

# The Next 20 Years: *Spectrum's* Ideal Future

*Younger readers look ahead  
to describe the compleat Spectrum*



**W**hat might *Spectrum* look like in the years ahead? We solicited answers from individuals who are today roughly the same age and engaged in the same activities as those who started *Spectrum* 20 volumes ago. Both those who began the journal and those who wrote for this symposium include graduate students and professionals, some employed by the denomination, some by other institutions. While contributors to this symposium are predominantly Americans, they include more individuals from other cultures than were represented among those who began the journal.

— The Editors

## A Call to Be Inclusive

by Jean Arthur

**A**s a child growing up in an Adventist home, I was encouraged to read only Seventh-day Adventist publications—*The Little Friend*, *Primary Treasure*, *Guide*, and *Insight*. I was entertained. But, I never quite felt that the characters or the theses of the stories were like me or applied to me. As a college student at Columbia Union College, I was presented with the attempts of magazines to serve college-aged Seventh-day Adventist young people. They were

something to read on Sabbath, but I don't recall my friends or I ever being particularly impressed that these magazines were meant for us.

Now as a young adult, I have access to *Spectrum*, and I hope in its next 20 volumes *Spectrum* continues to do what it now does so well for me. My career so far has not involved working with Seventh-day Adventists, and my present law school program and graduate work have both been at non-Adventist universities. Consequently, I am often asked by friends and associates why I exclude certain things from my diet, why I am not available for certain activities on Saturdays, and what my church's position is on abortion, homosexuality, and many other moral issues.

I hate to admit it, but sometimes I find it difficult to be an Adventist. As a child, even into my early college years, I knew all the dos and don'ts of Seventh-day Adventism. Now, my professional training and certainly my training to be a lawyer encourages me to find an answer to the whys. The Adventists I asked as a youth could not answer why. The Bible teaches basic principles of living but it does not deal directly with many of the issues I—and many like me—face from day to day. *Spectrum* helps me to confront the difficult questions.

The issues which face the world also face us as Seventh-day Adventists. We are affected by AIDS, we are one

of the few organizations that still refuses to give women equal status, and many of us are confused about many doctrines. *Spectrum* explores these areas. The writers are not all white, North American middle-aged men.

Still, I would like *Spectrum* to be even more inclusive in its selection of authors. I would like to see more articles expressing the views of people like me, who do not work for the Adventist church, who are not seen on the platform on Sabbath, who spend most of their time around non-Adventists. I would like to see *Spectrum* continue as a voice for different points of view in the Adventist church. But the important word is *continue*.

Twenty volumes from now I want my friends and me to still know that when we pick up *Spectrum* we are not just getting the standard church "line." To be honest, I hope *Spectrum* does not change much. I want *Spectrum* to remain the magazine for Seventh-day Adventists who think.

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## A Resource for Developing Countries

by Les Bucwa

When I came to the United States from South Africa for the first time in February 1990, I was astonished by the liberties Americans enjoy, such as freedom of the press, of worship, of association, of movement and travel, of opinion and expression; the freedom to choose your friends, church, art museum, and entertainment. This became clear from the articles I was reading in newspapers and magazines. One of the magazines I read was *Spectrum*. The topics it addressed were all fascinating and eye-opening. It illustrated the freedom of expression you find possible not only in your country but also in the church.

But it appears to me that American citizens take these freedoms for granted, and maybe forget to share what can be shared with the rest of the world. For example, *Spectrum* is largely designed for American Adventists rather than Adventists throughout the world. Why do I say that? I've never seen a copy of this wonderful magazine at home in South Africa. It was only by chance that I was introduced to it. I believe if we had had wider access to *Spectrum*, some misunderstandings and misconceptions could have been overcome long ago.

The church in South Africa is racially constituted, as we all know. Is this right? Problems such as these should have been addressed long ago through the pages of *Spectrum* by conducting interviews with church leaders in South Africa. Interviews would enable the average church member to learn and understand how our leaders view current problems in South Africa, and how the leaders of the different racial groups are prepar-

ing themselves and our church for the second coming of Christ under the apartheid system.

The Adventist community in South Africa is concerned that we are not living according to Christian expectations. In Christ we are all one (Galatians 3:28); however, in South Africa, in our church we do not treat one another as one, but as three. We are three racial groups: white, black, and colored. It is my belief that the average church member is aware of the issue but not of the facts that hinder progress towards integration of the church. *Spectrum* could effectively provide a platform for Adventist professionals to inform, to discuss and debate the possible merger of the peoples of South Africa into one Adventist church.

The situation in South Africa is especially fitting for scrutiny because it is such a vivid example of allowing our prejudices to dominate our lives. But the issue of racism and prejudice is currently relevant worldwide as is evidenced, for example, with the Iraqis and Kuwaitis in the Persian Gulf, and the Palestinians and Israelis in the Middle East.

*Spectrum* gathers together such a wealth of Adventist talent and expertise that it has an obligation to share this with the rest of the world. Especially in the developing countries, *Spectrum* should nurture church members to face their practical day-to-day problems as Adventists.

For example, how do the Adventists in Kuwait or Liberia cope with the prevailing conflicts? Does the problem of Adventist children being required to attend school on Sabbath still exist in Gorbachev's changing Russia? What strategies did they employ to effect that change? Comparison and exposure to the drug-abuse problem in Colombia, and how the Adventist church there deals with it, would teach us all what some of the options are. Interviews with secular and church leaders worldwide about the current problems facing church members as

they live their day-to-day lives would help us invent new strategies to respond to pertinent problems in our own disadvantaged communities.

