

# Spectrum

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The Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

## The Environment, Stupid

GOD AND THE COMPELLING  
CASE FOR NATURE

RESURRECTION OF  
THE WORLD

LETTERS FROM AFRICA

WHAT ARE ADVENTISTS *DOING?*

THE CURIOUS IMAGINATION

APOCALYPTIC  
ANTI-IMPERIALISTS

ACROBATIC ADVENTISTS



January 1993  
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# Spectrum

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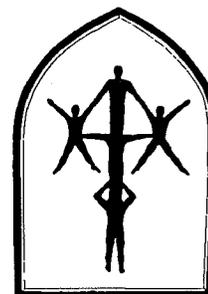
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# The Environment, Stupid

**B**ill Clinton's version was scrawled across the front wall of his presidential campaign headquarters: "It's the Economy, Stupid." If Al Gore had been at the top of the ticket, the title of our special section might have dominated the campaign. (See Roy Benton's review of Gore's book.) Gore and many others believe devastation of the environment has replaced nuclear winter as the impending apocalypse that should dominate our thinking.

"The environment, stupid," was not the slogan mounted on the denomination's Rose Parade float, but the one billion potential viewers on television could see that the Seventh-day Adventist Church had dedicated its gorgeous, multicolored float of animals to "Enjoying and Caring for Nature." (See Lara Beaven's report.) Media commentators reported that Seventh-day Adventists were environmentalists. (See the General Conference's official statement on the environment.)

In our special section, some of *Spectrum's* best-known authors (Alvin Kwiram, Roy Benton, Glenn Coe) demonstrate how making the environment one of the church's major concerns involves re-examining such distinctive Adventist affirmations as Creation, the Sabbath, healthful living, and an apocalyptic world view. Brian Harper, a graduate student in ethics appearing for the first time in *Spectrum*, suggests that redemption understood as resurrection must also be revisited if the environment is to become the focus of Adventist Christians. Several other younger voices report some things Adventists are actually doing about

the environment.

This is the first special section of *Spectrum* devoted to the environment. Of course, the voices heard in this issue only begin the discussion. For example, they concern themselves with the environment primarily because pollution transforms the environment into a hazard, indeed a threat, to human existence. The principal concern of these authors is the traditional preoccupation of morality—the well being of humans. They are what might be called *soft* environmentalists.

What remains a secondary theme through most of our special section are concerns about the environment for its own sake; expressions of outrage at the extinction of species unnecessary to human existence, such as the snail darter, spotted owl, and humpback whale. Glenn Coe does defend an environmentalism that might threaten human interests. Such a sense of loss at the disappearance of any part of creation, a demand to preserve life, even at the expense of human well being, is the truly new moral concern suggested by *hard* environmentalists. In a sense, soft environmentalists worry about protecting humans from a polluted environment; hard environmentalists worry about protecting the environment from humans.

Whether an apocalyptic community endorses not only soft but hard environmentalism is worth further discussion. It is already clear that soft or hard, Adventists are—or should be—environmentalists.

Roy Branson



# Letters From Africa

A Johns Hopkins professor returns to Africa, where he served 15 years, until recently, as a medical missionary.

by Gilbert Burnham

## Fort Portal, Western Uganda

Uganda is but a shadow of its former self. True, Field Marshal Amin and Milton Obote are gone, but they left behind an unsettled and suffering land with perhaps 1.3 million of its people killed. As the country struggled to its feet it was savaged again, this time by the AIDS virus. Two decades of devastation seem to have etched into the Ugandans with whom I work a certain indefinable sadness. Outside my bedroom window the guard with his Kalashnikov is a reminder that in some places, order has not been completely restored.

In the evening the sun sets behind the 17,000-foot Ruwenzori mountains, their glaciers and snow fields virtually astride the equator. The peaks are named for the Victorian greats who came this way on their explorations: Sir Samuel Baker, traveling with his slave-wife; Henry Morton Stanley, prince of hype; and the unfortunate John Speke. Captain Sir Richard Burton is not remembered here.

I am staying with Walter, a German doctor with

interests in Hans Kung and double reeds. He is doubtless the finest (and only) cor anglais player in Fort Portal, if not all Uganda. From his house the road goes *poco a poco* among the potholes and past the colonial-era municipal buildings, now balancing between decay and dereliction. On the green in front of the Labor Office the colonials once played cricket every Saturday in their starched whites. The bark of a nearby Jacaranda tree enfolds a corroded metal plate, which reminds the passer-by that this peace tree was planted in 1918 to celebrate the armistice. As years have passed, the carnage has come home from Ypres and Compiègne. Beyond the cricket pitch the road goes *allegro vivace* downhill, sun-dappled through the trees, to the river where bare-foot pedestrians cross on a foot bridge made of tropical hardwoods laid in a herringbone pattern. Above the river stands the old Hindu school, and not far away is the Asian cemetery where still rest the only Indians whom Idi Amin did not expel in 1973.

At the top of the hill, where the shops begin, the roundabout has only shards of asphalt—left from the days when Uganda's GNP was greater than that of Korea. Before its *glissando* into anguish. To the left, in a refurbished garage-cum-servant's quarters, is the office of the Northwestern Uganda Field of Seventh-day Adventists. Entering the door, I walk in on the monthly meeting of the field's pastoral staff. These district pastors have lean, hungry looks avouching salaries that fall short of the Minimum Daily Require-

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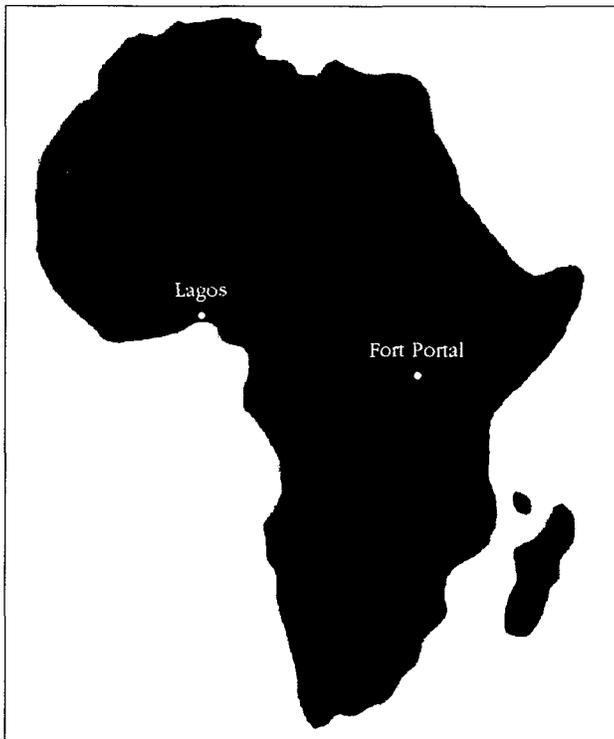
*Gilbert Burnham, who teaches international health and tropical medicine at the Johns Hopkins University, travels extensively, especially in Africa. With an M.D. from Loma Linda University and a Ph.D. from London University, Burnham served 15 years in East Africa, 14 of them, until 1991, as head of the denomination's Malamulo Hospital in Malawi.*

ment of a wife and children. The 14 pastors look after 49 churches and 98 companies. During the last quarter, Cranmer Nkiriyehe, the field president, says there were 408 baptisms and U.S.\$2,587 in tithes was collected. Remarkable for a country where many households earn less than \$25 a year. I try to exit tactfully and allow the meeting to go on, but a bond of brotherhood has been established, and I cannot leave until we pray together. My request to the Lord that he remember the wives and children of these gaunt men evokes a resounding amen.

The world church's shrinking resources threaten to leave unions like Uganda, established as they were during the spring tides of missionary zeal, heaped on the beach. Orphans like those up in the Toro Babies Home. But orphans from apathy, not AIDS.

On Sabbath, church is held in an uncompleted building on a hill overlooking town. If you come early you can squeeze together with other worshippers on the few benches. Late comers bring mats to sit on the unfinished floor. Until prosperity returns, the church is likely to remain unfinished. To begin the divine service we sing one of the grand old Adventist hymns from the Toro hymnbook, translated in some distant year from *Christ in Song*, and still printed, no doubt, from time to time by aging type at the *Africa Herald*. F. E. Belden and P. P. Bliss sing on in these remote reaches of the church.

Six secondary school students in their school uniforms sing the special music. Born into a world of



motion and rhythm, they sway gently and unself-consciously in time to "The Old Rugged Cross."

The sermon comes from Revelation 2:17; "... and in the stone a new name written. . . ." It is preached in English for my benefit. To many Africans one's name has significance, perhaps remembering a past great deed done by the family, some injustice done to a parent, or great expectations for the child. John promises that we, as did the Apostle Paul, will receive a new name, signifying our new relationship with Christ.

We close with another song from the past, sung in the rich harmony so characteristic of African congregational singing. Between the third and fourth verses I wonder what the music of heaven is like. My friend Walter already knows: oboe *con basso continuo*.

## Lagos, Nigeria

The early morning flight from Maiduguri has set down at Lagos in light showers, and without the benefit of air controllers, who are on strike. I am relieved to be off the worn and weary Boeing. After two weeks in the arid Lake Chad Basin in the northeast corner of the country, the humid air of the coast is welcome. In Lagos I look forward to seeing old friends at the embassy and new friends at the ministry of health.

Getting to Victoria Island from Ikeja airport is a slow trip through the high-viscosity road traffic of this 4-million strong pullulating metropolis. Small muddy roads lead off at irregular angles between countless one- and two-story buildings stuck up against one another. Some buildings affect an air of self-importance, peering over their lessers with an uppity smugness. But most look as if they had set themselves down for a moment of rest en route somewhere else, then decided to stay on. Intermittent electricity and a more intermittent water supply suggests an aggressive neoplasm, rapidly outgrowing its vascular supply. Floating in serenity above this amalgam of vitality and squalor is the new Sheraton Hotel. Visiting businessmen in their pressed tropical worsteds will still be breakfasting in the Garden Room on croissant and fresh melon as we pass.

This morning the traffic resembles the frenzied instinctual migration of some feral rodent species. Seemingly without beginning; certainly without end. The horde of Peugeot that have been flowing along in a noisy turbulence suddenly congeal into an agitated, snarling mass, stopped up by a stalled bus and a truck undergoing repairs. On the right side of Ikorodu Road, protected by high walls topped with

broken glass, rises the office of the Nigerian Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists. The belief of its builders in the Imminent Return is proclaimed by stark steel window frames set in a commonplace concrete structure, unadorned by plaiting of hair or wearing of gold. More recently, a church building has been constructed adjacent. Its exuberant architecture with attractive angles to its roof and walls and imaginatively designed hardwood doors suggests that the eschatological certitude has, perhaps, softened.

