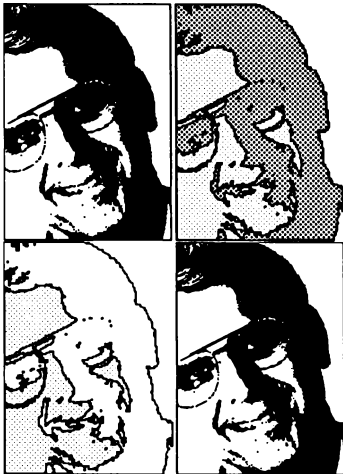


Readers' Symposium: Abortion to Tithing

The following symposium is an Adventist town meeting. Members speak out on some of the pressing issues facing the church. Many of these letters and short essays are not only responses to views expressed in *Spectrum*; they are cries from the heart. We are proud to be a part of the vivid conversation that is Adventism. (We have retained the right to shorten and edit letters.)

—The Editors

Not All Profiles Proved Pleasing



I found myself quite pleased to be associated on your pages with the "Adventist Celebrities" profiled in Ron Graybill's article. However, for so short a piece, the profile of me contained an astonishing number of errors (some implied), and I beg leave to correct the record.

I was never, as was implied, a passive "benchmark for the Merikay

case," a mere male counterpart of value to the outcome only because I did comparable work. Although I am not now and have never been a feminist, I have always believed in justice. And I was intimately involved in the exhausting 10-year struggle. Over the first months I worked hard—researching, studying, writing, debating—trying to convince the brethren to come out in favor of obeying the law requiring equal pay for equal work. When that enterprise failed, I turned to fact gathering in the ongoing, massive effort to help the EEOC and the U.S. Department of Labor prepare and prevail.

My divorce occurred nearly 15 years later than the point where Graybill's piece places it. And—contrary to what his sketch implies—the divorce had nothing whatever to do with the litigation, my beliefs, my former wife's beliefs, the Adventist Church, or my

dismissal from Pacific Press.

Graybill is egregiously incorrect in writing, "Phillips says he left the Adventist Church." I have never said anything remotely like that to Graybill or anyone else. It is against my ecumenical principles to "leave" any Christian fellowship. I was disfellowshipped from the Mountain View SDA congregation quietly, without the church trial I had requested. My pastor's clearly stated basis for the action was the revelation of my personal religious odyssey discreetly shared with my friends in the Sabbath school discussion group I attended and at times moderated. That had to stop, my pastor told me over the phone one sunny day. "A line has to be drawn," he said, because "they can't" defend the church leadership's pronouncements. (They had never indicated any desire to do so.) In response to his ultimatum, I wrote a letter requesting an *ecumenical transfer of*

membership from Mountain View SDA to Sunnyvale Presbyterian, where I was attending Sunday services. With no other information beyond rumor, I can only speculate that my "request for *transfer* of membership" was interpreted by my pastor and by the Central California Conference leadership at that time as a "request for *cessation* of membership" and was granted as such for the record.

Allow me herewith to combat misinformation about me so ubiquitously assumed, it seems, within Adventism. Here in Walla Walla no one is more regular than I in attending a Walla Walla College

church Sabbath school discussion group, where I share my convictions openly and where, after more than a year, I still feel welcome.

The publication which I now edit is not *Health Science*, but *Health Scene*. Certainly more than a few *Spectrum* readers have seen it.

I do not work for Cecil Coffey Communications, but for Coffey Communications, Inc.

Thank you for allowing me to correct the record.

Max Phillips

Walla Walla, Washington

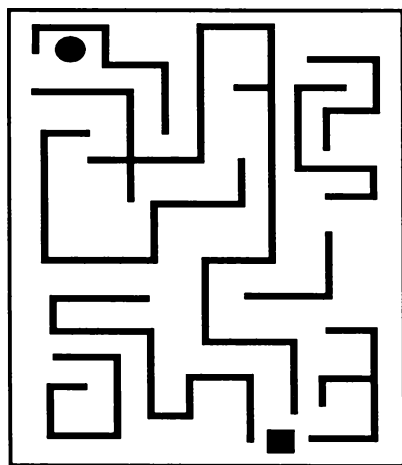
in too many cases appears to be dependent on how good a bargainer (possibly even schemer) a person is at time of employment. Ways of increasing and/or supplementing employee compensation appear to be limited largely by imagination and finding someone who is willing to go along.

It is interesting that Wisby admitted that there are other "courtesy payroll" employees. Where is that sanctioned in the working policies, and which constituencies approved them? In public life the free press, largely unknown in the church, helps balance a bureaucratic tendency to be self-dealing and secretive. Without *Spectrum*, this incident would likely have gone unreported, and even *Spectrum's* report was after the fact.

This recent incident may illustrate a difference in corporate culture between some church clergy/administrators and the treasurers/auditors, with some perhaps more likely to make "quiet deals" while others stick "by the book." In general, the corporate culture of the church appears to encourage seeking discounts and private "special deals." For example, some seminarians (and some other Adventists) are well known in Berrien Springs for asking for the "Adventist/clergy discount," and some also appear to spend an inordinate amount of energy finding ways to pay as little tax as possible.

One of the fundamental issues presented here is the Adventist pay scale and how it relates to the life-style of church employees. Church-sponsored educational and health systems have created a white collar, professional, upper-middle class among many members, with life-styles to match. These values are shared to a great degree by most church employees, who for example are no longer willing

"Anonymous Donors" or "Secret Arrangements"?



Spectrum should be commended for publishing the article, "The Presidents and Anonymous Donors," (Vol. 21, No. 4), which raises a number of interesting questions of church polity and policy that merit further discussion.