One obvious area where *Spectrum* could help is in education. The missionaries from Europe and America brought us the love of Jesus and a system of education to improve our lives, which is still greatly appreciated. *Spectrum* could now help us examine the rules and regulations, pertaining to the running of the church and our schools, which merely reflect the lifestyles of the missionaries' home countries. Lifestyle practices are distinct from the fundamental principles of the church, and sometimes conflict with our traditional customs.

As we all know, books and educational materials are scarce in developing countries. Since *Spectrum* has a lot of Adventist talent within its reach, this can be exploited to benefit church members, workers, administrators, and Adventist students in those developing nations. A series of programs could be designed to discuss organization of meetings, carrying out of administrative procedures, and planning of church activities relevant to our current environment. *Spectrum* could foster and share Spirit of Prophecy research on these topics.

Adventism in South Africa is the only denomination with its own educational system. I suppose Adventists find themselves in the same situation in many other developing countries. This puts Adventists in a pivotal position to influence their nation's educational system. *Spectrum* could help develop, sharpen, and improve the curriculum of the Adventist school systems. Teachers from the preschool to high school level need to be upgraded in their understanding of how to model and teach Adventist principles to their students. *Spectrum* could guide us in this effort by printing articles with new ideas for devotionals, and the

teaching of Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.

In addition to education, *Spectrum* could lead the way in improving Adventist publications. *Spectrum* could employ its worldwide connections to invite poems from church members throughout the world. This would provide far greater insight into the experiences and feelings of Adventists in distant lands and cultures and provide encouragement and training for promising writers.

If *Spectrum* utilized pictures, drawings, and visual illustrations from around the world, greater clarity and understanding regarding the substance of *Spectrum's* articles would result. It would also serve to attract the reader into reading more of the wonderful articles in *Spectrum*.

Another area where *Spectrum* could be of great assistance is in the Spirit of Prophecy research. It is common at home to misinterpret works such as the *Testimonies*, *Messages to Young People*, and *Gospel Workers*. The few who have the books normally use compilations and isolated quotes out of context. We need to learn the principles Ellen White was using when making a specific instruction. Otherwise, we get ourselves into pointless discussions and debates. For example, at home we hold dear the precept against the use of jewelry, but appear to miss the underlying principle. I believe Ellen White emphasized simplicity as opposed to extravagance.

Again, since our reference books are so few, if authors could provide references and proof of sources (even when formulating their opinions), this would provide something we could quote as facts to one another in sermons, articles, and essays.

In summary, I am stunned that *Spectrum* hasn't sought subscribers in South Africa and other overseas and developing countries. Since we do not have many Adventist books, each issue would pass to many, many hands and be appreciated for its valuable

contents. *Spectrum* needs to be cherished not only in the confines of America, but shared worldwide, especially in the developing countries where there is such a hunger for learning and reading materials. *Spectrum* has the potential for enlightening, educating, and motivating the world church.

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## Lab, Evangelist, and Home

by Gary Chartier

What good is *Spectrum* anyway? The concerns that birthed *Spectrum* 20 years ago seem not to excite many church members in their 20s and 30s. Even more frightening, the church as a whole seems to have lost the ability to appeal to the hearts and minds of a lot of its young people. I think that's too bad. I remember with dismay the local Forum planning conference I attended in Loma Linda two years ago: I was the only one attending who was under 30, and there weren't all that many under 40. The Forum and its church are both graying, and something should be done about it.

There are at least three ways in which *Spectrum* can help to make itself—not to mention the church—stronger and more vibrant. The Forum can be a *laboratory*, an *evangelist*, and a *home*.

The Forum can be a laboratory for the development of Adventist doc-

trine, Adventist worship, and Adventist lifestyle.

AAF has been involved in reflection on Adventist doctrine since its inception. And this kind of work needs to continue. But I want to suggest a slightly different role it could play in assisting in the formulation of Adventist doctrine: not an alternative to the role it already plays, but an addition to that role.

Most of the doctrinal reflection fostered by the Forum has involved testing and stretching the boundaries of Adventism. The Forum has been a context in which views could be aired regarding ethical concerns (like abortion) and doctrinal issues (like the ordination of women) that official Adventism sometimes seems as if it would like to ignore. The Forum needs, however, not only to help expand Adventism's frontiers, but to help identify and defend its center.

The first thing that needs to be done is to study the different ways in which the core of Adventist practice and belief could be determined. But after this methodological ground-clearing, the Forum needs to explore the *content* of core Adventism.

Our church now boasts one of the longest official doctrinal statements in Christendom. A highly placed church administrator is supposed to have said that, instead of 27 fundamental beliefs, we need only three or four. Among the Forum's tasks should be the attempted specification of those Adventist beliefs that are *really* fundamental.

As well as enthusiastically describing the center of Adventism, the Forum must defend Adventism to Adventists and to non-Adventists.

Some Adventists will balk at a definition of core Adventism because they believe it too general, too inclusive. But there is a difference between the essential and the peripheral, the major and the minor. *Spectrum* can help demonstrate that commitment and criticism can coexist in comple-

mentary fashion. *Spectrum* can remind Adventists that a community which believes everything believes nothing; that Adventism exists to communicate a coherent and distinctive understanding of the Christian gospel. It cannot fulfill this responsibility if no one, including church members themselves, understands what Adventists are committed to doing, believing, and experiencing.