On Sabbath, an urbane congregation will pack the benches to sing historic Christian hymns from the new *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* and to hear traditional Adventist sermons that could have pleased the early missionaries. Women will wear kilometers of colorful Nigerian print. The headdresses of matching fabric will be especially spectacular. The choir from the Adventist Seminary of West Africa may be there to sing, with graduation gowns, mortar boards, and tassels doubling as choir robes. The choir director is particularly resplendent, gowned in yellow and green of a tropical iridescence.

Several hours and a few miles later we reach the decaying grandeur of the Federal Palace Hotel with its spectacular prospects across Lagos harbor to the open sea. Peddlers of magazines, hawkers of curios, and the inevitable bevy of bar girls ebb and flow through the lobby while negotiations for a room continue.

Julius is director of research for the federal ministry of health. A few nights later we are at his house for a chat. He is dressed in an embroidered kaftan, which flows generously over his substantial frame and serious stomach. On the walls, Nigerian art is interspersed with Pissarro, Corot, and Turner prints. Tonight he is in fine form. We are quickly infected by his spontaneous laughter and clever wit. From his inexhaustible supply, the Great Stories roll, covering the circuit from improbable to absurd. They tumble out, words stepping on one another as enthusiasm compromises articulation. At the approaching punchline Julius collapses on the sofa in mirth, feet kicking wildly in the air, long robes flapping and abdomen convulsing.

Julius is a Falasha, one of several thousand Nigerian Jews whose families have lived here for centuries. They are an inseparable part of the intellectual and commercial life of this most populace of African nations. Amidst the long-running strife among Nigeria's many tribes and between its Christians and Muslims, they have preserved their Judaism. When did the Jews come to Nigeria? Julius is not sure. Perhaps it was in the 15th century. Perhaps before. When smoldering conflicts with the Christians in Ethiopia flared up into another pogrom, his forebears were chosen by their co-religionists to search out a new land where their race and religion could be preserved. Even now there is a tradition among Nigerian Falashas that one child in each family must be brought up to sacrifice himself, if circumstances require, so others might escape.

When he was a child, Julius remembers Golda Meir, future prime minister of Israel, coming to his parents' house, asking help of his father to encourage the return of the Nigerian Falashas to Israel. In the end, the Falashas decided they preferred trade with Israel to immigration. At the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War in 1973, Julius left his academic position to join the Israeli army in the defense of a land his ancestors had left during the reign of Solomon. This was the high point in his life.

On our last day in Lagos, with my colleagues I pay a final visit to Julius in his office, high up in the 15-story ministry headquarters with its sweeping views across the hazy afternoon sea. In the hallway sit a gaggle of gossiping messengers, deep into the analysis of the day's rumors. The impending change of government, riots in the north, a possible move of headquarters to Abuja and the latest announcement by General Babangida gives them much to consider.

When we arrive at his office there are already two meetings going on, and Julius is conducting spirited negotiations on the telephone, punctuated by dramatic gestures. We just dropped in to say good-by, but no, he is thinking of a new research project, funded by Japanese money, and we have to talk about it now. But for us there is the airport ordeal ahead. We must go. We edge toward the door. Julius blocks our way. Have we heard the story about the rabbi at the funeral?



# The Questioning Imagination

A commencement address at Canadian Union College by one of Adventism's most respected educators.

by Otilie Stafford

IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE HERE, TO FIND FORMER colleagues and friends here, and to be part of this celebration. Academic events tie the entire academic community together, and commencements have a common uniting memory and hope for the future that makes them similar, no matter what country the institution. They give us time to pause and reflect on what events mean—moments out of time to think about what time's envious and calumniating effects truly are. And in this kind of reflective pause, to think about how we have been changed by knowledge and experience.

The educated person learns how to live with such change. Learns how to welcome the unsettling of ideas and the shattering of visions that knowledge and experience often produce, and still to trust in the mind's "blessed rage for order" and to wait for the reshaping

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*Otilie Stafford, who received her Ph.D. in English literature from Boston University, is director of the adult degree program and professor of English at Atlantic Union College. She continues to teach in the English department, which she chaired for 25 years.*

of meanings.

This resilience of the mind and its ability to venture into new and (for the individual at any rate), unexplored territories is a central concern of education.

"The mind is an enchanting thing," said Marianne Moore, "like Gieseking playing Scarlatti." Most of you are too young to remember Gieseking, the great pianist, but if you have heard his recordings, you know what Marianne Moore was getting at. The intricacy, the great delicacy and complexity of the music, performed with such skill and ease that its difficulty is completely hidden, and the performance creates the impression of perfect freedom.

The mind, she is saying, is just such a performer. Trained to discipline, and yet, by discipline, freed.

Every musician and athlete must know that we must labor to be beautiful, whether it is Gieseking the virtuoso, or Kristi Yamaguchi, the balletic skater. Alfred North Whitehead, in the more abstruse language of the philosopher, echoes the poet's admiration for this

enchanted process of the mind. You quote him in your motto: "Wherever ideas are effective, there is freedom."

It is particularly pleasant to be speaking to a graduating class that has the good sense to quote Alfred North Whitehead. We have never managed to quite catch up to Whitehead, even though it is now almost 75 years since he came to this continent, changing his profession and venturing into a world of new ideas when his contemporaries were planning their retirements.

He was 63 when he came to Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Harvard University, having already had a distinguished career as a mathematician. But there were new ideas he wanted to explore, and dynamic changes were the central reality of life, he believed. He came to a department of philosophy that was in its golden years, but with a group of distinguished philosophers whose primary concern was epistemology. Whitehead wanted to talk about metaphysics. His first lecture at Harvard left students and faculty alike shaking their heads. They could not understand him.

But his Friday night seminars in his home gradually drew a group of students and colleagues into a conversation that led to a series of books by Whitehead, and to a changed view of philosophy in the department he had joined.

He began to talk and write about education before he left England, basing his lectures on a "main idea": "The students are alive, and the purpose of education is to stimulate and guide their self-development." He called this the "one fundamental principle of education." Transmission of knowledge was not the role of education, but the transformation of the mind and the lives of students and of their societies.

"Bits of knowledge can easily be learned; what matters is their *use*." His chief attack was on "inert ideas," both in his early lectures

about education and in his book, published shortly after he came to Harvard, *The Aims of Education*. "Inert ideas" he defined as "those ideas that are merely received into the mind without being utilized, or tested, or thrown into fresh combinations."

Basing his further statements about education on these early ones, he began exploring the uses of imagination and the responsibility education places on those who are fortunate enough to obtain it. "The fortunate people are those whose minds are filled with thoughts in which they forget themselves and remember others." "The whole point of a university . . . is to bring the young under the intellectual influence of a band of imaginative scholars."

The emphasis, of course, is on *imaginative*. Whitehead always credited his own teachers and his associates for the kind of imaginative scholarship they exemplified. All of us owe vast debts of gratitude to those who lit our fires, to those whose minds freed our minds to be adventurous.

"The human soul," he declared, "cannot endure monotony; it needs to be 'fertilized' by transient but vivid experiences; art meets this need."

"Imagination is more important than knowledge," Einstein said. "The tragedy of the world," said Whitehead, "is that those who are experienced have feeble imaginations. Fools act on imagination without knowledge; pedants act on knowledge without imagination. The task of education is to weld together imagination and experience."

Imagination frees us from imprisonments of various kinds: it frees us from our own subjective visions—locked up in the cell of our own experiences and emotions, we are alienated from others, and cannot grow beyond our own limitations. We react strongly to our own experiences, but, lacking the imaginative ability to see them as common to the experiences of humankind, we fall into self-aggrandizement or self-pity.

Imagination frees us from the rigidity of a view that sees what *has been* and what *is* as the only possibilities. Such a view imposes conformity on the society or institutional structure, aiming at crushing any suggestion of something different. Every *imaginative act* that is based upon *knowledge* overpasses the established order in some way and in some degree. It is likely at first to appear at least eccentric, at worst rebellious and chaotic, but it is truly a freeing from the established.

And imagination frees us from the certainty that chains of cause and result determine whatever happens, that nothing we can do will make a difference.

Such a failure of the imagination leaves us passive, lazy, and selfish parasites on a power structure or subject to haphazard events.

The ironic utopias of the 20th century picture this condition. In 1984 a society has become passive and lost its freedom. In *Brave New World* a society has become lazy and lost its concern about what happens. In both cases the faculty that has been destroyed has been the imagination.

We have all encountered the individual who, as a subordinate, has a strong sense of outrage when the persons he works under are unjust to him or dictatorial in their dealings with him. He may take a stand against tyranny, even become the spokesman for those who are oppressed by it. Years and upward mobility later, he himself becomes the person in power, and cannot understand why those under him object to his dictatorial ways. He cannot use his past personal sense of

injustice as a way of understanding the roots of injustice as they grow vines that choke others. Nor can he understand that his own sense in one kind of relationship may be similar to that of others in the same relationship, even when he is in an opposite position. His imaginative powers have failed to free him from the imprisonment of subjectivity.

We just had our alumni weekend at Atlantic Union College. I have very mixed feelings about these events. It is wonderful to see classmates, former students, from the near and distant past. It is disturbing to listen to those who have grown old viewing everything dif-

ferent in today's society as "signs of evil times," thinking, apparently, that the past was good, but the present world is descending into chaos. My mother's generation grew up in the Jazz Age, the world of bootlegging, speak-easies, free love, and agnosticism. Today those few who are left from her generation are shocked by drugs, the ignoring of the law, and cynicism. What happens to memory and

imagination as we grow old? Do we forget as we grow, and therefore cannot free ourselves from our own prejudices? Or do we understand the past, but cannot extend its lessons into the present and future, just as the subjective individual cannot extend her own personal experiences to illuminate the experiences of others?

Does imagination's power diminish as one grows older? I cannot think it necessarily does. There are so many Georgia O'Keeffes, Albert Einsteins, Mstislav Rostropoviches, whose imaginative power extends over their entire

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*I would hope the hunger and thirst for knowledge, the keen delight in the quest, will drive you from question to question; that you will be neither fool nor pedant, but will so combine imagination and knowledge that you will have the power to change your personal worlds and the worlds around you.*

lifetimes. And there are occasionally, Whiteheads, who have the courage and the imagination to change their lives and start something new, even at a stage in life when others are hardening into banality. Such persons are truly free, and at a time in life when freedom often diminishes, they are the most free. It is such freedom that Whitehead urges us toward.