Because individuals accepted this supplemental income as a result of their elected church offices, like other elected officials they can hardly expect it to be kept a secret from those who elected them. That their own employing entity de-

clined to handle the matter should have been sufficient warning that what was proposed was inappropriate. If he did not do so, the General Conference treasurer should have strongly advised against such an action, and that the Columbia Union was out of line getting involved in employee matters that were not its affair.

That Folkenberg and McClure proceeded to locate a church entity willing to cooperate illustrates a too-common attitude of some in church management, "management by expediency," i.e., finding a way around a policy and dealing only with a specific situation rather than dealing with the underlying problem. I also find this to be another disquieting example of the lack of accountability of union conferences reminiscent of the Davenport fiasco.

As indicated by both Turner and Wisby, there are more "private financial deals" presently going on than most church members and employees realize. Compensation

to live in the tiny bungalows of former years. The neighborhoods of such housing near some church institutions are now seen as an embarrassment and are torn down as much as possible.

This difference is perhaps illustrated by comparing the modest housing of the White family in Battle Creek, Michigan, with their substantial home at Elmhaven in California. However, church remuneration is more adequate for purchasing bungalows than Elmhavens, especially on a single salary. However, there now appears to be an assumption of two incomes in the families of church employees. The church pay system (at least the voted policies) has also traditionally been egalitarian, with a high emphasis on equality and "fairness." There is comparatively little salary difference made based on seniority, level of responsibility or effectiveness, and merit pay is virtually unheard of.

Paying different salaries in different parts of the country based almost entirely on real estate costs has had several, possibly unintended, consequences. Among them are the following: difficulty of people from lower-cost areas being able to move into high-cost areas (demonstrated in the present case as well as others), having the church indirectly pay much more toward the net financial worth of some (those in higher-cost areas) than others, which can then be cashed out at retirement or left to heirs.

It is ironic, and not good for employee morale, when a relatively inexperienced employee moves into a lower-cost area from a higher-cost area and purchases a house that is twice as expensive as that of the faithful long-time employee in the lower-cost area. Sometimes these individuals even

have difficulty locating housing that costs enough to use all their equity! The opposite problem, of course, happened in the case at hand. This system also affects retirement income, which is based on the income of the final years of employment.

Annual cost-of-living allowances historically have approximated (on the low side) the annual rise in the consumer price index. Recent church actions threaten even these modest increases. The decision last fall to pay an annual increase based on tithe increase or consumer price index, whichever is lower (excluding of course employees of the Adventist Health System, but including other church employees whose income is not dependent on tithe) is a desperate move that will gradually impoverish church employees even further. Needless to say, there is widespread anger and frustration over this in the Adventist work force.

At current mortgage rates, the interest-free real-estate loan received by McClure is worth more

than \$11,000 annually. Unlike the wives' pay, the article did not indicate that this very generous "deal" has been rescinded. I also wonder when it has become church policy for a church entity to purchase the home of an employee who moves. (Of course McClure was not even an employee, but the board chair.) There are many examples of church employees having difficulty selling homes when they move to new locations, and having double payments for some time.

The concept of anonymous donors giving personal favors to church officials is disquieting for other reasons. To begin with, to whom is the person's name unknown? To the recipient as well as the larger church? It raises the possibility of purchasing church political influence, much as PACs do now in the political arena, and like PACs they might divert the employee's attention to soliciting such favors. This practice would also almost certainly lead to inequities of outcome, as it did in this case. There is quite a substantial financial difference between a no-interest loan and even a church-sponsored loan (and to whom are the latter available, or is it simply another "perk" for the elite?).

Like Caesar's wife, the personal financial dealings of church leaders need to be above reproach. There are significant problems with the current remuneration system. Rather than spending time finding loopholes in the system (and there are many), church leaders need to expend considerable effort in addressing the systemic problems, which likely involve reducing the bureaucratic overhead much more than has yet been contemplated.

Harvey Brenneise
Berrien Springs, Michigan

There are significant problems with the current remuneration system. Rather than spending time finding loopholes in the system (and there are many), church leaders need to expend considerable effort in addressing the systemic problems, which likely involve reducing the bureaucratic overhead much more than has yet been contemplated.

Haven't we framed the discussion about income supplements with the wrong words from the beginning? The issue is not "anonymous donors," but "secret arrangements"—secret information withheld from the supposedly informed electorate that puts folks in top slots, that reviews and votes on policy.

My dictionary says that anonymous means that the recipient does not know from whence the largess came. Since the Adventist Church has no more folks capable of providing such succor than can be counted on the fingers of one hand, there can be little doubt that the recipients knew exactly where their wives' "salaries" were coming from.

It is indeed troubling to read that conferences have/had similar arrangements. For years we continued the fiction that everyone from the lowliest one-room teacher to the conference president got equal pay. We now know that there are many levels of "equal," with some far more "equal" than others.

Of course there are solutions. They should come from the appropriate committees, and not from so-called anonymous donors. But it is hard to locate an appropriate committee in the hierarchy. It should be made up primarily of laypeople who experience the problem in the outside world, not the usual ingrown rubber stamp operation that is all too typical. Every worldwide company, every nationwide company, has the same problem of executives moving between the low and high cost-of-living areas. There are plenty of places to look for solutions, and plenty of solutions that do not compromise the company or the executive.

I am reminded of a study done in the Southern California Conference detailing the demographics of

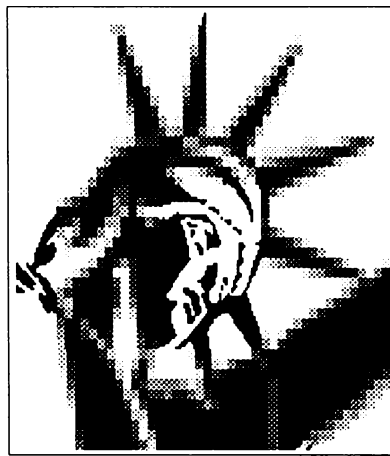
the loss of confidence in Adventist leaders. It pointed out that there is an inverse relationship between income and education on one hand, and confidence in leadership on the other.