Some people, inside and outside the community of faith, will ask that not only a definition of core Adventism but also the contents of core Adventism be defended. *Spectrum* can help to answer the questions of such people. It can highlight the ways in which historical analysis of the Gospels leads to a picture of Jesus that is congruent with the central confessions Christians want to make about him. *Spectrum* can remind people with varying views of earth history that their differences need not prevent them from affirming the basic Adventist understanding of the seventh-day Sabbath. *Spectrum* can help doubting "evangelicals" within and without the church see why the doctrine of atonement should be understood in cosmic terms, why it includes but transcends the work of Jesus on the cross. *Spectrum* can help Ad-

ventists and their critics reach a "post-critical" view of Ellen White that perceives the value of her prophetic ministry without denying the conclusions reached by means of historical and literary study of her work.

In short, *Spectrum* can constructively defend the core of Adventism to a new generation of Adventists and to a watching Christian and non-Christian world. By doing so, it will have rendered a major service to its community of faith.

*Spectrum* can also help Adventism explore new worship styles. Official and unofficial Adventist publications have called attention to Adventist congregations which have departed in significant ways—ways their opponents label "charismatic"—from the Adventist worship norm. And more such congregations are aborning. *Spectrum* can help the church respond to and profit from this phenomenon in several ways.

First, *Spectrum* can help clear the theological ground. It can foster discussion about the nature of Adventist worship, about its purpose and function. Such an exercise will enable intelligent discussion about the validity of various Adventist worship forms.

Second, *Spectrum* can encourage interchange that will lead to the critical assessment of existing traditional and nontraditional worship options in light of the conclusions reached by those who have thought reflectively about the essence of Adventist worship.

Third, *Spectrum* can sponsor prayerful study that might lead to suggestions for additional ecclesial alternatives. Such study might focus, for instance, on whether urban ministry options like Riverside's now-defunct City Parish might be explored. *Spectrum* might also want to ask whether, in addition to the "low church" liturgical forms currently being tested, the range of Adventist worship styles might also include patterns of adoration, praise, and celebration of a significantly "higher" liturgical

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character, marked by greater solemnity and the presence of a greater degree of form than that to which Adventists are accustomed. And, whatever their forms of worship, *Spectrum* can encourage all Adventist congregations to experiment with forms of life characterized by mutual support, community ministry, and openness to the Spirit's working.

*Spectrum* can help the Adventist community by being concerned not only with the thought life of the church and the worship life of the church, but also with the lifestyles of the church's members. Perhaps the most sensitive lifestyle area on which *Spectrum* could focus is stewardship. While the idea of stewardship has loomed large in Adventist discourse since the 1860s, it has too often been more a means of pressuring recalcitrant tithe-payers into submission than a joyous recognition that all of life, except insofar as it has been corrupted by sin, is God's, that "everything that God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected when it is taken with thanksgiving" (1 Timothy 3:4). *Spectrum* could encourage stewardship by highlighting the ways in which gifts—for contemporary art,

modern "secular" music, politics, film, or whatever—can be used to further the flourishing of God's good creation in accordance with the divine will. And the Forum itself needs to actively involve itself in coordinating such efforts.

*Spectrum* can also encourage responsible stewardship of money. Readers do not need to be reminded that we, as human beings, are all "members, one of another," and that we have responsibilities for others inside and outside the church. They do not need to be reminded that lifestyles marked by "conspicuous consumption" are leading to the devastation of our environment. And they do not need to be reminded of the tyranny possessions can exert.

A commitment to simplicity undoubtedly has consequences for organizations—for the institutional church and for the Forum itself. Perks and office staffs and purchases of funeral-black suits might have to be restrained. But simplicity also has consequences for individual life. If individual Forum chapters encouraged and supported individual Forum members in the pursuit of "downward mobility"—the redirection of resources in ways that would foster the flourishing of creation (Third World development, church counseling services, urban ministry, the work of Christian artists, etc.)—the witness against materialism could be a powerful one.

Simplicity is not to be confused with grinding asceticism—which is no more Christian than libertinism. But a commitment to simplicity will, I believe, lead us to opt for costume jewelry over pearls, futons over beds and couches, second hand clothes over the products of Saks, shell rings over diamond rings, shared homes over second houses in the mountains, and scooters and bicycles over automobiles; perhaps also it would mean an end to the dominance of the idiot-box over the family living-room. A choice for simplicity can lead to surprisingly

creative solutions to the problem of beautifying and humanizing one's life.

The kind of Adventism articulated in such books as Jack Provonsha's *God Is With Us* and Chuck Scriven's *The Demons Have Had It*, and in the pages of *Spectrum*, must be communicated to American audiences; this must be the kind of Adventism people think of when they hear our church mentioned. Past *Spectrum* articles urged such evangelism, but it is time to be more specific. Articles should explore how Adventists can cultivate the skills of "friendship evangelism" in which the spiritual well-being of one's friends is taken seriously as part of one's concern for them as friends. *Spectrum* might commission the writing of evangelistic books, and even undertake the organization of historically sensitive, theologically nuanced evangelistic series.

**A**n increasingly middle-aged *Spectrum* must also make a conscious effort to articulate an Adventism that is attractive, not only to secular Western adults, but also to the church's own youth. It must strive to facilitate their growth in grace, assist them in service to the world, and accept their desire to move beyond a lifestyle rooted in 19th-century pietism.

*Spectrum* can serve the church by being a special kind of home for Adventists and their friends.

Like everyone else, Adventists need community. And for those Adventists who need support as they serve in their various home churches, *Spectrum* can foster that needed community.

Young people who are not sure whether they want to serve or worship or do anything else in local congregations can be helped by *Spectrum's* publisher, the Association of Adventist Forums, by actively including such young people in their activities. National and local Forum organizations

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could ensure that young Adventists can occupy Forum leadership positions; in so doing, the Forum could demonstrate that, even if institutional Adventism seems inaccessible to input from the young, the Association of Adventist Forums is accessible.