The imagination feeds upon curiosity, a feeling that Whitehead says education should begin with: "A *ferment* already stirring in the mind." That ferment grows out of the instinctive, deep, human desire to *know*. The imaginative scholar becomes comfortable with the knowledge that there are few fixed truths, and that the questions themselves are that mind's purpose. It is Whitehead who sees the importance of uniting the young and the old together in the search for answers to questions. Such a union preserves the connection between knowledge and the zest for life. A college is not concerned with merely imparting knowledge, but with a sense of adventure that the search for knowledge brings.

The writer Annie Dillard found such a zest for life early in her childhood. She describes sitting on the cold marble floor of a library in Pittsburgh, as a child, while her mother talked to the librarians. The child Annie had gone to a section of the library far away from the children's books, and was looking with curiosity at the books in the nature section. She lifted down from the shelves the *Field Guide to Ponds and Streams*. Not knowing anything at all about ponds and streams, which were scarce in central Pittsburgh, she leafed through the book. What a shocker it was! Here was a whole area of life she hadn't even known existed. Then she looked at the card in the back of the book. It was filled with names, some of persons who had taken the same book out over and over. Who were these people, living in the middle

of Pittsburgh, who were so fascinated with the life in ponds and streams, she wondered? The book changed Annie Dillard's life, leading her to a lifelong curiosity about the natural world around her, and the sense of the mysterious that lies behind that world.

The adult Dillard, at the end of her Pulitzer prize-winning book, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, talks about the energy that results from a combination of experience and imagination. She writes:

Thomas Merton wrote, "There is always a temptation to diddle around in the contemplative life, making itsy-bitsy statues." There is always an enormous temptation to diddle around making itsy-bitsy friends and meals and journeys for itsy-bitsy years on end. It is so self-conscious, so apparently moral, simply to step aside from the gaps where the creeks and winds pour down, saying, I never merited this grace, quite rightly, and then to walk along the rest of our days on the edge of rage. I won't have it. The world is wilder in all directions, more dangerous and bitter, more extravagant and bright. We are making hay when we should be making whoopee; we are raising tomatoes when we should be raising Cain, or Lazarus. . . . The gaps are the things. The gaps are the spirit's one home, the altitudes and latitudes so dazzlingly spare and clean that the spirit can discover itself for the first time like a once-blind man unbound. . . . Stalk the gaps. Squeak into a gap in the soil, turn, and unlock a universe. This is how you spend the afternoon. *Spend* the afternoon. You can't take it with you.

Annie Dillard has a more recent book out. Her first novel, and a blockbuster. In an article in the Sunday *New York Times*, she talks about the preparation for the imaginative life of the writer as reading. Read! Read! Read!, she says. It fills the mind, so that the knowledge and the imagination can work together. In *An American Childhood*, Annie Dillard talks about the sentimental poster that hung in the Pittsburgh library—"When you open a book, anything can happen." But, she adds, "This was so. A book is a bomb, a land mine you want to go off. . . . Books swept me away."

The chief malady of the mind of man, said Pascal, is a restless curiosity about things that he does not know and cannot understand. It is this curiosity that preserves the connection between the knowledge and the zest for life. If that curiosity operates, suggests Whitehead, "a fact is no longer a burden on the memory: it is energizing as the poet of our dreams, and as the architect of our purposes."

How do we manage to keep the inquisitive eye and mind alive and well, throughout life, however long? How do we bring together the imaginative ability to see visions of worlds that do not exist, even as we study about the one in which we live? How can students be led to refine their questions so they will lead to further and fuller questions? How can the sense of learning as an adventure in which we move into the mysterious and the astonishing be kept fresh? How can we keep alive the idea of lifelong learning carrying us to the edge of knowledge? Can we learn to use our questions and our curiosity to change ourselves and our societies? Can we, by escaping from the conventional wisdom, by sensing the infinite possibilities for change, actually transform our worlds?



F.W. Maitland describes the qualities that shape the life of the imaginative scholar:

The hunger and thirst for knowledge, the keen delight in the chase, the good humored willingness to admit that the scent was false, the eager desire to get on with the work, the cheerful resolution to go back and begin again, the broad good sense, the unaffected modesty, the imperturbable temper, the gratitude for any little help that was given.

What a vital and dynamic list of qualities—none of them connected with the gathering of inert facts, with the sense of being an authority, of having found answers, or of learning how to do things efficiently! Good humor, a recognition that false starts are inevitable and often precede finding the right path; modesty, and especially a thirst for knowledge and a delight in the adventure of pursuing it. How can an educational system develop these qualities in graduates? Higher education is puzzled when it tries to answer this question.

We understand how to say, here is a body of knowledge you must master if you are to work in this area. There will be an exam over it in April. I am not so sure that we understand how to develop a sense of adventure, the ability to ask productive and expansive questions, the imaginative power that true scholarship needs. How do we develop the eager desire, the cheerful resolution, the good sense and modesty that Maitland thinks characterize the educated person?

Without these qualities, we are trapped by dilemmas because we cannot imagine ways to think differently about what we know. We grow and learn and solve problems when we not only tolerate, but delight in, the knowledge that many false starts can precede finding the right path, and that the fact that we have made false starts does not doom us to following them to their disastrous ends.

How can we educate our children, our young adults, our older adults, and those who

are in charge of doing the educating, to understand that the curiosity and openness to possibilities is a *way of living* and not an article of commerce? That education should produce a *kind of mind and character* and not a job applicant. That such an education should be actively shaping our lives and our discourses during the entire course of a lifetime. Lifelong learning then is not a plea for continuing education. It is a commitment to a life dedicated to the hunger and thirst for knowledge, the excitement of the chase, to the inquisitive eye and the open mind.

I have had for several years on the bulletin board over my desk these words of Rilke:

Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books that are written in a very foreign tongue . . . Live the questions. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answers.

If the purpose of the education is to lead us to further and more profound questions, not to give us absolute answers, one must ask how questioning and curiosity change between the experience of the child, sitting on the cold marble floor of the library, surprised by the book that seems to have no relation to the world around her, and the educated mind of the adult. The answer to that question should, I suppose, shape the structures of education, the methodology of teachers, the curricula of the college. Surely one aim would be to keep the inquisitive eye and mind alive and well, resilient and with a joy in the performing, like Gieseking playing Scarlatti, and not to forget them as academic disciplines engage them. But they must not just survive, they must develop. Here Whitehead's protest against inert facts becomes important. What happens *while* the facts are being mastered, and *after* they are encountered is much more important to the freeing of the mind than is the learning of them.

The gift that the college has to offer to its students is the ability to adventure for answers, the old gift of the educated imagination that can see visions and dream dreams. As Whitehead says, "It is a dangerous gift, which has started many a conflagration. If we are too timid as to that danger, the proper course is to shut down our universities." But, he also says, "You must be free to think rightly *and wrongly*, and free to appreciate the variousness of the universe." It is the gift that lends zest to life, that gives life meaning, whether we are living in the middle of happiness and good fortune, or in the middle of tragedy.

Christopher Fry, the English playwright, tells about his last encounter with his friend Charles Williams, who shouted to him from the tailboard of a London bus, "When we're dead we shall have the sensation of having enjoyed life altogether, whatever has happened to us."

"The distance between us had widened," says Fry, "and he leaned out into the space so that his voice should reach me. 'Even if we've been murdered, what a pleasure to have been capable of it!'"

Fry goes on to add, "He was not at all saying that everything is for the best in this best of all worlds. He was saying that there is an angle of the experience where the dark is distilled into light; either here or hereafter, in or out of time: where our tragic fate finds itself with perfect pitch, and goes straight to the key which creation was composed in." Only a combination of experience and imagination could see life whole in a way that reaches beyond the immediate and chaotic and sees its deeper meaning in all events, joyous and tragic. Such an imaginative vision brings a sense of zest to life, whatever its contents may be.

"A university," Whitehead thought, "is imaginative or it is nothing—at least nothing useful . . . The gift the university has to offer is the old one of imagination, the lighted torch which

passes from hand to hand . . . It is a gift which all must pray for their country who desire for it an abiding greatness.”

I would hope for those graduating today, as I would hope for all of us rejoicing in the event, that your lives will be filled with the excitement of curiosity, the hunger and thirst for knowledge, the keen delight in the quest, that you will be driven from question to question as you learn and find answers, that the mysterious and the inexplicable will always be there, that you will be freed from the familiar and the trite, that you will be neither

fool nor pedant, but will so combine imagination and knowledge that you will have the power to change your personal worlds and the worlds around you.

Because, as the great questioner Hamlet asks:

What is a man [or a woman]  
If his chief good and market of his time  
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.  
Sure, He that made us with such a large dis-  
course,  
Looking before and after, gave us not  
[Imagination] and godlike reason  
To fust in us unused.



# The Cynic and The Church

A young theologian explains why it isn't necessarily sacrilegious to feel like laughing.

by Gary Chartier

ANY PEOPLE COULD ECHO THE WORDS OF pastor and theologian William Willimon: "For me, the real scandal of the ordained ministry, the ultimate stumbling block, the thing I avoid and fear most, is the Church. . . . My problem . . . is that I am yoked to the Church." Willimon observes that like "many today, I love Jesus. I want to serve him. But he married beneath his station."<sup>1</sup> And numerous Adventists could resonate with Jonathan Butler when he says that,

as the good Christian Paul had a "wretched body" to contend with every day, so the Adventist church has its wretched body. As a people Adventists mean as much as the Christian Paul meant in his great love-letters and general epistles. But as a people we also are weighed down with a body of death which we must fight daily. It pervades us with its languor, and discontent, and provincial grasp of mankind and systems, and

cliche patterns of thought, and legalism, and PR faces, and materialism, and cliquish sociability. And we have sensed this flesh pervade our very selves, and well up within us—from we know not where—as a great current of darkness. . . . We wallow in the flesh of Adventism—bored, frustrated, left-wingers or stragglers.<sup>2</sup>

The "scandal" of the church evokes a certain kind of cynicism. Indeed, cynicism about the church follows naturally from Christian faith. Cynicism, in and of itself, can never be judged to be *necessarily* inappropriate, even from within the community of faith. In short, I want to justify the cynic to the church and the church to the cynic. I believe cynicism about the church is a part of fidelity to the church.

By "cynicism," I mean an attitude of dryly humorous suspicion about human activities—especially motivations. While more extreme accounts of the cynic's perspective may be offered, this one seems to me to capture the understanding of cynicism presupposed in ordinary discourse. The cynic doubts that things are as they should be. He or she also doubts that this is caused solely by poor

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information or inadequate coordination; pure human cussedness is at least partly responsible. The cynic believes in "original sin."