The leadership should ponder one thought. You don't "get" respect, no matter what one TV co-

median thinks: you earn it. This episode at the top, evidently copying other incidents in the local conferences, has done little to enhance the respect and confidence in their judgment and capability.

Bob Patchin
Villa Park, California

Talk About Threats to Religious Liberty!



Your August, 1991 issue (Vol. 21, No. 4) just arrived. It contains two articles on last year's case of *Oregon Employment Division v. Smith*. Both opposed the Supreme Court's decision in terms that can be fairly called hyperbolic.

While I would be more comfortable with a decision that said that even laws, religiously neutral on their face, could not be enforced against those acting for religious motives, I don't feel that the threat is all that serious. For that matter I have seen predictions of disaster come to nothing. This will probably do the same.

To begin with, do we really believe that when a Sunday bill of the sort that would inspire the angel of mercy to fold her wings in preparation for taking her flight,

never to return (*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 451), those promoting it would be discouraged by a legal opinion that, under that most recent decisions of the Supreme Court, such a law would be unconstitutional?

Next, the decision in the *Smith* case applies only to laws that are religiously neutral. I recall that when the Sunday Law decisions (*McGowan v. Maryland*, 366 US 420) were handed down in 1961, the one thing the laws involved were not is religiously neutral. Yet they were upheld. By contrast the law involved in the *Smith* case is very moderate. It forbade the use of peyote and said nothing about religion.

I wrote an article about the decision that appeared in the *Baylor Law Review* issue of the summer of 1961. At the time I made a study of all the Sunday laws in the country and found a number of them using such terms as "Lord's Day," and "desecration." My favorite was a law in Virginia that, forbidding hunting on Sunday, declared it to be a day of rest for wild birds and wild animals.

Let me give one theory about the real threat to liberty. It will come in Satan's effort to make evil seem good and good seem evil. We have seen some considerable success in that effort. There is certain sexual conduct, adultery,

fornication, and homosexuality, that is most vigorously condemned in the Bible, now argued to be a most basic human right. Laws are already in existence protecting those who engage in such conduct from discrimination by those who do not agree with them. We can expect such law to trample on our right to hire church school teachers who uphold Bible teachings on the subject.

Nor is that all. We who believe in a divine creation, if we do not pay to send our children to church schools, must allow them to be

indoctrinated in a theory that denies our beliefs. A few states have passed laws that require that if one side of the question is presented, the other must be as well. All they say is, "Let's give both sides of the question and let kids decide for themselves." This has been held to be an establishment of religion!

If we wish to be upset by a decision of the Supreme Court, try this one on for size.

Kenneth Harvey Hopp
Yucaipa, California

couples who have had significant difficulty achieving pregnancy for one reason or another, and Bonnie Dwyer's experience, with some variation in details, is shared by many of my patients, and by millions of couples in this country. The unfortunate irony of this situation is that most of these couples are loving and sincere people who would make absolutely wonderful parents, but have difficulty achieving pregnancy for reasons over which they have no control.

To those who would deny them the opportunity to have children through assisted reproductive technology of one form or another because they consider it "sinful," "adulterous," or "immoral," I suggest that judgment be reserved. "Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matthew 7:1, NKJV). If one is not in the proverbial shoes of an "infertile" couple, one cannot truly appreciate the pain, grief, shame, and feelings of being "less than whole" that an "infertile" couple experiences. Only couples who are faced with this unfortunate situation have the right to decide for themselves what is right for them. It has to be a decision made after much prayerful consideration. It is a decision that the couple has to live with for the rest of their lives, and it is unfair for anyone outside of this relationship to impose their standards, based on personal bias, onto the couple. The God that I serve is a God of love and compassion, and I'm certain that s/he would judge each person according to the motives of his or her heart.

Thank you very much for deciding to publish this series of articles. I cheer your attempts to deal with an issue that affects more couples than most people realize.

Samuel C. Pang
Center for Fertility and IVF
Loma Linda University

The Ethics of Reproductive Technologies



cally, the principle of personhood must be derived directly from Scripture. It needs to be unequivocally *shown* that God can approve of using one ethic for "us" and another for "them."

We owe exactly the same basic ethical obligations to every human being: of whatever gender, race, color, age or developmental stage; of whatever ability or disability. To deny this principle leaves us at the mercy of whomever has the power to define "personhood," and flies in the face of the plain reading of Scripture.

Earl M. J. Aagaard
Angwin, California

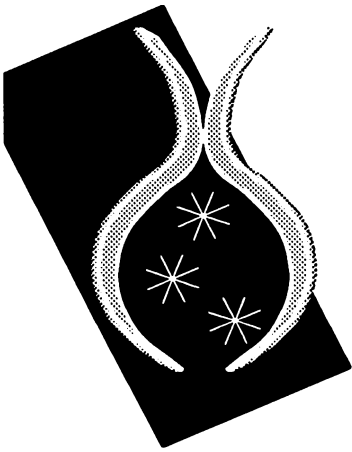
It seems to be a natural desire to divide humanity into "us" and "them." "Us" represents those to whom we have a list of ethical obligations, and "them" are those to whom we owe less, or nothing at all. Historians and anthropologists can give us many examples, and the practical results of such divisions are instructive—and scary.

Jack Provonsha's tempting call for the "principle of personhood" appears to represent another such division of the human family. We must require a very high burden of proof before we go along. Specifi-

Being a reproductive endocrinologist and infertility specialist, I was excited to see issues involved with assisted reproductive technologies addressed in *Spectrum* ("The Odyssey and the Ecstasy," "Inside the Human Life Committee," "Whose Baby Is This, Anyway?" and "God and the Adoption of Sperm and Ova," Vol. 21, No. 4).

