an unexpected “surprise” after 17 years of marriage!

Our two adopted children are grown now and caused us very few problems.

The child of our flesh and blood is a high school dropout, has been busted twice for drugs, has had three automobile accidents, been fired from two jobs, and quit three because two were “too dirty,” and the other one was on Sunday.

Now he lies in bed until 2 p.m. and watches TV all night. I am going to kick him out as soon as he is 19.

All for Adoption in Virginia

Fern Ringering, director of Adventist Adoption and Family Services in Portland, Oregon, says: “I have talked to thousands of adoptive families, and the idea that an adopted child can never have as close a relationship to an adoptive parent as to a birth parent would be dis-

credited by the majority, I am sure.”

With all of our money, time, and energy being channeled into “combating abortion,” few, it seems, have time to talk about the option of adoption, a living parable of our relationship to the Father. “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4, 5, NKJV).

Sandra Doran
Bridgeport, Connecticut

A Working Definition of Life

A life within a life

One life becoming two lives.
The stirring that is me, but not me,
Self and other both.
Wonder.

Paradox.

Mystery.

Am I me? Am I we?
What holy confusion!

I wonder if woman, life-bearing woman, has ever been considered as a source for the definition of life? Science analyzes her. Psychology ignores her. Theology instructs her. Literature praises her. Art adulates her form. Philosophy puzzles about her. Who listens to her? Who credits her with being a responsible source of information about life, the life she bears?

In the abortion dilemma, it seems that the drive to define life does not emerge for its own sake, but rather for the sake of creating the context, or evidence, for sanctity or sacredness of life. How can we declare it sacred if we don't know what “it” is? People who are trying to create policies about abortion need at least a working definition of life. A working definition thus becomes one of those things that profoundly affects life—sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse.

I offer woman, life-bearing woman, as a primary source for the working definition of life that is used by those who feel compelled to

write abortion policies. Woman is a primary source for a profoundly rich definition of life. It is she who can show us that life is more sacred than theories or propositions have ever described. She can tell us, like no branch of science or humanities can, that life comes from God and leads to God.

Woman, the bearer of life, that I am referring to, is the wisdom/experience of womanhood. She is two. Just as man is two. She is woman glorious; she is also woman infamous. The voice of every woman echoes woman glorious. The voice of every woman also, tragically, echoes woman infamous. The voice of

Listening to woman, the bearer of life, can lead us to understand the tragedy of abortion more in terms of suicide than homicide.

every woman is an echo of both. None is only either. Every woman is both woman glorious and woman infamous.

Every pregnant woman (on some level, and to some degree) senses that life is God's doing and that it comes from God and leads to God. She also knows this “holy confusion” she experiences is both her self and not her self. “I” means “we” to her as often as “I” means “me.” When “I” means we, the death of the other is death of her self. That makes abortion a matter of suicide.

We hear a lot about abortion as murder. But what if it's suicide? How does—or should—the church respond to suicide, epidemic proportions of suicide? Shall we try to determine whether the suicides are legal? Shall we refuse to allow them in Adventist institutions? Listening to woman, the bearer of life, can lead us to understand the tragedy of abortion more in terms of suicide than homicide. If we, as a church, set about “dealing with” an epidemic of suicide, I wonder if our primary concern would be preparing a policy to forbid or control it?

I believe we, as an Adventist community,

can come up with a concrete, specific, redemptive response if we will apply ourselves as much to that purpose as we do to policy-making.

Diane Forsyth
Loma Linda, California

Diane Forsyth, an associate pastor of the Loma Linda University Church, is writing an expanded version of this piece for the book: *Feminine Dimensions of Adventist Belief*, edited by Dr. Lourdes Morales Gudmundsson, a professor at the University of Connecticut at Stamford.

Creation

In your Volume 20, Number 1 issue you have an article written by Dr. Fritz Guy entitled “Negotiating the Creation-Evolution Wars,” which intrigues me more than anything else in that particular issue. I am submitting my reaction to it.

Dr. Guy describes five main responses exhibited by Christians in dealing with this problem. While reading this scholarly article I could not avoid reflecting on the fact that Adventist intellectuals are slowly drifting away from a literal reading of Genesis. In his description of the first approach he states that for Adventists to ignore the findings of geology would be a symptom of “intellectual schizophrenia,” since we do accept the findings of scientific research in the field of medicine. I personally think that his mistake is based on the fact that he is trying to “put together Genesis and geology,” which is equivalent to attempting to mix oil and water.