Measured suspicion of the church is appropriate, first of all, because of the "in-between" character of Christian existence. The *identity* of the church and its members is clear. That identity is shaped by God's self-gift in Jesus of Nazareth; by the hope inspired by Jesus' resurrection, by the promise of the world's ultimate salvation and restoration in Jesus' *parousia*; and by the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church.

But the Christian is called to "become what he or she is." While identity of the Christian as a child of God may be clear, his or her experience and behavior often fails. Thus, Paul distances himself from enthusiasts who suppose that the Christian's new life eliminates the ambiguities inherent in sinful existence: "I do not claim that I have already succeeded or have already become perfect. I keep going on to try to win the prize for which Christ Jesus has already won me to himself. Of course, brothers, I really do not think that I have already won it; the one thing I do, however, is to forget what is behind me and do my best to reach what is ahead" (Philippians 3:12, 13, TEV).<sup>3</sup>

Paul makes the same point in a more general way in his Epistle to the Galatians: the sinful nature "sets its desires against the Spirit, while the Spirit fights against it. They are in conflict with one another so that what you will to do you cannot do" (5:16-18, NEB). And,

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*I believe that cynics have cause to remain hopeful. I remain convinced that individual Adventists possess the capacity to continue their "lover's quarrels" with the church, and that collective Adventism possesses the resources to profit from its cynical members.*

while in no way condoning their behavior, Paul judges the Corinthian *believers* to be "infants in Christ," not ready for "solid food," and living in accordance with dictates of the "lower nature" (1 Corinthians 3:1-4).

The church cannot *glory* in this shame; the inherent sinfulness of its members can be no cause for gratitude. But this shame must render incredible any corporate or individual claims to perfection. Consequently, Christians always appropriately remain suspicious of churchly pretensions to ultimacy.

The fact that the church is a corporate entity also renders it worthy of suspicion. For corporate structures give ever-fresh opportunities to sinful people to cloak themselves and their actions in a mantle of respectability. Some involved directly in the church structure are drawn to the argument that the Spirit, who makes Christ's lordship in the church, ensures its infallibility. If one then judges oneself to be "legislating for God,"<sup>4</sup> the temptation to make absolute whatever one decides becomes well-nigh irresistible.

Of course, ecclesiastical history demonstrates that the universal Christian church has strayed, wandered, and been inconsistent. God is always at work in the church to bring good out of its evil or ineptitude, but God does not always *override* the church's mistakes.

It would seem that if one has *exactly* the same informational input as someone else, but relies on divine power, one's judgment regarding an issue of moral or spiritual significance ought to be better.

In fact, reliance on God does not make

much of a difference in coming to a right decision. There are at least five reasons why.

1. An issue may be so circumscribed that it is of a purely organizational or logistical character. In such a case, moral and spiritual sensitivity cannot make one's judgment better or worse.

2. Other persons with explicit faith in Christ may—indeed, probably will—have differing opinions about an object of dispute, and invoking one's faith as the source of the legitimacy of one's opinion can carry little or no weight in such situations.

3. God's grace is, of course, operative outside the visible church, and thus to assert the superiority of one's opinion over that of someone else *solely or exclusively because one is a Christian* is to ignore the possibility that the person with whom one is disputing is also being transformed in judgment and will by God's Spirit.

4. Whatever one's disposition, one's analysis of the relevant data is a function of one's human history and social locus.

5. Finally, one is never in a position to know with any degree of accuracy either the state of one's own spiritual maturity or the state of anyone else's.

Humans are not only evil, they are also limited. No humans can act on completely adequate knowledge. No human activity can be carried on with perfect effectiveness. Humans do not possess unlimited power or knowledge and so, even under the best of circumstances, their actions and decisions can be faulty.

Because, then, the church has its redeemed identity on the one hand and the imperious demands of the Old Adam on the other, we have every right to be suspicious of any ecclesiastical claim to finality.<sup>5</sup> We can be suspicious of the church's belief, the church's practice, the motives of the church's members (especially ourselves) because the church is a *human* community.

Suspicion of the church is justified precisely because of the gospel the church preaches. The church does not preach belief in unwavering human goodness. The gospel the church presents highlights not only human possibility but human ambiguity, not only the goodness wrought by the Spirit's work but the evil against which the Spirit contends.

While suspicion and cynicism are justified, they are also dangerous. First, we cannot afford to be suspicious of the Lord of the church. Of course, the prophetic word informs us that it is God who says "come now, and let us reason together." Central to Adventist talk about the "Great Controversy" is the assumption that God is willing to be evaluated by the created universe. Even if we judge that the God whose grace is proclaimed by the church is trustworthy, we may still find ourselves questioning *within* the community of faith, like Job and the psalmists.

Williams argues that our "obedience to God requires us to fight Him. And when we fail in that most radical and paradoxical kind of obedience people smell death in our churches and stay away. . . ." "Whatever God wants in our relationship with Him," Williams maintains, "it certainly isn't respectability. I imagine that the church in Laodicea treated God in the most respectable way. The divine reply to this treatment is invective fitting for youth at its most rebellious: 'I'll spit you out.'"<sup>6</sup>

The temptation to be avoided here is one common to all real and would-be intellectuals: to cultivate tension as a sign of sophistication rather than accepting it as a sign of fallen and finite humanity. To be sure, Christian life is unlikely ever to be free of doubt. George MacDonald wrote, "The man that feareth, Lord, to doubt, / In that fear doubteth thee."<sup>7</sup> But we must not compel ourselves to *cherish* cynicism about God, not because God is so insecure that human suspicion naturally evokes divine wrath, but because to be cynical about

God is to alienate oneself from the loving source of one's being.<sup>8</sup>

Second, cynicism is dangerous because we cannot exempt ourselves. The others regarding whom we are cynical face challenges not dissimilar from our own. Our loyalties are often divided, our commitment to God and others wavers, our experience is pervaded by ambiguity.

Cynicism cannot be allowed to break down relationships among people. Because we must be suspicious of ourselves, we must be aware that our own suspicion of others is itself questionable.

Perhaps it is easier to maintain appropriate distance when one voices suspicions of the corporate (congregational, denominational, or universal) church. Church structures intensify the inherently problematic character of human decisions, and have wide-ranging consequences for people. One can articulate suspicion, cynicism, and concern about structures in a way that does not bring shame and disrepute to particular individuals.



It is worth noting the distinction between experiencing appropriate suspicion and voicing it. Private wrongs deserve private airing, while public wrongs demand public attention. One's suspicion is most appropriately expressed and directed at those in whom one trusts. After all, they are the most likely to return the favor. It is in the company of one's friends that self-criticism comes most readily. A community of trust and honesty may serve as a paradigm for the church, understood as a community of both loyalty and "suspicion"—of others and, even more, of ourselves.

Thus it seems to me that Butler is absolutely correct when, in the context of Adventist collegiate life, he writes that we

get off the subject when we place all our gripes on the head of a scapegoat . . . , [assuming that] if we can just rid ourselves of these goats everything will be alright. We are off the subject when it is always "their fault," because even if we could drive out all these scapegoats from the camp, we would still be here (I would still be here), and now we're getting back on the subject.

Because after I have exposed all the evils, and smashed all the idols, and burned all the tyrants in effigy, the real enemy still lurks. For the enemy is never the scapegoat we can send out of camp, the problem is never simply "their fault" (if we understand fully the problem), for it is part of me. The enemy must be met within me. I can gripe all I want through the day about the faculty, or the Commons, or the Dean's Council, but it's really only chit-chat until I turn out the lights and wait in the silence for sleep to take me.<sup>9</sup>

Third, cynicism is very dangerous when it is directed at the *point* of the church: the trust and love and worship and service of God. What goes on "in church" (i.e., in congregational life) and "in *the* church" (i.e., in the context of church and supra-church organization) may often fall short of the divine ideal, and deserves to be treated with a healthy skepticism. But responsible suspicion regarding the church is always the suspicion of a

*participant*, not a bystander. The church is worth getting mad about, but only if the church makes a difference in our life, if one has some reason to care about it.

We must have community if we are to grow, if we are to be the persons God intends us to be. Spirituality is not nurtured in a vacuum; nor are the various worthwhile endeavors the church sponsors likely to be successfully managed by isolated individuals. To experience and respond to the world most adequately, we require the support of a community which helps to shape our interpretations of and responses to reality by a variety of the practices it inculcates, the language and images it employs, the stories it remembers and the self-discipline it fosters. In other words, we need religious communities.<sup>10</sup>

We do not start in a vacuum. One begins one's religious reflection with a heritage one cannot simply ignore. Karl Rahner, the great German theologian, is surely correct when he writes:

A man cannot do away with his parents once he is born. The very fact that we are and that we continue to exist assures us of the fact that they continue ceaselessly to be our parents. Hence we cannot be Christians . . . by quitting the church which has been, and remains, once and for all the mother of this Christian existence of ours. Otherwise all that we have, ultimately speaking, is an abstract God and an abstract Christ who continues to exist merely as the projection of our own subjectivity. Community is thus crucial for personal religious experience.<sup>11</sup>

Though church communities are flawed, they have the capacity to dramatically affect our lives in positive ways.

I have observed that the cynic's *suspicion* is qualified by his or her *humor*. And this reference to humor will be enough, as far as some people are concerned, to legitimate the disfranchisement of the cynic. To the grimly serious pundits who take it upon themselves

to call down divine judgment on the church, humor will seem entirely inappropriate. Issues of consequence are at stake, and the fate of the church is, they will tell us, no laughing matter.

At least two responses come to mind. First, in Scripture, the narratives that shape our moral identities as Christians,<sup>12</sup> combine, with little difficulty, humor and seriousness about matters of ultimate concern. Elijah mocks the prophets of Baal with the suggestion that their deity has not bothered to answer their petition; instead, he is relieving himself. Jesus employs striking metaphors and stories intended to elicit not only reflection but laughter from his hearers. Paul employs sarcasm to good effect in his attempts to shame and woo the Corinthian believers back into fellowship with himself (e.g., 1 Corinthians 4:8). If the moral witness of Scripture is to be taken seriously, then human foibles cannot be taken too seriously.

The second defense of humor is more philosophical. One key ingredient in humor is the sense of incongruity. And a sense of incongruity should be very, very evident whenever religious issues are discussed by finite creatures.