On a daily basis, I work with

Sorry, But Life Doesn't Start at Conception



I am disturbed by the draft document entitled, "General Guidelines for a Christian Approach to Abortion" that appeared in *Spectrum* (Vol. 21, No. 4). Section One of the document suggests tacit acceptance of the idea that life starts at conception, or soon afterward.

By biological criteria this assertion is inaccurate. What occurs at conception is the joining of two cells that are already fully alive. This is one unique step in a series of steps, all critical, that lead to the formation of a new person. The new person does not suddenly come alive at any stage but rather continues life that was present in his or her parents and in their germ cells. While it may not please aesthetic sensibilities, loss of life is the normal and common mode of operation for the reproductive mechanism. Ova lost during normal menstruation and sperm lost during intercourse with contraception are just as alive prior to the event and just as dead afterward as an aborted fetus, and many times more common. While Scripture and Christian traditions demand respect and protection for human life, they are also consistent with the biological evidence that human life origi-

nated once and is passed in an unbroken (if inefficient) chain from generation to generation. Biologically, life isn't created at conception.

My thinking has been informed as I observed and struggled with the difficulty of two Seventh-day Adventist friends who I will call Ann and Betty. Both were students when they became pregnant. Both believed that sex outside marriage was wrong, had not intended to have sex, and had not, for the same reason, planned contraception. Both had a parent, or parents, whom they believed could not forgive them if they learned of the pregnancy.

Ann opted for abortion. She was deeply disturbed and expressed her feelings of guilt repeatedly. Ann did not, however, say that she believed that she had made the wrong decision.

Betty carried her pregnancy to term and had the satisfaction and deep pain of giving her daughter to another woman in an adopted family. She commented bitterly, during her pregnancy, about how pervasively the pregnancy interfered with her education and her social life. Betty never told me that she regretted her decision to carry the pregnancy to term, although she rued the glib manner in which she had decided that her moral principles allowed her no other option. To my knowledge both women remain active members of the church. Prior to Ann's experience I cherished a belief that abortion for reasons other than a threat to the mother's life was wrong. Today I believe that both of my friends made the right decision.

By the criteria of the draft document, Ann, who chose an abortion, would be culpable (under Item

Four) of having chosen abortion for reasons of convenience or birth control. The word *convenience* demeans her difficult choice and the word *inconvenience* is a gross understatement of the obstacles that she faced in carrying the pregnancy to term. Unlike Betty, attending a non-Adventist school and able to continue in classes, Ann was enrolled in an Adventist institution which would not, as a matter of policy, allow unmarried pregnant women to attend classes or remain full-time students. She lacked a social network outside of the school and was terrified of the prospect that her parents or her intolerant home church would learn of her pregnancy. In addition, she lacked a source of financial support outside of student loans and her parents' contribution to tuition.

Religious convictions about Rsexual restraint frequently are not matched by restrained behavior during adolescence and early adulthood. A pregnancy costs the student mother at least a lost school term and temporary separation from her social milieu.

If emotions preclude giving up a baby for adoption, pregnancy can permanently disrupt education and dictate poverty-level existence for the single mother supporting a family at the minimum wage. Adolescent pregnancy often stigmatizes a young woman, making it unlikely that she will find a husband.

The word *convenience* applies nicely to the married couple who find that the baby they wanted in two years is on the way now. It underrates the obstacles of the pregnant student. Loss of educational opportunity and loss of social opportunities are substantial losses and not issues only of convenience. While they are not obvious victors when weighted against the potential of a new person, they are not

obvious losers either. Genetically, the developing embryo or fetus is unique, but a young woman's life—a life that will be to a great degree shaped by her opportunities in school—is also unique. Seventh-day Adventists are interested in the life of the young woman; their interest is not restricted to the fetus developing within her.

I know that there are committed Seventh-day Adventists who believe that in some circumstances, social and economic obstacles to a pregnant woman should be given

substantial weight when considering the alternatives. Counselors at Seventh-day Adventist institutions, who have the trust of young women, have indicated it in private conversation and I cannot believe that no one on the committee holds this view. If this can't be incorporated into a consensus statement, then it may be well to include an appendix of a significant minority view.

Gary Gilbert, M.D.
Harvard Medical School

Genesis and Darwin Without Tears



Between the lines of James Hayward's review of problems associated with the Creation story (*Spectrum*, Vol. 21, No. 2), it was difficult to escape the sense of dismay and consternation that permeated the report. Adventist scientists have not gone overboard toward either evolutionary thinking or the so-called creationism that is making headlines. However, it is frustrating to find nature so uncooperative with our understanding of God's Word. Maybe it's time to take a look at both God's Word and the natural world from a different perspective. There is an an-

swer, a very simple answer, but it involves re-examining one of our most cherished traditions.

We are learning that some of what has passed for doctrine in theology is nothing more than tradition; it doesn't come from Scripture at all. The church is full of traditions, good traditions. But periodically it is wise to review these traditions in the light of new knowledge and discovery to see if they need updating. Adventists are used to doing this. We have rejected the traditional understanding of the day of worship, the mode of baptism, the nature of the human soul and

spirit, the location and nature of heaven and hell, and similar traditions. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to look for other doctrines that have been built on tradition rather than on Scripture.

Part of the problem in our understanding of Creation and, for that matter, the entire Old Testament, is the retention of our beliefs regarding the nature of God.

The Nature of God. Traditionally, God is presented to us as a Being who is omniscient (knows everything), omnipotent (all powerful), and omnipresent (everywhere). Some go even farther and claim that God knows things that have not yet happened. All these concepts are based on a few isolated texts that have other, more realistic interpretations.

Consider first the concept of omnipresence. Throughout the Scriptures God is presented as a finite, localized being:

- Genesis 3:8: "the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden." [All texts are taken from the New International Version unless otherwise specified.]