Adventists who wish to expose non-Adventist friends to core Adventism should be able to find in *Spectrum* and chapters of the Association of Adventist Forums settings where their friends can get excited about their church. *Spectrum* can accomplish enormous good. It can further appropriate experimentation, help to spread the everlasting gospel to the world, and offer church members the support they need to continue living Christian and Adventist lives. No one could question the relevance of a *Spectrum* and Association of Adventist Forums that so dynamically served the church and the world.

Gary Chartier is a doctoral candidate in theology and philosophy of religion at Cambridge University. He thanks Heather Hessel, John Jones, Steve Daily, and Vernon Howe for comments that contributed to the development of this essay.

## What's in a Word?

by Daniel Duda

The celebration of publishing *Spectrum's* twenty volumes is a moment to ponder the power and importance of words in our individual and corporate lives. Because we live in a world where words (like dollars) are becoming pitifully devalued, it might seem that words are no longer important.

But I come from a country, Czechoslovakia, where words finally shook the society and brought the

communist social order, and all its uncountable suffering, to an end. For more than 30 years, I lived in a society that arrogantly claimed to have a monopoly on truth, and tried to exploit words in a very peculiar manner. Words were twisted, misinterpreted, distorted. Words were used to label people and put people in prison. But experience has taught me that words are not only capable of being lethal arrows but also rays of light in a realm of darkness.

Words point to something which is beyond them. Our attitude toward the words always reveals our attitude to some realities. As Seventh-day Adventists, we recognize the importance of human words; a whole department of our work was established to publish and disseminate words more effectively. Seventh-day Adventists have a very special regard for the Word of God. We want our lives to follow it as closely as possible. As a church we quite rightly believe, as we always have, in the power of words to change history—the history of individuals, churches, nations, even the whole civilization.

Unfortunately, the church (or some of its sections) sometimes is prone to claim the final word in the realm of words. History tells us that the church has not always avoided this arrogance. Theologians working with the Word have brought forth words that radiated great hopes, but have also emitted lethal rays.

Today, as our faith is challenged from every angle by our secular society, we need to find the appropriate words, to think and bring out new thoughts, to explore new horizons, to rethink the reasons for our positions. We need as Adventists to present the eternal verities in up-to-date cloth. We need to be able to present in today's language what we believe to be God's message for our generation. We need the word for today.

Naturally this must mean not arrogantly refusing to submit to God's

inspired Word, but honoring it. All of us need to learn to build our faith on solid foundations while being open, as Christians, to anything true and new.

*Spectrum* can and should play an important role in finding the word for today. Adventist theologians, students, and intellectuals need to have an arena where their views can be discussed and challenged freely, openly, and without emotional attacks. We desperately need different societies, segments, sections, and groups within the entire Adventist spectrum engaging in honest and meaningful dialogue.

All my life I lived in a country where there was only one voice, one way of speaking, one way of looking at things. I do not want something similar in my church. Now, thank God, in my country, false, oppressive uniformity is history. As Adventists we do not yet live in a theocracy. Let us put into practice Augustine's well-known dictum: "In essentials unity, non-essentials liberty, and in all charity."

Daniel Duda was born in Czechoslovakia, received the equivalent of his M.Div. at the Slovak Lutheran Theological Seminary in Bratislava, and served as a pastor and teacher in the Adventist Seminary in Prague. He enrolled in 1989 in the D.Min. program at the SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University. He is now teaching theology at the new Adventist seminary in the Soviet Union.

## Let's Not Get Comfortable

by Gina Foster

"What is really bothering me incessantly is the question what Christianity really is, or indeed who Christ really is, for us today."  
—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

The question of who Christ really is troubled Dietrich Bonhoeffer during

his last months in prison. Bonhoeffer's concern was that the traditional representation of Christ as humanity's Redeemer from sin did not fit the new age of science and philosophy; did not allow human beings to explain their origins and actions without reference to God. Half a century later, as *Spectrum* enters its third decade, these words resonate with our commitment to responsible spiritual dialogue.

If one replaced the word "Christianity" with "Seventh-day Adventism," I think Bonhoeffer's words would reflect *Spectrum's* purpose quite accurately. From my perspective, *Spectrum* and the Association of Adventist Forums form two valuable resources within the church which make Adventism a viable contemporary religion.

In reading the early issues of *Spectrum*, I sensed an energy I seldom feel in current Adventist publications. From its inception, *Spectrum* has dedicated itself to an intellectual and spiritual questing that often touches on the controversial. Complex issues such as race and gender relations, sexuality, problems associated with AIDS, and even points of doctrine appear from the very first. Although as a church we may be slow to respond to the challenges of contemporary soci-

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ety, *Spectrum* quite obviously is not.

From a critical perspective, as *Spectrum* has developed it seems to have settled into a comfortable liberalism. Although the subject matter and authors remain potent, the actual texts are not. I read many articles in which the contributors congratulate themselves for being wise enough to see a problem in isolation, without considering the larger context. For example, *Spectrum* has published several articles on homosexuality within the Adventist church. In these articles, one reads that there are homosexuals in the church, that there are groups for gays within the church, and that the church is not particularly receptive to its gay members. However, these articles do not mention the role of alternative sexuality within the church, the problems (and benefits) of allowing these men and women to participate fully in the church, and how our "Christian" notions of sexuality parallel as well as contradict the notions of those of gay and lesbian orientation. While I do not expect every writer to present a fully detailed article of his or her position each time he or she contributes, I do feel that the editorial staff could find a wider representation of facts and opinions on issues concerning sexuality and marginalization.