The reality about which we speak when we speak religiously so far exceeds our language and our imagery that we speak only because we have no alternative. The issues are important ones, and they must be addressed with whatever clarity of thought and courage of will we can bring to bear. But our representations of ultimate reality are separated from ultimate reality itself by infinite decision. Otherwise, we wouldn't be talking about ultimate reality at all. The tension obtains not only when we *speak*, but when we *do* Christianly. That is why H. A. Williams can write, "Thank God when you can take a delighted pleasure in the comic spectacle which is yourself, especially if it is yourself

devoutly at prayer."<sup>13</sup>

The recognition of this gap can inspire appropriate irony and cynicism about the church. There is something more than faintly absurd about our too-somber religious performance and discourse. Laughter is the only appropriate response.<sup>14</sup>

Is there a place, then, for cynics in the church? Perhaps not for cynics whose own self-righteousness prevents them from being cynical about themselves. Perhaps not for cynics who believe that ultimate reality itself deserves to be scorned. Perhaps not for cynics who refuse to opt for the trust, love, worship, and service of God-in-Christ on the basis that their categories of understanding are provisional.

Certainly, however, there is room for worshipful, self-critical, and communally responsible cynics. Christians are impelled to such cynicism by the Christian gospel itself. And since their faith is always in the church's Lord, and not in the church itself, their faith can continue despite battles with their community of faith. Hans Küng articulates this ambivalent understanding of the church with particular clarity and grace:

Why then does the church remain alive as a community of faith? Not because there is no threat to life, no fatal illness, within it. But because God keeps it alive, *despite* all infirmities and weaknesses, and constantly endows it with a new continuity . . . .

Why does the church remain in grace? Not because it is itself steadfast and faithful. But because, *despite* all sin and guilt, God does not dismiss it from his favor and grace and constantly grants it a new indestructibility . . . .

Why does the church remain in truth? Not because there is in it no wavering or doubting, no deviation or going astray. But because God maintains it in truth, *despite* its doubts, misunderstandings, and errors.<sup>15</sup>

I believe that cynics have cause to remain hopeful. Not everyone, perhaps, can be a cynic *in* the church. Not every church, perhaps, can tolerate cynics. But I remain convinced that individual Adventists possess the capacity to continue their "lover's quarrels" with the church, and that collective Adventism possess the resources to profit from its cynical members.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. William H. Willimon, *What's Right With the Church* (San Francisco: Harper, 1985) p. 131.

2. Jonathan Butler, "Letters to Phillip," *La Sierra College Criterion*, 38:4 (October 21, 1966), p. 2.

3. Cp. Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1911), pp. 559-565.

4. To use a de-contextualized Ellen White expression employed in the introduction to the new *General Conference Rules of Procedure*.

5. Thus, Ellen White's image of the life to come includes a vision of progressive understanding: "There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. . . . Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. . . . And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will

be their admiration of His character" (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1911], pp. 677, 678).

6. H. A. Williams, *Tensions: Necessary Conflicts in Life and Love* (London: Beazley, 1976), pp. 30, 31.

7. Qtd. in Williams, p. 48.

8. But cp. Williams, who argues that temporary conflict with God can ultimately be productive of greater intimacy with God: "When we find ourselves sneering at God-associated things we may be pretty certain that the God-associated things are only a cover for God Himself. We often find that too shocking an admission to make to ourselves—are we sneering at Absolute Goodness? Or if not too shocking, then too absurd. We might as well sneer at the Alps. Yet in fact that is precisely what we are doing, not because we are doomed and damned and totally depraved, but because here on earth our sneering and ridicule is a necessary stage or element in our love for the Creator,

who is leading us towards that independence of Him by means of which alone we can finally give ourselves totally to Him. The acceptance of our inevitable ambiguity towards God—with all the tensions, conflicts and guilt-feelings it involves—is part of that cross through which alone we can enter into fullness of life” (p. 34). While I find this plausible, I think we must avoid the temptation to idealize such conflict and to use the truth that it will sometimes come as an excuse for self-indulgence and irresponsibility. It is important to distinguish here between our genuine (and not merely clever and trendy) doubts about the reality and goodness of God and our response to a God whose love we perceive but whom we wish, perhaps, to ridicule because we find that love too demanding.

9. Jonathan Butler, “Letters to Phillip,” *La Sierra College Criterion*, 38:10 (January 20, 1967), p. 2.

10. The dependence of the account of religion offered here upon that of George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Post-Liberal Era* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984) will be obvious. I am, in fact, more appreciative of the work of Lindbeck’s student, William C. Placher, whose *Unapologetic Theology: A Christian Voice in a Pluralistic Conversation* (Atlanta: Westminster/John Knox, 1989) offers an account of “post-liberal” theology less open to relativist or dogmatic misuse than Lindbeck’s. And, in company with Terence Tilley, I advocate a “dirty intertextuality” in contrast to the “pure intratextualism” Lindbeck, Kenneth Surin, and others seem to prefer. Nicholas Lash addresses these issues incisively in his recent book *Easter in Ordinary: Reflections on Human Experience and the Knowledge of God* (Charlottesville, Va.: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1988).

11. Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations 12: Confrontations 2*, trans. David Bourke (London: Darton, 1974), p. 154.

12. See Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1983).

13. Williams, p. 113.

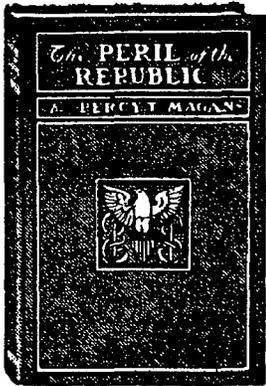
14. Science fiction and fantasy novelist Ursula LeGuin remarks somewhere that “God is only playing

God.” What LeGuin means I am not sure, but it seems to me that her statement could be interpreted as implying that God does not take the divine majesty too seriously, that God is not easily offended. Were it validated, this affirmation could serve both as a legitimation of comic discourse about the church and as a model for our own self-analysis.

Suppose God really does not take Godself seriously; would this legitimate simply *any* response to the divine reality? I think not. There is a difference between God, the ultimate reality, who knows Godself to be self-giving love, denying with amusement the thought that ultimate reality should be taken as ultimate *for its own sake* and our refusal to recognize our own rootedness in the being of God. While our concepts of God are always provisional, God remains our sure foundation—morally, epistemically, and ontologically. God *is* ultimate in a way that no finite reality is, and it is precisely God’s ultimacy that renders finite claims to ultimacy comic. Further, to make light of God is not to make light simply of one other member of reality; it is to make light of the character of reality itself. Our talk about that reality must be treated with humor, but our judgments relative to the nature of reality itself—is it marked by mutuality or competition, is it self-sufficient or dependent—are vital. There is always a tension here between our own limitations and the significance of the decisions we must make despite those limitations.

It is perhaps in this context that discussions of flippant use of the word “God” belong. God does not take God seriously enough to be offended by such usage. But perhaps we will fail to treat God worshipfully if the only label we have for God is bandied about without much thought. Again, we must prevent our cynicism about our own limitations from encouraging a thoroughgoing cynicism about reality as such. And since our only access to reality as such is by means of our words and concepts, we must make use of them even as we affirm their provisionality.

15. Hans Küng, *The Church—Maintained in Truth: A Theological Meditation*, trans. Edward Quinn (New York: Random House, 1982), p. 16, and cp. Rahner, pp. 159, 160.



# Apocalyptic Anti-Imperialists

The Adventist denunciation of the Spanish-American War (1898) demonstrates that a lively apocalyptic hope can encourage public witness against war and oppression.

by Doug Morgan

“IT HAS BEEN A SPLENDID LITTLE WAR,” WROTE John Hay, United States ambassador to England in a letter to the war’s best-known hero, Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>1</sup> In Hay’s assessment, America’s little war with Spain in 1898 was “splendid” for three reasons. First, it was “begun with highest motives.” Because of Spain’s intransigence against Cuban independence and the repeated atrocities of its colonial rule, the United States could enter the war with the high moral purpose of liberating a grievously oppressed people.

Further, the war was “carried on with magnificent intelligence and spirit.” Theodore Roosevelt, of course, epitomized that spirit, not only in leading his Rough Riders in the assault on San Juan Hill, but also in the preemptive action he’d taken as assistant secretary of the Navy, prior to the outbreak of the war, in ordering the U.S. Pacific fleet under George Dewey in the Philippines to block

possible movement of the Spanish squadron. The action positioned U.S. forces for the most decisive victory of the Spanish-American War, when Dewey crushed the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay in a battle described by one historian as “a military execution rather than a real contest.”<sup>2</sup>

Finally, said Hay, the war was “favored by that fortune which loves the brave.” Begun in April of 1898, it was all over by August, with only 281 American combat deaths (though tropical diseases took the lives of around 2,500).<sup>3</sup>

The Spanish-American War and its aftermath marked the emergence of the U.S. as a world power, an empire with worldwide commitments and even outright possessions. This emergence sparked a debate about the nation’s character and policies in which Seventh-day Adventists were deeply involved. The Adventist response to the government’s action during this epoch adds clarity to the complex picture of the church’s interaction with the American Republic in the 19th century. The Adventist response to the Spanish-American War and

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related developments suggests, I contend, that the apocalyptic view of history which Adventists held drove them to bear a witness that involved them in the public affairs of the Republic.

At the outset of the war, Congress had signalled America's apparently honorable intentions by passing a resolution guaranteeing Cuba's self-determination. But during the course of the war, the U.S. acquired numerous island territories, including Guam, Puerto Rico, and most controversial of all, the Philippines. The Philippine independence forces under Emilio Aguinaldo had initially welcomed the Americans as liberators. But the Americans stayed after driving the Spanish out, and ignored the independent government Aguinaldo tried to establish. In February of 1899, the Senate ratified the Treaty of Paris, formally annexing the Philippines. This action led to a two-year war against Aguinaldo's nationalists, in which American troops resorted to various forms of torture, such as the "water cure."<sup>4</sup>

A diverse coalition of voices responded to the U.S. action with alarm, charging the nation with imperialism. Though a minority, the anti-imperialists included many prominent Americans, including ex-Presidents Benjamin Harrison and Grover Cleveland, progressive reformer Jane Addams, labor leader Samuel Gompers, industrialist Andrew Carnegie, writer Mark Twain, philosopher William James, and a host of lesser-known educators and reformers. Though motivated by a variety of concerns—diplomatic, constitutional, political, and economic—the anti-imperialists' major theme was that in becoming an empire and denying those conquered the rights and liberties of Americans, the nation was betraying the ideals on which it was founded and which made it unique, a beacon of democracy to the world.<sup>5</sup>

The anti-imperialists, however, did not prevail. The bold, expansionist spirit of Teddy Roosevelt and what he called "the strenuous

life," seemed more vital and progressive to the majority of Americans. For Roosevelt, "righteous war" was a necessary expression of those "virile qualities" which Americans must have if the nation was "to play a great part in the world." He had no patience with "those who make a pretense of humanitarianism to hide and cover their timidity, and who cant about 'liberty' and the 'consent of the governed,' in order to excuse themselves for their unwillingness to play the part of men."<sup>6</sup>

According to Roosevelt, President McKinley, because of his initial restraint regarding the dispute with Spain, had "no more backbone than a chocolate éclair."<sup>7</sup> However, public sentiment, inflamed by sensationalized press reports of Spanish atrocities in Cuba and the tragic explosion on the U.S. battleship *Maine* that killed 262 men, finally overcame the President's reluctance and swept the nation into war.