- Genesis 18:1, 2: "the Lord appeared to Abraham. . ."

- Genesis 32:24: "Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him" (see verse 30, "because I saw God face to face").

- Joshua 5:13-15: "he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him" (see verse 15: "the place where you are standing is holy").

- Daniel 10:16: "Then one who looked like a man touched my lips."

- Hebrews 1:3: "He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven"

In some cases, God is seen in conjunction with or riding or flying in a vehicle (often described by its appearance as a cloud):

- Exodus 19:18: "the Lord de-

scended on it [the mountain] in fire."

- Exodus 33:9: "As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the Lord spoke with Moses."

- Exodus 34:5: "the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him."

- Deuteronomy 31:15: "the Lord appeared at the Tent in a pillar of cloud; and the cloud stood over the entrance to the Tent."

- 2 Samuel 22:11: "He mounted the cherubim and flew; he soared on the wings of the wind" (see also Psalms 18:10).

- Ezekiel 1:4-28 (description of a "helicopter" in which the Lord was riding).

- Ezekiel 10 (more description of God's vehicle).

- Acts 1:9: "he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight."

These descriptions do not fit the image of an omnipresent being. There is no Scripture that remotely suggests that God is omnipresent. Since God is assumed to be omniscient and omnipotent, it is presumed that he is also omnipresent. But that is tradition, not scripture.

But why do we assume that God is omnipotent? There is probably more scriptural justification for this view than what supports either of the other attributes. However, if God is good and all-powerful, one must conclude with our Christian Scientist friends that there is no power that is not good; i.e., evil cannot exist. But the Scriptures make it plain that evil does exist. The devil is real. And death is an enemy that Jesus came to conquer.

God is good; of that there can be no argument or the whole of Christian philosophy is invalid. So God cannot be omnipotent in the

usual sense of the word. Nowhere does God claim to be all-powerful. He has, of course, all the power it takes to handle any situation that may arise in this world:

- Jeremiah 32:27: "I am the Lord. . . . Is anything too hard for Me?"

- Matthew 28:18: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

In this sense, he can rightly be titled "omnipotent" (Revelation 19:6, KJV). However, to ascribe an infinity of power to him takes us away from Bible doctrine into the realm of tradition.

Finally, consider omniscience; how much does God really know? If traditional philosophy is examined carefully, nothing is found but a giant computer—completely deterministic, preprogrammed, immutable, unchangeable. Love, mercy, grace, and justice all disappear in a morass of meaningless phrases. But if we examine what God says about himself, we find a God who has a sense of humor, uses tools, gets upset, keeps records, changes his mind, seeks advice, and much more. These are just the opposite of what we have been taught about God.

God says that he changes his

If we examine what God says about himself, we find a God who has a sense of humor, uses tools, gets upset, keeps records, changes his mind, seeks advice, and much more. These are just the opposite of what we have been taught about God.

mind:

- Genesis 6:7: "I will wipe mankind . . . from the face of the earth . . . for I am grieved that I have made them."

- 1 Samuel 16:1: "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king . . . ?"

- 2 Kings 20:1: "You will die; you will not recover . . ." Verse 5: "I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you."

- Ezekiel 4:12: "Bake it in the sight of the people, using human excrement for fuel." Verse 15 (after Ezekiel's protest): "Very well, . . . I will let you bake your bread over cow manure instead of human excrement."

- Amos 7:3: "So the Lord relented."

- Jonah 3:10: "When God saw what they did . . . he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened."

God can be influenced:

- Exodus 33:3: "I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people." Verses 14, 17 (after Moses's entreaty): "My presence will go with you . . . I will do the very thing you have asked."

- Numbers 14:20: "I have forgiven them, as you asked."

- Deuteronomy 9:13-20: "Let me alone, so that I may destroy them." Verse 19: "But again the Lord listened to me."

- Psalm 106:23: "he would destroy them—had not Moses . . . stood in the breach before him to keep his wrath from destroying them."

- Jeremiah 18:8: "if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent. . . ." Verse 10: "I will reconsider."

There are things that never entered his mind:

- Jeremiah 7:31: "'something I did not command nor did it enter my mind'" (see also Jeremiah 19:5; 32:35).

He can forget:

- Isaiah 43:25: "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions . . . and remembers your sins no more."

- Jeremiah 31:34: "I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." (See also Hebrews 8:12.)

- Hebrews 10:17: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."

He can think and reason (impossible if he knows everything):

- Isaiah 1:18: "Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord."

- Isaiah 55:8, 9: "my thoughts are not your thoughts."

- Micah 4:12: "they do not know the thoughts of the Lord; they do not understand his plan."

He lays plans:

- Isaiah 37:26: "In days of old I planned it; now I have brought it to pass."

- Jeremiah 18:11: "Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you."

- Jeremiah 29:11: "I know the plans I have for you."

The Creation Problem. In terms of the current question, once we recognize that God made us in his image and that he may do things as we would do them, we are free to compare his activities with our approaches to similar problems. For instance, when we set out to build a flying machine, we did not start by designing a jumbo jet complete with provisions for

food trays and oxygen masks. Instead, the first airship was a simple machine made of bicycle parts powered with a small available engine. It was taken to a quiet beach at Kitty Hawk and tried out on a calm morning. Since then, designs have improved and capabilities increased—until now we build huge passenger planes, fighter planes, helicopters, and space shuttles. All around us we see evidences that God went through a similar process when he designed and built the earth. Our friends in science have been telling us this for years, but since we thought we knew more than they did, we haven't been listening.

All through Scripture we see God trying to figure out how to handle us. He tries one thing, and when it fails he modifies his approach and tries another. With Abram, for instance, he tried to begin the New Earth. When Jacob's children turned out surly, he retrenched, starting again with Moses and Joshua. It seems that he almost succeeded with David and Solomon, but then sinful human nature took over again.