*Spectrum* does not do this on a sporadic basis. The occasions for far-ranging discussion focus mainly on Ellen White or church structure. However, except for an issue devoted entirely to the subject of women's ordination, I do not find the level of dialogue I expect in scholarly discussions.

This tendency to use half-finished arguments disturbs me. If we are to commit ourselves to open, honest communication, we must prepare ourselves for moments of discomfort. We cannot open doors only to stand in the portal. We must face both the divine and the demonic when we question, or we may lose sight of "who Christ really is."

One cause of this comfortable self-limitation is that the contributors to *Spectrum* are not as diverse as the audience they claim to represent. On subjects of general interest (Ellen White, church structure, the church and politics), writers are primarily white, male, and impeccably credentialed as intellectuals. Writers of African-American descent write on race; women write on gender. Writers from marginalized sectors of society write predominantly on the issues of their marginalization. There are regrettably few exceptions to this rule in the 20 published volumes of *Spectrum*.

**A**nother cause of this easy self-consciousness lies in the attitude of Seventh-day Adventism itself, of which *Spectrum* is only a reflection. As a church and a subculture, we view ourselves as ineradicably unique. In my critical role, I must point out that we are not as distinctive as we think we are. We are Christians, and North American Protestants, and we share many qualities with these groups. Within Seventh-day Adventism are doctrines that differentiate our church from others, but we are still a part of Christianity as a whole. We are also a part of the world in which we work and live. We are more alike than we are different.

When we think we are different (and blessed for being so), we ask less of ourselves than we would in a similar secular situation. We base conclusions on incomplete evidence (see ordination of women, the replacement of the conference hierarchy, the responsibility of church toward state), and we settle for the views of a Seventh-day Adventist over a more qualified statement from an "outsider." I think we have much to learn from the Protestant churches who already ordain women, from the Catholic theologians who practice liberation theology, and from interdenominational committees

studying common interests such as family, worship, and spiritual community. Wouldn't we accomplish more if we realized our common ground as believers in Christ and Christianity, accepting our limitations as part of our humanity, rather than denying that we can't know it all?

As I mentioned earlier, I think that *Spectrum* has done a commendable job. But there is room for improvement. If we keep Bonhoeffer's concern in mind, I am certain that we can follow the words of an Arabic proverb, to "keep what is worth keeping, and with the breath of kindness, blow the rest away." Surely this is the best spiritual dialogue.

Gina Foster, who is planning to embark on graduate studies in theology with an eye toward becoming an Adventist teacher or minister, received her B.A. in 1990 from Pomona College in Claremont, California. Her special program, in theology and English literature, included a year's study at Emmanuel College, Oxford University, where she gave a public reading of her own poetry and worked on her honors thesis—an analysis of several contemporary Christian poets.

## Providing Community

by Brent Geraty

I was born two years before *Spectrum*. I can't claim that *Spectrum* played a particularly important role in my early childhood, but I did learn to recognize the "magazine without any pictures." The more interested I became in reading, the more familiar *Spectrum* became, and by the time I reached college, its articles were quite often used by my friends and me as a basis for discussion. As I have changed, so too has *Spectrum's* role.

I write now as a graduate student, facing a dilemma that is not unique. How do I reconcile the expectations of my church with the challenge to think in critical and creative ways? In truth, that should not be a dilemma; in reality, it is a daily predicament. The impression is sometimes given by the church (both the institution *and* its membership) that it already has the answers, and that all a member needs to do is to adhere to these discovered "truths."

I believe, however, that it is the search for truth that brings us closer to what is actually true, more than does any interim designation of an arrived truth. By accepting the status quo, we find what is true to be more illusive. Alfred Lord Tennyson articulated this idea when he wrote that "there is more faith in honest doubt . . . than in half the creeds." Doubt has too often been discouraged in the church; it has been thought of as entirely too dangerous. But many of us have discovered just how true, how stimulating, honest doubt can be. Lest I be misunderstood, I should make it clear that embracing honest doubt does not prevent us from sharing with our world, our country, and our community, the knowledge as humans, in the words of a colleague of mine, that "love is better than hate . . . peace is better than war . . . good is better than evil . . . hope is better than despair . . . life is better than death, and that all of this has meaning."

What does this have to do with *Spectrum*? *Spectrum* performs the vital function of providing a secure place where graduate students, et al, can go to express their honest doubt, and to reflect upon both the doubt and faith expressed by other *Spectrum* constituents. It gives graduate students an Adventist outlet where they are not asked to set aside the critical, potentially constructive, tools that they have learned. In this way, *Spectrum* allows us to try out different kinds of reconciliation with the Adventist church.

The importance of a journal like

*Spectrum*, too, is that it gives its readers the gift of community. Through the written exchange of ideas, *Spectrum* fosters a community of committed Christians, most of whom share a common Adventist heritage. Corresponding and communicating through *Spectrum* (or more directly), friends and colleagues develop a network; a network that often provides the support and encouragement that a larger church community is understandably unable to give. One of my hopes, then, for *Spectrum's* future, is that it will enable me to get acquainted with other people from my generation who not only share my ideas, but also my eagerness to move the church to a more nurturing, more just, and more inclusive state.

This brings me to a more specific list of what I would like to see in *Spectrum's* future. First, I would like to see a younger *Spectrum*. I'd like to see more graduate, professional, and college students writing articles and articulating ideas. It's not that people outside my generation are dealing with issues that aren't relevant to us, it's just that I need to begin developing the Adventist network that I wrote of earlier. Perhaps I'm just encouraging more articles to be submitted.