How, then, did Adventists respond to this overwhelmingly popular "splendid little war" and its aftermath? Two levels of moral discourse may be seen in that response. The first had to do with what was right for Christians. The second had to do with the church's witness to the nation.<sup>8</sup>

## Confronting the Church Militant

The war fervor that had galvanized the nation prompted striking expressions of pacifist sentiment from Adventist leaders. In a sermon preached in the Battle Creek Tabernacle about the same time the United States entered the war, General Conference President George A. Irwin declared, "We have no business whatever to become aroused and stirred by the spirit [of war] that is abroad in the land." He cited several passages from the Sermon on the Mount, declaring that these scriptures "show what I believe is the position of the Christian in this conflict, and what are

the teachings of our Lord and Master in regard to war and the spirit of what comes with war.”<sup>9</sup>

A. T. Jones, co-editor of the *Review and Herald*, maintained that “Christian love demands that its possessor shall not make war at all. ‘Put up again thy sword into his place,’ is the word of the Author of Christianity, the embodiment of Christian love.”<sup>10</sup> Ever inclined to state issues in the most stark of terms, the former army sergeant declared that “Christianity is one thing; war is another, and far different thing. Christians are one sort of people; warriors are another and different sort of people.”<sup>11</sup>

Such anti-war statements were not expressly for the purpose of advancing a particular national foreign policy, but rather to make clear the moral stance of Christians as a people distinct from the world. In proclaiming these views, Adventists were challenging influential American Christians who pronounced blessings upon the war and American territorial expansion because of its benefits to the cause of Christianizing and civilizing the globe. According to Sydney Ahlstrom, “the churches reflected the American consensus” in favor of the war, “and then proceeded in the limited time available to convert the war into a crusade to rationalize imperialism as a missionary

obligation.”<sup>12</sup> A *Review and Herald* editorialist lamented the “spirit of militarism” being fostered “right within the bosom of the church,” noting the companies of “Christian cadets” training for action under the auspices of America’s churches, the prayer services for the “success of the American arms” at a leading Protestant church in New York City, and the irony of “American Catholics . . . praying for the extermination of Spanish Catholics.”<sup>13</sup>

President McKinley gave classic expression to the justification of force as a means for advancing the gospel when he explained to a group of Methodist clergymen visiting the White House in 1899 how he had arrived at this decision to annex the Philippines. The president told the ministers that he had been deeply troubled about what to do with the Philippines after Spain had been defeated, and that he had prayed about the problem. Finally, the answer came to him that it would be “cowardly and dishonorable” to give them back to Spain and “bad business” to turn them over to rival nations; moreover, the Filipinos were “unfit for self-government.” Thus,

there was nothing left to do but to take them all [the islands], and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God’s grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow men for whom Christ also died. And then I went to bed, and slept soundly, and the next morning I sent for the chief engineer of the War Department (our map-maker), and I told him to put the Philippines on the map of the United States [pointing to a large map on the wall of his office], and there they are, and there they will stay while I am President!<sup>14</sup>

Challenging the widespread acceptance of this linkage between Christian mission and national aggression, Adventist writers pointed to the glaring inconsistencies of associating the cross of Christ with military conquest. Percy T. Magan, then professor of Bible and history at Battle Creek College, pointed to



Jesus' repeated refusal of the temptation to use force to aid his mission, and argued that it would far better serve the cause of Christianity "for a few missionaries to lose their lives at the hands of heathen savages than for heathen savages to lose their lives at the hands of those calling themselves Christians." If the "doctrine of the Bible in one hand and the shotgun in the other is a good one for the Philippine Islands, how long," he wondered, "will it be ere it is considered a good one for every State in the Union?"<sup>15</sup>

After the first year of America's war against the Philippine independence forces, Andrew Carnegie sarcastically congratulated Whitelaw Reid, a prominent expansionist, for his success in advancing the cause of "civilizing" the Filipinos: "About 8,000 of them have been completely civilized and sent to Heaven. I hope you like it."<sup>16</sup> In a similar vein, the *American Sentinel* (predecessor to *Liberty*), then edited by Uriah Smith's son Leon, observed that in fulfilling the "high moral obligation" it had assumed in the Philippines, the United States was "slaughtering the wretched Filipinos by hundreds and by thousands." The *Sentinel* declared that "every Christian in America ought to raise his voice in protest" against this action, which the "sentiment of the Christian church ought never to support (as it now does) . . ."<sup>17</sup>

Thus, the Spanish-American conflict and America's rise to imperial power prompted Adventists, despite prevailing public opinion to the contrary, to declare their conviction that for the Christian church, faithfulness to Christ and his kingdom entailed rejection of war and the militaristic spirit.

## Denouncing the American Empire

But Adventists were not content simply to strive for the church's purity by distanc-

ing it from the war policy. They had a mission to the world that included bearing a witness to the nation. Week after week, the editorial sections of the *Review* and the *American Sentinel* decried American imperialism as "national apostasy." The *Sentinel* described the shot fired in Manila beginning the war with the Filipinos as a reversal of the shot fired at Lexington in 1775, for it united Americans once again with "imperial government"—this time their own.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps the most significant piece of Adventist anti-imperialist literature was a book by Percy Magan entitled *The Peril of the Republic*, rushed into print in 1899. Published by the non-Adventist evangelical publisher Fleming H. Revell, the book was a prophetic call to the nation to realize the seriousness of its peril and reform before it was too late.

In contrast to Jones, who was suspicious of American intentions from the outset of the intervention in Cuba, Magan agreed with most Americans that the war to liberate Cuba was indeed a "war for humanity's sake," not a war of conquest, as the United States had allowed the Cubans independence.<sup>19</sup> Jones, however, kept a critical eye on the way in which American promises concerning Cuba were being fulfilled. He picked up on an unguarded statement by a U.S. admiral regarding the U.S. intention to "rule" Cuba, and caustically observed:

That illustrates how "the people of Cuba are, and of right ought to be, free and independent," as declared by the American Congress, April, 1898.

Hurrah for free Cuba! *Cuba libre* forever!<sup>20</sup>

Despite this apparent disagreement, Jones and Magan were essentially agreed in the analysis, and certainly that the annexation of the Philippines constituted "national apostasy." With the takeover of the islands, said Magan, the war begun for "humanity's sake" had "been turned from its high and holy

purpose.” By imposing rule on the Philippines without the consent of the governed, America had utterly repudiated the great principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Her character as a nation, first formulated in the war of the Revolution, regenerated and reconsecrated in the war of the Rebellion, has been ruthlessly sacrificed to colonial greed and rapacious lust. Awake! O Fathers of the Republic, ere it is too late, and call back your posterity, ere they stray into paths from which there is no returning!<sup>21</sup>

Adventists argued that the American rule over the Philippines was based on the same principle invoked to justify slavery.<sup>22</sup> Since slavery, in the words of Lincoln, was an “open war with the very fundamental principles of civil liberty,” why, asked A. T. Jones, “should not this which does the same things in our day be hated by every lover of liberty now?”<sup>23</sup>

It was not simply the conquest of territory to which Adventists objected, it was an entire pattern of militarism which they believed would return America to “old world” despotism, and thus deprive the world of its “last, best hope.” Rather than bringing the vitality that Theodore Roosevelt promised, Magan, relying on the work of Carl Schurz, a leading anti-imperialist voice,<sup>24</sup> argued that military build-up and democracy were antithetical.

Military modes of thinking and methods of action unfit men for the duties incumbent on the citizens of a free republic. The rise of a large, permanent armed force in a republic always portends the downfall and ruin of free government.<sup>25</sup>

With its move toward imperialism and militarism, the United States was returning to the monarchial doctrines of Europe, abandoning the “new order of things” that it had inaugurated. And this “national ruin” portended “the ruin of the world.”<sup>26</sup>

In their warnings about the government’s course, Adventists were not asking the republic to be specifically Christian. Civil government, ordained by God to use force in the restraint of evil, could not be expected to act in full accordance with Christian principles. But the republic could be expected to adhere to its own expressed ideals, and those of the U.S. were the best reflection of divine ideals to be found in any earthly government.<sup>27</sup> In the controversy at the turn of the century, Adventists, motivated by their particular faith-based concerns, raised their voices in public debate, calling on the republic to square its practice with its principles.

## Challenging the Protestant World View

Why were these Adventists, these avowedly apolitical apocalypticists, spending so much time and energy on such political issues? Did they expect or even want the nation to reform, or were they merely on the lookout for signs of the end?

Discussion of such questions must begin with Jonathan Butler’s ground-breaking analysis of Adventism’s relationship with the American public order in the 19th century.<sup>28</sup> Butler argued that at the time of the denomination’s founding in the Civil War era, Seventh-day Adventists engaged in “political apocalyptic”—that is, a rhetorical radicalism that identified America as one of Revelation’s beasts because of slavery, but did not issue in action for change, as expectation of an imminent Second Advent was still powerful.

Adventism’s public stance then developed into what Butler called “political prophetic” in the latter quarter of the 19th century. This style was characterized by social action on certain issues: human rights, prohibition, and humanitarian ministry in large cities. By such action Adventists began to work for a tempo-

rary delay of the final collapse of society in order that the church's mission might be carried forth. They were working, as Butler phrased it, "to delay the end in order to preach that the end was soon."

Butler did not discuss the Adventist critique of American imperialism, but it appears to fit well into his schema. Though Adventists believed that republican principles ultimately would fail in America, they can be seen here as calling the nation to correct its course for the time being. Yet questions remain about the ongoing function of apocalyptic hope in relation to the Adventist political outlook. It would be misleading to conceive of Adventism as gradually shedding its apocalypticism. Indeed, the very era we are examining saw an increase in intensity of apocalyptic expectation in the Adventist community. Did this reheated apocalypticism simply co-exist in tension with concern for the fate of the republic or, as Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart have recently argued in connection with Adventist denunciations of slavery, were Adventists primarily motivated by a desire to convince people that the end was soon, their political criticism functioning mainly "as a stick with which to beat the American beast,"<sup>29</sup> rather than constituting evidence of genuine public engagement?

The commentary of Seventh-day Adventists on national affairs was not merely fodder for evangelistic sermonizing. Rather, the apocalyptic impulse shaped and energized a particular form of public witness, which reflected a passionate commitment to justice, peace, and human rights.