Guy makes reference to four basic questions related to the origin dilemma: Who? Why? When? and How? The basic question that we need to answer *a priori* is Who? Our answer to this fundamental question will determine everything that follows. It will become the cornerstone of the entire logical edifice. We have only two choices at our disposal: God or chance. There is no third alternative.

Logical Consequences of Choosing Chance. Since Darwin, intellectuals have been opting

for chance as their basic postulate or axiom. Let us briefly analyze the evolutionists’ basic premise. If chance is, in effect, responsible for what exists, then it follows that even our thinking is the result of chance. My thoughts, and your thoughts, and the thoughts of all research scientists, are the result of chance. If that is the case, then why should I trust anybody else’s conclusions more than mine? Any attempt at dialogue becomes fruitless. As we can see, geology is impossible under the evolutionary umbrella, since the end results of geological research must, of course, be the result of chance.

In addition, we need to consider that evolution contradicts one of the basic scientific laws. The second law of thermodynamics states that, in a closed system, order will decrease with time. Evolution’s survival of the fittest or natural selection affirms exactly the opposite. Evolution has been desperately searching for the missing link between primates and man without acknowledging the awesome fact that

Evolution, as far as I am concerned, is totally bankrupt, unable to produce solid scientific data to support its crumbling theory . . . or to explain the incredibly numerous mechanisms of nature designed to preserve life on planet Earth.

in order to establish their theory on solid scientific data they have to produce billions of missing links between diverse life forms. What has their research produced? The fossil record shows that as far as we can dig, cats have been cats, and dogs, dogs. This is why scientists are now talking about punctuated evolution where gaps are bridged all of a sudden. What else can they say in the absence of countless missing links between species? Evolution, as far as I am concerned, is totally bankrupt, unable to produce solid scientific data to support its crumbling theory, unable to explain the complexity of the genetic code, bisexual reproduction, the

incredible immune system, and the incredibly numerous mechanisms of nature designed to preserve life on planet Earth. If chance can produce order and design, then we had better admit that we are not dealing with blind chance but with supernatural intelligence capable of counteracting the inexorable and fatal workings of the second law of thermodynamics, which slowly but surely creates disorder and chaos.

The supernatural manifestations of the divine activity will not yield themselves to scientific verification. You do not expect a scientist to explain the resurrection of Lazarus, or . . . any of the numerous instances of divine intervention recorded throughout the pages of sacred history.

Logical Consequences of Choosing God. If, on the other hand, our basic response to the first question is God, then we make room for both science and geology. The supernatural manifestations of the divine activity will not yield themselves to scientific verification. You do not expect a scientist to explain the resurrection of Lazarus, or the turning of water into wine, or any of the numerous instances of divine intervention recorded throughout the pages of sacred history. A Christian scientist will be wise to keep clear in his mind the chasm that exists between the natural and the supernatural. He will continue to pray for divine guidance, realizing that, naturally speaking, prayer is scientifically an impossibility.

The "When" Question. Regarding the "When" question, I do not think geology is equipped to deal with it in an effective way. We know nothing of the process utilized by God when creating this earth and shaping it for human habitation. Neither is theology prepared to give a reliable answer to said question for many reasons. There is no direct reference

in the biblical record to the age of the earth. Biblical chronology is full of gaps; it does not contain an exhaustive list of individuals. The Bible was intended to provide a practical guide to repentant sinners in search for forgiveness and hope in the middle of loss and despair. The first chapters of Genesis represent an ode to Creation, and like the book of Job, are literary works of art. They cannot be taken literally in every detail.

The "How" Question. Both geology and theology are least equipped to deal with the "How" question. Asking geology to explain this would be equivalent to calling a scientist to explain how Jesus managed to turn water into wine, or how he succeeded in bringing Lazarus back to life. Those were supernatural events akin to Creation and totally unexplainable in the natural realm. The Bible was never designed to be a scientific description of God's supernatural interventions in human affairs.

If we start with God, we end with God. If we start with chance, we end with meaningless chance, which makes dialogue devoid of any significance.

Nic Samojluk
Loma Linda, California

Testing the Beliefs

Dr. Guy made much mention of science. It may be presumptuous for a lawyer to write on science, but there are advantages in viewing a subject from outside.