Second, I would like to see *Spectrum* get a sense of humor. (A British tour guide is speaking to a group of American tourists. "This is where the Magna Charta was signed." "When did that happen?" shouts a tourist. "1215," replies the tour guide. "Shoot," says the American, "we only missed it by 20 minutes!") Actually, I'm not calling for a joke or cartoon section, it just seems to me that more often than now occurs, it would be appropriate for an author to incorporate humor into her or his piece. Humor and depth of thought are certainly not incompatible.

Third, I would like to see more "personal reflection" pieces. Often I

find that reading somebody else's personal emotions, feelings, and thoughts enables me to better understand myself. Encouraging the sharing of very personal experience might require including anonymous authors.

Having made suggestions for new additions, I must say that for me the purpose of *Spectrum* from its inception—to provide a forum for the written exchange of ideas—is of timeless necessity. *Spectrum* need only remain as a tool that is open for those who care to use it—a tool where Adventism can be analyzed and embraced, where ideas can be shared and dissected, and where people can meet and become whole.

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## Seek a Wider Universe

by Karl Hall

In his novel *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy describes two characters who were old friends from university days. One thought the other's clear and simple outlook on life resulted from the poverty of his nature, while the second thought the first's inconsequential opinions resulted from a lack of mental discipline. Yet the clarity of the first character pleased his friend, and the second character's abundance of undisciplined thought likewise pleased his companion, so they liked to meet and argue.<sup>1</sup>

There is nothing unique about this pair. Who among us cannot think of friends whose company we most enjoy when debating some topic of common concern? I single out Tolstoy

because this passage, ending with the matter-of-fact statement, "they liked to meet and argue," is part of an extended narrative in which the main character often senses that he is "painfully out of harmony with himself, and strain[s] all his spiritual powers to escape from this condition."<sup>2</sup>

As someone who struggles with discord in his spiritual life, I am always interested in hearing about the par-

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*I am always interested in the particular harmonies that others have found in some aspect of their own spiritual experience.*

ticular harmonies that others have found in some aspect or another of their own spiritual experience. The fact that one person's harmony may sound dissonant to another is no obstacle to listening. For me it is spiritually helpful simply to "meet and argue," and that is the primary reason I read *Spectrum*. I see *Spectrum* as an instrument for productive tensions that can lead to greater harmony in the life of the reader.

Some 20 years ago, when *Spectrum* first appeared, preschool nicely encompassed my idea of an institutional forum for discussing contemporary issues. Even as a child, I began to learn the many forms of disputation, although substantive debate frequently lost out to impassioned rhetoric in key questions like whether or not I had been tagged "out."

Two decades later I am still in school, trying to master the subtler arts

of disputation as formalized in the graduate curriculum. These studies, a baptismal certificate (and a stint as an English-Russian translator at the 1990 General Conference Session) perhaps qualify me, at least superficially, for novitiate status among the Adventist professionals who effectively constitute the bulk of *Spectrum's* readership. As such I would like to offer my own perspective on possible priorities for *Spectrum* in coming years.

As *Spectrum* contemplates the possibility of publishing in the next millennium, the need to involve another generation of Adventist young people, engaged both in examining dilemmas in the church and articulating new insights, becomes readily apparent. How can *Spectrum* best encourage them to "meet and argue" on its pages? I would suggest three related imperatives:

*Be good catholics (with a small "c"),* in the sense that the issues defined and addressed by the materials in *Spectrum* should be universal although the issues need not necessarily originate within the Adventist subculture. By this I simply mean that the pages of *Spectrum* could be a profitable forum for discussing extra-Adventist concerns. At the very least, we should be presenting Adventist perspectives on larger social debates. Several examples come to mind: Should Adventists take positions in environmental debates? Do we have anything credible to say, or is it easier to hide behind an apocalyptic theology? Should Adventists as consumers exhibit habits any different from the population at large (and I don't just mean meat, alcohol, and tobacco consumption)?

*Look outside the church.* Many young people raised in the church in the 1980s will not maintain their ties in the 1990s. The element of skepticism in these decisions is perhaps best reflected in a chorus from a recent song:

We go to the Bible, we go through  
the workout

We read up on revival and we  
stand up for the lookout  
There's more than one answer to  
these questions pointing me  
in a crooked line  
The less I seek my source for some  
definitive  
The closer I am to fine.<sup>3</sup>

We need to encourage input from people who no longer "seek their source for some definitive" in the church as an institution. I think of peers who are keenly disappointed in the church's positions on the role of women, and feel that their connection with the church has, as a result, become ambiguous at best. If *Spectrum* is to be a vehicle for continuous renewal in the relationship between its readers and the Adventist church, it ought to make a point of seeking out the insights of those on the fringes who may continue to offer caring criticism. This is part of what it means to "evaluate the merits of diverse views," an objective for *Spectrum* from its very beginning.

Occasionally we may suspect, as did a professor I once knew, that "ideals, like virtues, are most spoken of when in doubt or danger. The wish to articulate them goes hand in hand with the need to defend them."<sup>4</sup> That is why "outside" contributions may be difficult to assimilate, for they suggest doubt in the common ideals that we assume define the church. Maintaining the church community in a life of faith is indeed a high ideal, and the printed word may sometimes seem a feeble medium for the task. But that faith whose content is implicit remains at the carpenter's bench in Nazareth. The only defensible faith is the one that meets and argues in its inconclusiveness, and aspires to make the crooked straight.