A matrix of specific apocalyptic interpretations clearly shaped the Adventist perspective on America's rise to empire. The most important biblical passage was, of course, Revelation 13. Since 1851, Adventists had seen in the "two-horned" beast of Revelation 13:11-17 a divine forecast of the career of the American republic. The two lamblike horns of this beast, Adventists

argued, represented the principles of Protestantism, or religious liberty, and republicanism, or civil liberty. The beast's dragon voice represented the betrayal of those principles. In the 1850s and 1860s, slavery constituted the betrayal of republicanism, while creedalism and an inclination toward Sunday laws constituted the betrayal of Protestantism.<sup>30</sup>

With the abolition of slavery and the increased prominence of movements for Sunday laws to bulwark a "Christian America," Adventists after the Civil War focused their interpretations of the prophecy about the two-horned beast almost exclusively on Protestant movements to legislate Sunday observance. "For several years," Jones observed in 1899, "we said much, never half enough, about the apostasy of the nation from the fundamental principle of Protestantism. But very little has been said about the apostasy of the nation from its fundamental principle of republicanism."

However, America's imperialist adventure was making the latter "apostasy" dramatically obvious: "*now*, JUST NOW, the *fact* pointed out in that *truth* is being worked out before the eyes of all people."<sup>31</sup> The action in the Philippines, said Magan, constituted an abandonment of the essence of republicanism and a turn to "monarchical ideas" just as religious legislation marked Protestantism's turn to the principles of Roman Catholicism.<sup>32</sup>

For these Adventist interpreters, America's embrace of imperialism at the turn of the century was the culmination of a series of events beginning in the late 1880s that appeared to confirm both the prophecy of Revelation 13 and Ellen White's commentary on that prophecy. Jones repeatedly referred to Mrs. White's 1885 statement that the United States would "repudiate every principle of its Constitution as a Protestant and republican government."<sup>33</sup> The repudiation of Protestantism had taken place in 1892 with the Supreme

Court's decision in the case of *Church of Holy Trinity vs. United States*, in which America was described as a "Christian nation," followed by congressional legislation making federal funding for the Chicago World's Fair contingent on the fair's being closed on Sundays. For Jones, these actions were *the* formation of the "image to the papal beast" foretold in Revelation 13. Moreover, the 1888 message of righteousness by faith had launched the "loud cry" of Revelation 18 and was making possible the renewal necessary to prepare the church for the final events.<sup>34</sup>

Now, in annexing the Philippines, the United States had forsaken republicanism as utterly as it had Protestantism only a few years earlier. The government had, said Jones, "in principle . . . deliberately and expressly repudiated every principle of its Constitution as a republican government."<sup>35</sup> The import he saw in all of this for the people of God obviously was the necessity of readiness for the "end of all things." Jones frequently ended his articles with the thrice-repeated exhortation: "Get ready, get ready, get ready."<sup>36</sup>

## Energizing Public Action

Such thoroughgoing apocalypticism would seem to confirm the view that Adventist interest in public life was limited to end-time prognostications. Indeed, Jones and Magan both insisted that their criticism of government policy was a matter of prophecy, not politics.<sup>37</sup>

But, paradoxically, the apocalyptic vision in some ways functioned to energize public action. The "readiness" to which Jones called his audiences did not mean withdrawal from the world, nor was it only a matter of individual repentance. Rather, it included a summons to action in defense of liberty. Apocalyptic hope charged the brief interim

remaining before the Second Advent with such significance that Adventists felt impelled to circulate petitions, appear at congressional hearings, publish magazines, and work the lecture circuit in behalf of their conception of human rights and the public good. Such action, Jones argued, was not "meddling in politics" any more than was the public witness of Daniel in Babylon or the early Christians in the Roman Empire.<sup>38</sup>

Sacred regard for human rights is a Christian virtue. And for people who stand before the world as Christians, to disregard human rights is doubly wrong, in that (a) it is wrong in itself, and (b) it turns the light into darkness, causing others to stumble on in darkness.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, for Jones, Adventists could no more be silent about imperialism than they could about Sunday laws.

In writing *The Peril of the Republic*, Magan saw himself in a role similar to that of biblical prophets sent to warn kings and nations of the consequences of departure from the divine intention. "Ambassadors of Jesus Christ," he believed, should make their voices heard "in the courts and congresses of human powers, of earthly governments." And he called upon all citizens of the coming kingdom of God to be true to principle "in things national as well as in things personal" and to "work for right principles while it is day."<sup>40</sup>

The Adventist response to a "splendid little war" and America's rise to imperial power around the turn of the century was remarkable for its expression of a pacifist ethic for the church, its forthright critique of the nation's departure from the principles of liberty, and for what it reveals about the function of apocalyptic. A lively hope went together with, indeed encouraged, public witness against war and oppression and for the dignity and rights of human beings.

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12. Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 879. Adventist writers leveled criticisms at articles in leading Protestant journals such as the *Independent* (see Jones, "A Novel Christian Duty"), and the *Outlook*, edited by Lyman Abbott, the influential pastor of Brooklyn's Plymouth Church (see "The Principles of the Fathers," RH [June 27, 1899], p. 412).
13. "The Gospel of War," RH (May 3, 1898), p. 351.
14. Cited in Larrabee, pp. 76, 77.
15. Percy T. Magan, *The Peril of the Republic* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1899), p. 121.
16. Walter Millis, *The Martial Spirit* (Cambridge, Mass: The Riverside Press, 1931), p. 406.
17. "Not by Politics, But by the Gospel," *American Sentinel* (March 30, 1899), p. 194. Magan noted other ironic outcomes of America's "Christianizing" presence: since the Americans had arrived in Manila 300 new saloons had opened and 21 percent of U.S. soldiers had become afflicted with "loathsome diseases" (*Peril of the Republic*, p. 125).
18. "Lexington, 1775; and Manila, 1899," *American Sentinel* (February 23, 1899), pp. 114, 115.
19. Magan, pp. 38, 39.
20. A. T. Jones, "Solely for Humanity," RH (January 24, 1899), p. 57. Though Cuba did become independent in 1902, the United States imposed on it an agreement guaranteeing the United States many economic rights, the naval base at Guantanamo Bay, and the right of intervention if Cuban sovereignty were threatened.
21. Magan, pp. 103, 117.
22. "Justifying 'Expansion' by the Constitution," *American Sentinel* (January 5, 1899), pp. 2, 3.
23. A. T. Jones, "The Necessity of 'Imperialism,'" RH (December 27, 1898), p. 834.
24. See Beisner, pp. 18-34.
25. Magan, pp. 126, 127; 168, 169. Magan and Jones believed, as did some non-Adventist anti-imperialists, that the United States was recapitulating ancient Rome's development from republic to empire; see Magan, p. 155, Jones, "National Apostasy," RH (May 23, 1899), p. 328, and Larrabee, p. 33.
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38. "The Third Angel's Message: It Must Be Given," p. 424.
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# Adventists and The Good Earth

A scientist challenges Adventists to transform the ecology of their faith.

by Alvin Kwiram

**G**LOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE IS CONSIDERED by some to be the most important science policy issue of the 1990s. Environmental issues will influence the scientific and political agenda for years to come. Failure to address the most critical aspects can expose us to potentially devastating consequences. But do these issues, however important they may be to the world at large, have any relevance to us as Christians?

The answer to this question depends in part on our theology and in part on our world view in general. If we take the view that we are transients in an alien community, then our interest in the long-term welfare of the community will tend to be limited. If we see

ourselves as fully embedded in a complex web of life, as an integral part of God's creation, and as responsible stewards of that creation, then our response to challenges such as the environmental issue will take on a distinctly different character. Which of these two attitudes we hold is deeply influenced by our religious tradition, by the paradigms of our culture, and by the metaphors on which we structure our daily lives.

I would assert that at the very center of our tradition stands the concept of time and endtime. Yet our ambivalence about the question of time prevents us from thinking clearly and acting decisively with regard to major global issues. It is precisely this ambivalence that paralyzes us and prevents us from engaging creatively and productively in some of the larger questions facing humanity today. Such paralysis undermines our own spiritual experience and weakens our Christian witness.

If this assertion is correct, then it should raise an alarm that we have serious work to do in refining our metaphors and resolving our ambivalence. The environmental issue illus-

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trates how our confusion as Adventists about the question of time essentially relegates us to the sidelines in some of the pressing issues of our time. These issues have relevance not only to our role as citizens of the social order, but especially to our role as citizens of a spiritual community.<sup>1</sup> I will begin by outlining a few of the most critical environmental challenges, argue that our present metaphors limit our effectiveness, and finally suggest that if we could rethink those metaphors we might revitalize our theology and give greater clarity to our mission.

## Environmental Impacts

Global environmental change is a vast subject. Some of the major themes that define the current discussion include greenhouse gases and global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, destruction of the ecosystem, and population growth. Reasonable people can differ on the scale or the timing (or in some cases even the mathematical sign) of these impacts, but most would agree that these impacts are real and deserve our thoughtful evaluation.

*Greenhouse Gases.* There is little dispute in the scientific community that greenhouse gases have been increasing steadily since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Figure 1 shows the increase in the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. This increase results largely from burning fossil fuel and other organic material (principally wood). Every time we burn a gallon of gasoline, we are putting about 20 pounds of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) into the air. Not only does the burning of fossil fuels increase CO<sub>2</sub>, but it also consumes a precious, non-renewable natural resource. (In my view, the latter is even more worrisome than the former.)

In addition to carbon dioxide, methane also contributes to the greenhouse effect, as does

water.<sup>2</sup> Cattle (ruminants) and rice paddies are significant sources of methane because of their specific metabolic processes. These processes add to the atmospheric burden. As these gases build up in the atmosphere, they block more and more of the Earth's outgoing infrared radiation without affecting the incoming radiation as significantly. The more of these gases we pump into the atmosphere, the less heat can escape by way of the infrared radiation. Consequently, the Earth will gradually grow warmer.<sup>3</sup>

Two things are clear: carbon dioxide and methane concentrations are increasing, and increases in greenhouse gases can cause global warming. What is not clear is how much and how soon such warming might occur. (Nor do we know whether there is another ice age just around the corner that could completely overwhelm the impact of the greenhouse gases.) To answer these questions, scientists have developed models to simulate the impact of various factors on the thermal budget of the planet. Unfortunately, this is a massive computational problem. Even the most powerful computers available today cannot adequately address the task. The problem is complicated further by the fact that we do not even know all the factors that should be included in the models. In other cases, we may recognize the importance of a factor, but do not really know how best to include it in the model.