Later through Ezekiel, Ezra, and Nehemiah he tried again. The last chapters of Ezekiel present a fascinating picture of God's intentions. This time the Jews went overboard with oppressive laws and regulations, so that Ezekiel's prophecies never came to pass, either. When God himself in the person of Jesus came here for one last attempt to set up the kingdom, and Jesus was slain, God gave up that tactic. Now we are told of a 1,000-year retraining program, a final judgment, and a fire to cleanse the earth. Clearly God is learning and adapting as he tries to deal with his people.

Another concept should be addressed as well. As earth becomes more populated, humans are considering how to make Mars or Ve-

nus habitable. We are trying to figure out how to modify the atmosphere so we can breathe it, how to modify the soil so it will support the kind of vegetation we need to live on, et cetera. Perhaps we should introduce certain bacteria to modify some chemical. At another time we might introduce some plant to do another task. Or we might introduce animals for other jobs. Meanwhile we might choose to modify the atmosphere to accommodate the requirements of each life form. The eventual goal, of course, is to prepare everything so we can be comfortable living there.

Between what we find in nature and what God tells us in his Word, it seems that he used these same concepts in building earth. He is capable of doing a lot more than we can, of course, and he has better tools to work with, but the methods seem to be similar. We can see this, for instance, in his work with primates. The records of *A. afarensis* (Lucy), *H. habilis*, and *H. erectus* in the fossil strata show evidence of a number of experiments between the apes and humans. Apparently God worked on designing us for several million years until he perfected his masterpiece, us. (There are those who believe he tried it at least once before, but that the inhabitants of Atlantis and Lamuria wiped themselves out, so he had made some adjustments and started again. More likely, those myths refer to antediluvian people. On the other hand, maybe the Flood story should re-examined, too.)

About 6,000 years ago, in a seven-day visit to this planet, God planted a garden (see Genesis 2), made some final adjustments (see Genesis 1), formed his masterpiece (us), gave us some guidelines, and started our present era. From time to time, he returned to see how we

Only as we read more into Scripture than is actually there or as we accept more from Darwin than is actually found in nature do we find conflict.

were doing, encourage us, answer questions, and just be a friend. Then one time he found that we had blown it. Our Bible records the rest of the story.

As for the items that bothered Dr. Hayward, there is no hint in Scripture that the lives of animals are any more sacred than the lives of plants. Only humans were offered the tree of life. The very mention of that tree implies that other animals had normal life cycles even in Eden. He bases his dismay on tradition that is not supported by Scripture.

Because of the perceived threat to the sanctity of the Sabbath posed by Darwinian theory, Adventists have a special fascination with the Creation story. But once we understand the nature of God as outlined above and the way God probably works, there is no conflict. Some-

thing special happened 6,000 years ago. It is legitimate to ask what that was. However, it wasn't the creation of the entire universe as taught by some, nor the creation of the earth from nothing as taught by others. Nor was it something that conflicts with what we find in the fossil record.

Another threat posed by Darwin is the undermining of faith in God's Word in general. Here again, however, there is no real conflict. Only as we read more into Scripture than is actually there or as we accept more from Darwin than is actually found in nature do we find conflict. By staying with the facts in both nature and Scripture, perfect agreement is found between God's two books.

Robert Lee
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by a worker from the States, while Mariano Huallara, father-in-law of Dr. Ruben Chambi (mentioned in Teel's article), was assigned to the southern part.

Early during our presidency of the mission, some of the native station directors urged that we investigate the handling of tithes and offerings on one of the mission stations. When it was discovered that funds were being appropriated by the director for personal use, why did not the other mission station directors call attention to a supposed inequality in salaries, etc.?

Upon our leaving the Lake Titicaca Mission in 1953, at a little farewell gathering, Dr. Ruben Chambi, as Teel says, elected to the National Legislature, made an unforgettable speech: More than four centuries ago came the invasion from Spain, when the conquistadores brought the descendants of the Incas to the level of virtual slaves. Nearly three centuries later came the invasion from the South, as San Martin led the armies of liberation. But independence from Spain did not bring freedom to the people of the highlands. Finally, near the beginning of the present century, came the invasion from the North. Only with the coming of the Adventist missionaries did the dream of true freedom become a reality.

But Weiss asks, "Why do you think that Ruben Chambi did not teach at the Adventist College (Inca Union College) in Nāna?" During the seven years that we were closely connected with Inca Union College (1962-1969), we do not recall a mention of the subject. It seems he was not available. We did overlap with him for a year or two at Chile Adventist College, where beyond-the-call-of-duty efforts were expended to make sure that his daughter received the maximum student help in her nursing course. As foreign missionaries from

What Inequality at Lake Titicaca?



Regarding Harold Weiss's response (Vol. 21, No. 2) to "The Radical Roots of Peruvian Adventism," by Charles Teel (Vol. 21, No. 1), it is a bit puzzling that the inequality or "caste system" in the Peruvian Adventist Mission that

Weiss refers to should not have surfaced until recently. During the five years that we worked in an administrative capacity in the Lake Titicaca Mission (1948-1953) where we were intimately associated with Andres Achata, native Peruvian educational secretary of the mission, and especially concerned with those 109 schools, we never heard one word of lament over the inequality among workers and their assigned positions on the "totem pole."

We do distinctly remember that the mission committee gave study as to how the work on the mission stations could be made more efficient. A superintendent was appointed for the stations to the north of Lake Titicaca, and another for those to the south, to counsel with the station directors about problems related to their work. The post for the northern section was filled

Peru to Chile, the Chambis were well received and did good work.