"Shatter the confines of oppression with the shock of the holy." We should continue to invoke the words of Roy Branson in the daily life of the church

and of the world around us. Like Ibsen's Dr. Stockmann, we have "new and vigorous truths" to share. What better forum to do so than *Spectrum*? Let *Spectrum* proclaim a liberating theology that always challenges its readers to be more than, in Churchill's turgid phrase, "flaccid sea anemones of virtue who can hardly wobble an antenna in the waters of negativity." *Spectrum* can not only encourage Adventist participation in discussions of contemporary issues, it can serve as a catalyst for action by the reader in his or her community. Only then will it enable us to boast, along with Jeremiah, of a Lord "who exercises kindness, justice, and righteousness on earth" through the diverse lives of his believers.

### Notes

1. Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, Part VII, Chapter III
2. Ibid., Part VII, Chapter IX.
3. Emily Saliers. "Closer to Fine." *Indigo Girls*. Epic EK 45044.
4. Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1986), p. 22.

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## Daring and Loyalty

by Doug Morgan

I can only envision the future of *Spectrum* in the light of its profound influence on my own intellectual and spiritual development. While I was a theology major at Union

College in the mid- and late 1970s, *Spectrum* helped introduce me to a way of probing the Adventist faith that disclosed a richness and range of possibilities I had never before imagined. My first exposure came in a philosophy lecture by H. Ward Hill, who presented the James Londis-Richard Rice debate on faith and reason (Vol. 5, No. 2, 1973). Here were Adventist theologians conducting a public but civil argument over a fundamental human issue. And they brought great figures like Augustine, Aquinas, and Pascal into the argument. I began to see that to believe as an Adventist meant something far deeper than mere acceptance of a predetermined set of doctrines. I wanted to hear more.

That same year another professor then at Union, Jonathan Butler, shared with me a manuscript he had submitted to *Spectrum* titled, "When Prophecy Fails: The Validity of Apocalypticism" (Vol. 8, No. 1, 1976). That article gripped my soul. Here was the courage to confront weaknesses in traditional understandings of a doctrine at the core of the faith, but also the faithfulness, creativity, and intellectual skill to reformulate the belief and show its significance for the present era.

This brief personal retrospective points to the goals I would like to see *Spectrum*/Association of Adventist Forums continue to pursue, with the energy and adaptability demanded by changing times. Zinzendorf, the Moravian leader of the pietistic revival of Protestantism in the 18th century, said, "Belief needs daring and much loyalty." In fresh and diverse ways, *Spectrum*/Association of Adventist Forums must continue to express and facilitate the daring and loyalty that makes faith vital.

Daring is needed in the rigorous pursuit of truth, both about the life of the church and about its message; that is, in both reporting the news and in open theological inquiry. Despite the refreshing changes at the *Adventist*

*Review* in recent years, one of *Spectrum's* most important roles remains that of objective journalistic coverage of church affairs. No institution can remain healthy or true to its best self for very long without independent critical scrutiny. A worthy goal might be more comprehensive and regular news coverage through a network of volunteer reporters and stringers.

Commitment to intellectual truth must also remain strong. As long as the Seventh-day Adventist church supports liberal arts higher education, Adventists will face the challenge of relating their faith to the often competing claims of the wider culture of learning. Those seeking to negotiate the tricky course in which those competing claims are taken seriously must have the resource of an open forum in which discussion is not constricted at the outset by the necessity of adherence to a party line. No real future for an educated Adventism is possible without such a forum. Moreover, commitment to the progressive unfolding of truth has always been at the heart of Adventism.

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*We need to show that it is by building on what is best in Adventism and applying it to the present age that the movement goes forward and fulfills its mission . . . to articulate the truths of Adventism.*

The daring to pursue truth is thus in itself an act of loyalty. But pursuit of truth without loyalty can destroy community. I see *Spectrum/Association of Adventist Forums* as serving those who hold a deep commitment to the Adventist community together with their commitment to truth. It is for those who choose to carry out their personal quests in continuity with the Adventist heritage, whose concern is to enrich the community rather than eviscerate it.

I believe the impact of *Spectrum/Association of Adventist Forums* during its first two decades has overwhelmingly been toward building up community rather than tearing it down. But I want to suggest some ways in which we might be more explicit and energetic in expressing loyalty (each of which would be an expansion of past and current endeavors).

First, *Spectrum/Association of Adventist Forums* needs to encourage progressive Adventists more forthrightly to stake their claim on the Adventist heritage and offer visions of hope for its future. We need to challenge the notion that those who selectively absolutize aspects of the past can rightfully claim to be the exclusive preservers of the Adventist tradition, while so-called liberals erode it. We need to show that it is by building on what is best in Adventism and applying it to the present age that the movement goes forward and fulfills its mission. The volumes of *The Festival of the Sabbath* and *Pilgrimage of Hope* are marvelous examples of what could be done on a larger scale to articulate the truths of Adventism in a way that addresses the world in which we now live.

Second, we need to continue to pursue creative ways of witness and service. One of those ways could be making *Spectrum* the pioneering voice of a more thoroughgoing Adventist cultural engagement. If Adventism is worthwhile, it must have something to say to the larger culture—its public

issues, arts, and learning. Such engagement would both enable Adventists to bear a more effective witness and be a source of spiritual invigoration of our own community. *Spectrum* could include review and commentary on significant non-Adventist books, plays, and films as a means of exploring what Adventism has to offer (as well as learn from) contemporary culture.