In this case I see that the word "science" and its derivatives are complements. Its opposites, such as "unscientific," are criticisms. This fact has some natural consequences. Those who wish to boost their opinions call them scientific, while calling those who disagree with them unscientific. As a result, we have a Church of Religious Science, a Church of Scientology, and a Christian Science church. Just to show that I can look at the opposite side of thought, when I was young I heard much of Marxian scientific socialism, so called, no

doubt, to distinguish it from the unscientific socialism of others.

These people are obviously not using the term “science” in the same way as most people do. There are many meanings to the term. Let me take up two of them. Science is:

1. A method of thought whereby every idea is tested as rigorously as possible and only tentatively accepted until further means of testing are available.

2. An organized philosophy, usually materialistic in its assumptions.

I personally prefer the first of these two definitions. But I know people to whom the idea of testing their beliefs seems to be entirely foreign. Some are in the church; there are plenty outside of religion.

Dating systems can be tested. The method is simple. If there are two methods that can be applied to a given sample, perform them both and ask if they agree. More than that, there are tests that can be applied to the age of the earth as a whole. One of them once used as a method of figuring the age of the earth is the “salt” method. The amount of salt in the oceans can be measured, and so can the amount entering them from rivers. By dividing the annual addition to the salt in the oceans into the total there we get an age of 50 million years. This is about one percent of the generally accepted age of the earth.

Another test of the earth’s age is the slowing of the rotation of the earth on its axis. Because of tidal friction its rotation is slowing. As the change is very small we don’t notice it, although the Naval Observatory in Washington, D. C. occasionally sends word out that we need to adjust our clocks by a second that has accumulated. The earth rotated faster in former times, and in a mere fraction of the five billion years that is given as its age it would have rotated so fast that the equator would have been moving faster than the “escape velocity” required to leave the earth.

I am all for testing our beliefs. They can stand honest examination. If not, it is time we found it out. One statement I have very much liked in the writings of Ellen White is found in

Steps to Christ, at the beginning of the chapter entitled, “What to Do With Doubt.” It is that “God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence on which to base our faith.” Further, this evidence “appeals to our reason.”

Kenneth H. Hopp
Yucaipa, California

Can an Adventist Believe in Evolution?

As a chemist, the issues of *Spectrum* that discuss creationism have interested me as far back as I can remember. The latest was no exception.

Fritz Guy’s clarification of five approaches to the “Creation-Evolution Wars” was helpful. It appeared that Guy’s sympathies lie with what he terms “dimensionalism,” as do mine. He alluded to the challenges of that position, however. These include having to rethink the Sabbath, Adam and Eve, and the relation of death to sin. He might have added the nature of man, eschatology (Is our world getting better or worse?), and biblical and Ellen G. White inspiration.

These challenges appear so insurmountable that in a May 19, 1988, editorial in the *Adventist Review*, William Johnson flatly stated that “evolution isn’t an option for Adventists.” Thus, while Guy reaffirmed the possibility of believing in both Creation and evolution, he didn’t address the possibility of being an Adventist and accepting the evolutionary model.

Assuming that Fritz Guy—a trained theologian—has already struggled with these issues and finds dimensionalism to be consistent with Adventism, I hope that in the near future he might address this question in *Spectrum* for the benefit of us laypeople by discussing the implications of an evolutionary interpretation of Genesis for Adventist theology. Perhaps in the interim he would be kind enough to supply a bibliography of readable books discussing these issues.

Robert T. Johnston
Lake Jackson, Texas

A Point of Clarification

I enjoyed the five approaches to an understanding of the first two chapters of Genesis as outlined and discussed by Fritz Guy in “Negotiating the Creation-Evolution Wars” (Vol. 20, No. 1).

I feel constrained, however, to take issue with his contention that “biochemistry and neurophysiology,” which sciences undergird Adventist study and practice of medicine, obligate us to accept “geology and paleontology” as equally contributing to an understanding of the topic of origins. He goes on to say that “a commitment to medical science means that an understanding of Creation and earth history must take advantage of the earth sciences; otherwise there is intellectual schizophrenia.” Unfortunately, geology and paleontology are not experimental sciences in the same sense as are biochemistry and neurophysiology.