Weiss mentions a "real revolution" that took place in Peru in the '70s. If he has in mind an episode that began several years before 1970, we can affirm that it did not revolve around Ruben Chambi, nor was it an effort to put forward those that had supposedly suffered under a caste system. Weiss's opinion is that "this revolution . . . is worthy of its historian." Others might opine that the pages of *Spectrum* need not be cluttered therewith.

As for Pedro Kalbermatter, mentioned by Harold Weiss in his letter, it may be that the tendency of North American Adventists to idolize certain missionaries like Fernando Stahl and Leo Halliwell have left others back in the shadows, but it did not keep Pedro Kalbermatter's daughter and son-in-law, Noel Mangold, from accepting a call to the Juliaca Clinic where we found them upon our

arrival in 1948.

In 1975, the Pacific Press published Barbara Westphall's *A Man Called Peter* [Kalbermatter]. A very recent Junior Sabbath School *Mission* has a vivid story of Pedro's army experience, long since recognized by South American Adventists as having opened the door for considerate treatment of Adventist conscripts throughout the continent.

Since 1987, Pacific Press has been producing several books a year to add to its new *Hall of Faith* series, paying special attention to the role played by less well-known missionary pioneers, each book accompanied by an audio-visual program from Mission Spotlight.

We may forget, but he who gave them their commission will not forget.

Bruno W. Steinweg
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increased taxes without the consent of the barons. The court was driven by the king's wishes, with crushing penalties for minor infractions.

In 1213 barons and church leaders met at St. Albans. They called for a halt to the king's injustices. There were 63 articles mainly affecting the middle class. From the charter developed the concepts of trial by jury and freedom from unjust imprisonment. Many of its ideas were later incorporated into the Constitution of the United States.

What if, after hearing the ideas, the barons had agreed, "The world field is not ready for this. Unity is more important than justice!"

The British gained dominance over the French in the New World in 1763. They then turned their attention to the colonists. Taxes were increased, duties imposed on imports, and troops quartered in private homes. The colonists dumped tea in Boston Harbor and the Second Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence.

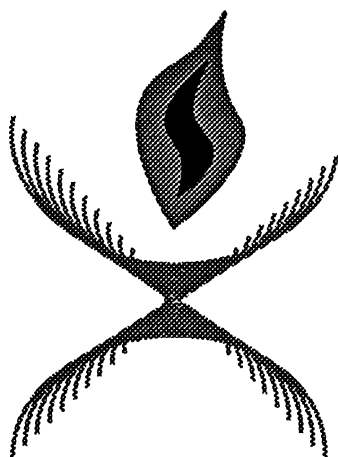
What if the representatives had said, "The world field is not ready for this; unity is more important than justice!"

The United States was torn by a variety of issues: economic, financial, philosophical, and political. The question of slavery underlay many of them. President Lincoln articulated the prevailing, though not always dominant view, that it was simply not right for one person to toil endlessly so that another could live in leisure and luxury.

What if, when Lincoln proposed the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing slaves south of the Mason/Dixon line, Congress had said, "The world field is not ready for this; unity is more important than justice!"

President Lyndon Baines Johnson was elected to the U.S.

Hammurabi and the Ordination of Women



Hammurabi, one of Babylon's greatest kings, ruled between 1850 and 1750 B.C. His reign ushered in the Golden Age of Babylon. He expanded his king-

dom by conquest and diplomacy. He proposed to his cabinet that the government should collect taxes fairly, that military service was for all and limited by law, that just rules would control business, wages, trade, loans, and debts, that basically the strong would not take advantage of the weak.

What if his cabinet had replied, "The world field is not ready for this; unity is more important than justice!"

The Normans and the French conquered England in 1066 A.D. For 100 years able and fair kings ruled the isle. They respected feudal customs and tried to govern fairly. In 1199 John took the throne. He demanded excessive military service, sold royal positions, and

presidency in 1964. He stated, "We have the opportunity to move not only toward the Rich Society, but upward to the Great Society." Johnson led the Congress to enact legislation to fight poverty, improve education, and care for the aged. His dreams culminated in the Civil Rights Act of 1968, designed to end discrimination in housing, education, and transportation.

What if Congress had said, "The world field is not ready for this; unity is more important than justice!"

The 1990 General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists', meeting in Indianapolis, considered the question of the ordination

of women. Some said it was a theological question, some argued sociologically, some saw it as an issue of basic justice. When the count was taken, the ordination of women was voted down.

What if the North American Delegation had said, "The world field may not be ready for the ordination of women, but we are. Justice is more important than unity because without justice, there can be no real unity!"

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academic circles in the United States through the writings of Jonathan Culler in particular.

Semiological theory is mainly informed by Saussure's theory of language. "Language, better than anything else, offers a basis for understanding the semiological problem," Saussure argued long before semiology developed into a full-fledged science.

Saussure defines language as a system of conventional, arbitrary signs. These three concepts—convention, arbitrariness, and sign—are also the basis of semiological theory. Let's briefly examine the concepts in the order: convention, sign, arbitrariness.

According to Saussure, a series of sounds does not constitute a word until there has been an informal agreement or convention of the arrangement pattern of those individual sounds. Take the English word *book*, which consists, in sequential order, of the sounds [bu:] and [k]. If these sounds were rearranged so that [k] came before [bu:], the linguistic convention of sound arrangement would be violated, producing a series of sounds that do not constitute a word in English.

Saussure also conceives any word to consist of two components: the sign (or signifier) and the concept (or signified). The sign is vocal (the sounds that are uttered) while the concept is the mental image of the object that the sign (word) designates. (Note that the morpheme "sign" is contained in such words as "*designate*" and "*signify*.")

Finally, the relationship between signifier and signified, Saussure argues, is arbitrary. In other words, there is no inherent quality in a signified, say the mental image of object "leaf," that requires it to be known by the sound sequence [li:f] in any language.