The German scholar Ernst Troeltsch, writing around the turn of the century, cited Zinzendorf in suggesting daring and loyalty as necessary for defining the essence of Christianity in an era of intellectual upheaval. While few Adventists (or others for that matter) would today find all of Troeltsch's conclusions tenable, his way of charting the process that keeps faith vital remains useful. An adaptation summarizes what we who are connected with *Spectrum/Association of Adventist Forums* need as we approach the turn of another century: Much loyalty in meditation on and devotion to the Adventist heritage and above all to Jesus, but also the daring to bring a living idea forward out of the past for the present time, with the courage of conscience grounded in God, to set it within the intellectual world of the present.<sup>1</sup>

## Notes

1. Ernst Troeltsch, *Writings on Theology and Religion*, translated and edited by Robert Morgan and Michael Pye (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1977), p. 176.

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# The Music of Maturity

by Beverly Wesner-Hoehn

As a musician I have spent many years examining the lives and performing the music of great and not-so-great composers. If one were to choose any major composer such as Beethoven, Stravinsky, Debussy, Schönberg, Brahms, Schubert, or J. S. Bach, and examine his compositional techniques, one would see an obvious growth in maturity. Each person passes from simple structures of music created at the beginning of his career to masterful and intricate design at the middle and most successful part of his career, climaxing in compositions filled with contrapuntal technique or intentionally arranged chaos by the culmination of his life. As their music matures, some composers' lives are divided into as few as three periods for the sake of classification of their different styles of music; some have as many as ten major stylistic divisions. A few finished their most mature stage only to pass on to fragile deaths and musical obscurity.

The form of communication found in *Spectrum* has participated in a maturation process as well. I remember attending Adventist Forum meetings while a student at Pacific Union College, but as to reading *Spectrum*? I must confess that I did not read anything then that wasn't assigned by my major professors. It wasn't until after I left the haven of Adventism, and found myself deeply submerged in graduate school, that I sought to keep in touch with the temperature of the Adventist religion. I felt that, as a performing-arts major in a secular university, I would have to make a concerted effort to hear the issues being discussed by my church. I did so by reading *Spectrum*. What a blessing! I found articles to digest, to discuss, to encourage, and

to enlighten. Since 1978, I have been reading *Spectrum* as a part of my "homework," mental rejuvenation, and recreation. I have watched it grow and mature, and pass through stages similar, I think, to those a musical composer or performer does.

A budding musician is so enthusiastic and responsive to suggestions; but so often lacking in the technical support or ability to accomplish the task. It's always more practice, or more writing. *Spectrum* began with a very dedicated group of writers, eager to present what they believed and knew to be true. At first their audience was small, the funds difficult to find. But their dedication and commitment was indomitable, so they succeeded in publishing a journal. As public interest grew, so did *Spectrum's* staff, budget, and quality of articles.

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*In an age when many young adults are finding the religion of their parents to be irrelevant, Spectrum could present a composition of beauty and inspiration. . . . I have a strong desire to discuss it with friends who don't care.*

At Indiana University it was intriguing to see how well-attended the professional doctoral recitals were. Music of the highest caliber and form was consistently presented—in stark contrast to the struggling sophomore soprano who had to pay to get even Mom and Dad to attend. Oh, the value of experience! The years of practice and maturation do change the final product. As it has aged, *Spectrum* has also become seasoned: an expanding source of information and a maturing source of knowledge.

Is it approaching the culmination of its life? Has *Spectrum* evolved into the final, well-polished, or even chaotic extreme of maturity? I hope I see the finest years still yet to come. In an age where many young adults are finding the religion of their parents to be irrelevant, *Spectrum* could present a composition of beauty and inspiration. I frequently find myself in a discussion with my husband over where the latest issue of *Spectrum* is; or whose turn it is to read it while tending the baby in the nursery during church. (If the latest issue has just recently arrived, that discussion turns into a hot debate!) We've also found that in some places it is a great way to discourage being asked by the nominating committee to serve in a church office—we just carry it under our arm with our Bible and *Collegiate Quarterly*, and they don't bother asking!

Seriously, though, I have found so much to inspire and debate in its pages. I have a strong desire to discuss it with friends—friends who see the church as irrelevant; friends who don't know about *Spectrum* at all; friends who don't care. I was surprised to learn that its circulation is at 5,500. I had presumed that such a well-seasoned art form would be enjoying the success of a well-attended recital. My desire is to see its audience expand and adopt its ideals.

Unfortunately, the future of a musician is only ensured to the extent that the audience supports the con-

cert. The future of any form of communication is valuable only if people will use it in day-to-day communication. I perceive the dilemma for the future of *Spectrum* to be how to reach out and touch more lives. I consider it very useful and important to my daily life; but I know I am almost alone among my friends in this sentiment.

As *Spectrum* begins its age of culmination, it can be more effective than ever through a massive, well-planned circulation campaign. It must create the need to be in our homes to ensure its future. The *raison d'être* must be to seek and present a wide diversity of

ideas and options for the rational, truth-seeking Christian. Whether through simple tunes, masterful and intricate forms, or some intentionally planned chaos, the usefulness of *Spectrum* has not died and passed into obscurity. Through experience and age it has created the need to exist in my life, to communicate on a deeper level, thus ensuring its future as a sounding board for Christian ideas.

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harmonic. A graduate of Pacific Union College, she earned a Master of Music degree from the University of Southern California and her Doctor of Music from Indiana University, where she also was an instructor for three years. She has studied and performed internationally, including one year of study at the Conservatoire Royale de la Musique in Brussels and the premier performance of a composition by a Chinese composer at the the World Harp Congress (WHC) in Israel. Wesner-Hoehn is the treasurer and a member of the board of directors of the WHC.