It should be a source of satisfaction to all of us that Loma Linda School of Medicine is willing to remain “schizophrenic” in its insistence on using the experimental sciences as a basis for clinical and instructional functions.

Neil W. Rowland
Lincoln, Nebraska

To Be Human Is to Be Spiritual

I enjoyed reading the October issue of *Spectrum*. The Creation/evolution articles were enlightened, dealing as they did with two clashing world views: 19th-century (static universe, young fossils) versus 20th-century (expanding universe, ancient fossils). Those who struggle thus could do worse for company. At first, even Albert Einstein couldn't accept the conclusion—that the universe was expanding—required by his own equations. He went so far as to introduce a spurious “term” into his equations to keep the galaxies fixed forever in their places. After Hubble's experiments using the 200-inch telescope at Mt. Palomar proved the earlier Einstein correct, Albert opined that his failure to

accept this implication of his own theory was the “worst mistake” of his life!

In addition to the “world view” struggle, Delmer Johnson and Fritz Guy grappled with the thornier issue of the spiritual import of the clash. Johnson has Pastor Ralph remarking, “If the universe is going to end in such a way that life as we know it cannot survive, it becomes difficult to believe in eternal life”—cleverly exposing this pastor's *literal-but-not-spiritual* understanding of eternal life. I got a tickle out of that one.

A certain attitude prevails in the Adventist and other churches which are literalistic in interpreting the Bible. This attitude presupposes that anyone who holds the 20th-century world view is a “secular humanist,” a prodigal son, or a lost sheep or coin. My observations tell me that there are few, if any, truly secular people around. To be human is to be spiritual. To the extent that one is human, one is spiritual. And to be fully human is to be fully spiritual. This is the reason “secular humanist” is a contradiction in terms.

In “Negotiating the Creation-Evolution Wars,” Fritz Guy instructs us: “Genesis is saying that God is the source of everything. Everything is created by God and dependent on God. What God creates is real and good, so nothing is intrinsically evil. This is not ‘scientific’; it is far more important than science.” If Adventist writers want to communicate with those non-Adventists who are thoughtful, who are educated, and who take the 20th-century world view seriously, they would be well informed to do so according to the example of this rare illumination.

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Ready for a Rehearing on Gentry's Halos

The review of Gentry's book appearing in Volume 20, Number 1, presented such a different physical explanation and impression than mine, that I would

like to add a different perspective. At the outset, I should state that my first acquaintance with Gentry's work left a very negative impression because an attempted explanation came from a well-known evangelist who only confused me along with the other scientists present. I was then a doctoral student in physics at the University of Toronto in Canada. After reading Gentry's book, however, and seeing comments on his work in open scientific journals, where some evolutionists admit that he presents a really puzzling scientific case for Creation, I have a more open mind on the subject.

The reason why alpha particles develop halos, which electrons do not, is that heavy charged particles demonstrate a phenomenon known as the Bragg Peak, which is not demonstrated by light particles. The alpha particle is more than 7,000 times heavier than the electron, and has twice the electric charge of the opposite sign. This Bragg Peak results from a rapid loss of energy toward the end of the particle's path. Therefore, if a single alpha particle of sufficient energy were released at a point on the surface of a sheet of photographic film, a light linear smear with a dense spot toward the end of its path would be seen on the developed film. When several alpha particles are emitted in all directions from the same source, therefore, the dense spots would form a ring. Hence the halos.

The point Gentry is making, as I understand it, is that there had to be very rapid cooling of the granite from the liquid to the solid state to maintain the integrity of these rings so sharply.

Had the cooling taken place over very long periods of time as normally postulated, the rings should have lost their shape and appear as irregular smears in the rock.

I do not know enough about these halos to say if Gentry is correct, but, having read the book myself, I do not share the views of the reviewers and would prefer to wait and see the final reaction to his work by the secular scientific community, who do not seem to have ready explanations, at present, to fit their evolutionary models.

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No Faith in Evolution

The articles about Genesis evoked my recollections of H. M. S. Richards' story of the two ants watching the launch of a rocket. An ant says, "Let's go to the moon; we will jump really high!"

We *homo sapiens* (and perhaps the writer of Genesis) may not be any closer to understanding God, origins, and the universe, than are those ants close to comprehending computer complexities.

Richards' story makes me very humble. I can muster enough faith to believe that there may be some intelligent source-God. I don't have enough faith to believe that it all just happened to evolve.

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