Jewelry, Semiology, and Freud . . .



It is not uncommon these days to see a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church wearing jewelry. He or she, however, does not go unfrowned at by fellow church members. If these members are courageous enough to confront him or her, or still, if they are earnest enough to persuade him or her that wearing jewelry is unacceptable in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, their arguments usually fall under two categories: one, that jewelry is expensive; two, that jewelry is su-

perfluous decoration.

While these arguments may once have been valid, today they do not hold water. First, gold wrist watches and posh cars by Cadillac, BMW, and Mercedes-Benz, all symbols of conspicuous consumption, are acceptable for Adventists to have. Besides, the market today is full of cheap jewelry, making cost not so valid an argument. Second, some superfluous shiny buttons and hair ribbons seem to have no purpose other than that of decoration, yet they are acceptable for Adventists to wear.

That cost and decoration are no longer valid arguments, however, does not legitimate for Adventists the wearing of jewelry for reasons that can be derived from semiology and psychology.

Semiology, or "a science that studies the life of signs within society," as Ferdinand de Saussure defines it, is a fairly young science that is particularly dominated by French structuralists such as Roland Barthes and Pierre Guiraud. It has also gained much ground in the

It is these linguistic concepts—convention, sign, and arbitrariness—that constitute the basis of semiological theory. In other words, semiology is language minus the element of sound. The field is vast. It encompasses the traffic code, forms of greeting, formulas of politeness, and modes of dress—including the wearing of jewelry.

Besides the obvious purpose of covering our nudity and keeping us warm, our mode of dress expresses our social identity, a concept that is illuminated by Sigmund Freud's theory of the human psyche.

Freud divides the human psyche into three compartments: the Id, the Ego, and the Superego. In the Id, which is unconscious, are stored images of things that we have sense but that we have long forgotten. At the level of the Ego, we are conscious, but only conscious in relation to our individual selves. At the level of the Superego, our individual selves interact with society, and here our fashion of interaction is governed by conventional norms. It is at this social level that individual selves assume social identities. Here we are members of a certain nationality, class, church, club, profession . . . the list goes on.

When the individual self is about to interact with society, it wears a "mask" (what Carl Gustav Jung, Freud's disciple, calls a persona) to identify its social identity at that particular time. Take the example of a child at the time of birth. He or she is born naked and is immediately dressed upon entering society. In many societies, if the baby is a girl, she is dressed differently from her brother: she wears a dress and her brother wears shorts or pants. In those societies, there is a convention that a dress designates the female gender and shorts or pants designate the male gender. In other words, the mode of dress is the signifier and the gender is the

signified.

Examples of modes of dress as signifiers of social identities abound. A police officer or a nurse on duty wear a uniform, quite an explicit signifier. Other signifiers are not so explicit: a company executive wears a suit; a blue collar worker wears jeans.

Modes of dress that express one's social identity are, like linguistic signs, conventional and arbitrary. If the signifiers were not conventional and arbitrary, it would be unnatural for women in some Western countries to wear pants and men in Scotland to wear skirts.

What does all this have to do with the wearing of jewelry? Before the mass production of jewelry and its resulting affordability, the wearing of jewelry was a sign of belonging to the rich class; it expressed a social identity. Today, however, jewelry is so cheaply available that the wearing of it no longer expressed a social identity; rather, it is the nonwearing of it that expresses a social identity—the Adventist identity.

Unlike other social identities

that are assumed at certain times (for example a police officer only wears his or her uniform in public when at work), Adventism is a way of life—an identity that should be present in all social contexts and whose semiological expression, the mode of dress, should also be present in all social contexts. Of all Adventist modes of dress, the nonwearing of jewelry is the most explicit.

Is then a member of the Adventist Church who wears jewelry less of an Adventist? Like all signs, the relationship between the presence or absence of jewelry (signifier) and one's Adventism (signified) is arbitrary. The nonwearing of jewelry, however, is a long-standing convention—a dress code for the Adventist identity. In other words, wearing jewelry for an Adventist constitutes a violation of the convention—a significant act of not wishing to be identified as an Adventist.

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SDAs Have Only Part of the Tithing Story



In a 1987 *Spectrum* article, "Adventist Tithesaying—The Untold Story," Brian E. Strayer made a

thorough historical survey of the arduous and controversial development of the tithing system in the Adventist church. Interesting is the fact that James White and other church pioneers were actually, at first, opponents to adopting a biblical tithe system.

I wonder, given the present controversies of our tithe system, whether it be competition between administrative divisions or subordinate claims of factional groups, if anything other than sweeping change can re-establish virility in the financial structure of our church. The failures and weaknesses of the present tithe doctrine is, in my

view, approaching the impotency of the "Sister Betsy" system back in the 1870s. We can only overcome imminent doom by reviving biblical truths which are presently lacking.

According to Strayer's survey, not since the initial emphasis on Malachi 3:8-10 by Dudley M. Canwright in 1876 has there been any further biblical input into our tithe doctrine. Many—perhaps most—Adventists are not aware that Adventist doctrine is biblically incomplete. Deuteronomy is categorically avoided in the present

doctrine, which is ironic since Deuteronomy is the most concentrated and interpretive resource of tithing principles in the Bible.

The interpretations of Deuteronomic tithing according to *The SDA Bible Commentary* are bad for two reasons—firstly, that they are simply wrong concluding that tithing in Deuteronomy is different from tithing as we know it, and secondly, because this "second tithe" does not exist in any form in church doctrine, or practice. The church cannot defend an interpretation that is void in practice. There-

fore, mere logic demands that revision is necessary.

Solutions to the ineffectiveness and vulnerability of tithe cannot be achieved by debates on a policy level. The issue must be debated on the highest plane—biblical truth. Behind this truth is an economic system designed by God with a potential more powerful than most have yet imagined.

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