For example, only recently have investigators begun to include the effect of clouds in the global circulation models (GCMs). Clouds are known to play a significant role in reflecting sunlight and in trapping radiation. However, how to include them properly in the model is not well understood. Furthermore, including a factor to represent clouds adds greatly to the demands placed on the computers which, as we have said, are inadequate even for simpler models.<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, the role of sulfate aerosols, pro-

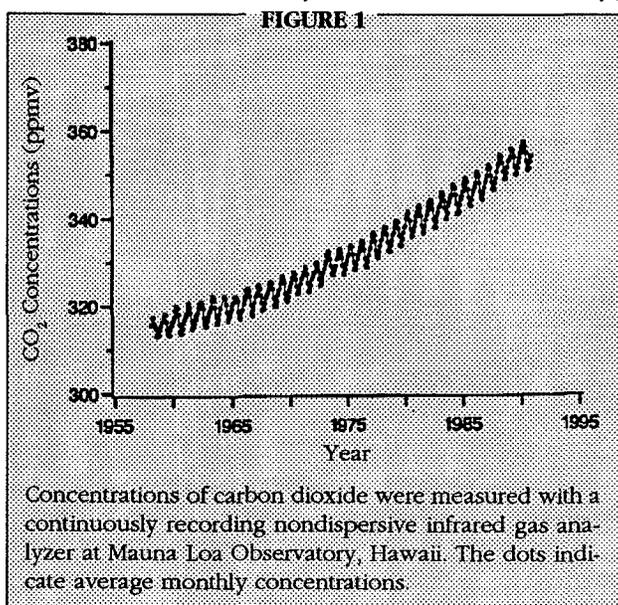
duced by burning coal and by phytoplankton in the world's temperate oceans, is only now being recognized as an important and potentially offsetting factor in global warming. These are very active areas of research today, and good progress is being made. But clearly, given the problems with the GCMs outlined above, we cannot be entirely comfortable accepting the predictions of the models suggesting that the global temperature will increase by two to three degrees in the next century.<sup>5</sup>

**Ozone Depletion.** The ozone depletion over the Antarctic is another good example of a serious environmental challenge. This problem was first recognized in the early 1970s by the chemist Sherry Rowland, who was trying to understand the eventual fate of the chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) that we use as the working fluid in our refrigerators and air conditioners. Until recently, CFCs were also used in foam insulation and as the propellant gas in spray cans. Rowland predicted that the reactions of these "stable" compounds at high altitudes under the influence of ultraviolet radiation from the sun could lead to a catalytic and serious destruction of ozone. There was much skepticism about this idea when it was initially outlined. Gradually,

however, evidence has accumulated to confirm the original idea. The discovery of the seasonal reduction of the ozone concentration over Antarctica finally made believers out of most of the earlier skeptics, and led to the enactment of the 1985 Montreal Protocols, which called for the gradual phase-out of CFCs by 2010. That initial timetable was revised just two years later, in 1987, because of the growing recognition that the problem was far more serious than had been realized earlier. The potential impact on the health of plants and animals alike could be significant if the "thin blue shield," represented by the Earth's atmosphere with its even thinner ozone layer, were seriously compromised. Human activities are beginning to damage, perhaps irretrievably, the ecosystem.

A thousand years ago, human activities had a relatively small impact on the Earth's systems. Today, abetted by the power of giant machines, we are transforming the face of the Earth.

**Human Population.** The impact of humans on the Earth through the various mechanisms listed above might be manageable with a stable and reasonably modest population. However, the growth in population makes all the other problems pale by comparison. Figure 2 shows the growth of the world's population since the Middle Ages. This explosive growth should be of paramount concern to us. It is worth considering two extreme scenarios: continued and uncontrolled growth with the curve exploding off the top of the page, or a sharp bend in the curve toward the right (or even downward). If the present trend continues unchecked, then all the environmental impacts that we face today will only increase exponentially in scope and intensity. If the curve begins a sharp turn away from the vertical, it could be caused by massive starvation, disease, and death. Either of these scenarios must concern any responsible person, and should be of special concern to us as



Christians.

Although it cannot be stated with certainty just how much the impact of these global changes will affect us, it would be irresponsible for us to ignore the problems. It is imperative that we, together with other responsible inhabitants of this fragile planet, study the matter and refine our models while at the same time making reasonable efforts to modify our actions so as to mitigate the most obvious effects. We must not abdicate our responsibility by assuming that the problem will be addressed by others.

## Theological Impacts

However important these issues are for society at large, what do they have to do with us as Adventists and as Christians? After all, if the Advent is imminent, and the pace of global change sufficiently slow, then we can probably escape the consequences just in the nick of time.

Such a posture is inappropriate for at least three reasons. First, we have a responsibility to be faithful caretakers of God's creation. This stewardship is directly linked to the celebration of the Sabbath, the central pillar of our faith. Second, these issues present us with an opportunity to put our holistic views of life into practice on a larger stage to encompass the relationship between mind and body, male and female, black and white, human and animal. Third, these issues provide us with an important reality check on the theoretical structure of our faith, and help us to see whether it matches with the practical realities of the world about us. However, a serious examination of our position on environmental issues brings a key metaphor of our religious culture—the metaphor of endtime—into sharp relief.

It is time for us to re-examine our understanding of time. It can be argued that we are

not able to take issues such as the environment (and many other contemporary issues) seriously if we are ambivalent about the time frame in which we operate. For example, some will argue that our apocalyptic view exempts us from responsibility for the creation. If we don't expect to be here very long, then it doesn't matter if we use up the Earth's resources or devastate our environment or destroy essential ecosystems. If we don't expect to be here very long, then there are higher priorities that require our attention, and we should not be wasting our time worrying about some remote ice fields or rain forests.

Let's turn back the clock briefly to 1843. The Millerites were expecting the Lord's return in a very short time. Since they believed that the Advent was going to occur within a year, there really wasn't a compelling reason to worry about their long-term health or to put new roofs on their houses. In that context, it was entirely reasonable for the Millerites to leave their jobs, and to turn all their energies to the anticipated event in 1844. But once that date had passed, they began to realize that a new understanding was necessary. Different actions were appropriate.

For the past 100 years Adventists have operated with a somewhat stretched version of the one-year time frame of the Millerites. I believe we have operated, pragmatically, within a 10-year time frame. And we have not really acknowledged our ambivalence, much less examined it. As a result we have continued to live a somewhat schizophrenic existence that has arguably crippled our effectiveness.

Part of our confusion stems from what I will refer to as the actuarial fallacy. We have failed to emphasize a basic mathematical reality: what is true of a statistical average is not true for each member of the average.<sup>6</sup> For humankind, the Lord's coming may be 10 or 100 years away, and so humans must structure society and government on that basis. But for the individual, the operative time of the Lord's

coming can occur at any moment. The challenge is to balance the task of being ready each moment with the task of occupying until he comes.

Even if a one-year time frame for the faithful was appropriate for the mid-19th century, is it appropriate today? Almost 150 years have passed. Is it time to explore this question? Is it time to consider a new paradigm? Even a 10-year horizon imposes an entirely different dialectic. The challenge of clarifying this fundamental issue could be one of the primary tasks of our theologians.<sup>7</sup> If we could make such an adjustment, it could have a profound effect on our vision of the future, on our contributions to society, and on our vitality as a movement.

Some will object that even talking about such a change in time frame will undermine faith. But cognitive dissonance, insisting on something that is demonstrably not so, also undermines faith. The challenge for the church today is how to keep faith alive if we do not make the transition to a more comprehensive world view.

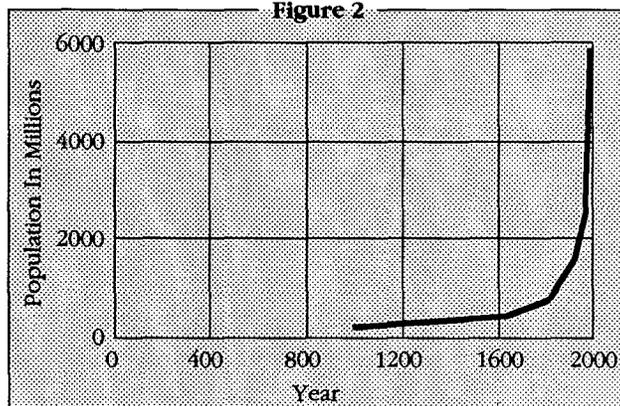
Christians should be concerned about the physical and social environment because of our concept of the Creator and his creation. Adventists are in a unique position to provide leadership in this arena, especially given the strong link between the doctrine of the Sabbath and the doctrine of creation. As a church

we have espoused a profound truth about the need to stop and recognize the holiness of time. Maybe it is appropriate to expand our celebration of the Sabbath by giving greater attention to the holiness of creation as well. What a wonderful opportunity to give the Sabbath new meaning and to bring a new richness, depth, and purpose to this special day.

A re-examination of our metaphors and our tradition in the context of environmental awareness would enlarge our understanding and broaden our vision in other areas as well. The concepts of the Enlightenment, however powerful and productive, have left us with a legacy that establishes a hierarchical world view wherein nature is to be mastered and exploited. Maybe it is time to take our Western metaphors, with their emphasis on individualism and domination, and leaven them with some Eastern perspectives on holism, on the importance of community, and the connectedness of all living things.

We have successfully espoused a holistic view of personal growth in our teachings. We have emphasized that the body is the temple of God, and this understanding has served us well in maintaining a healthful life-style in which the physical, the mental, and the spiritual are components of a harmoniously balanced life. We often see these components represented pictorially as the three sides of an equilateral triangle. But that is a highly restricted emphasis, with its focus on self-development, and an individualistic strategy for personal salvation. Maybe it is time to move beyond our Flatland conceptions to add higher dimensions to our metaphors. At the very least, we could add the other components of God's creation at the apices of three-dimensional constructs so that our holistic vision can be elaborated to encompass a more harmonious balance for all of God's creation. Such a conceptual departure might provide us with a more constructive framework in which to

Figure 2



## Testament of Chief Sealth Seattle, 1853

The Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land.

How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us.

If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them from us?

What Chief Sealth says, the Great Chief in Washington can count on as truly as our white brothers can count on the return of the seasons. My words are like the stars. They do not set.

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing, and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man.

We are a part of the earth and it is a part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters, the deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat of the pony, and man—all belong to the same family.

There is no quiet place in the white man's cities. No place to hear the unfurling of leaves in spring nor the rustle of insect's wings. But perhaps it is because I am a savage and do not understand. The clatter only seems to insult the ears. And what is there to life if a man cannot hear the lonely cry of the whippoorwill or the arguments of the frogs around a pond at night? I am a red man and do not understand. The Indian prefers the soft sound of the wind darting over the face of a pond, and the smell of the wind itself, cleansed by a midday rain, or scented with a pinon pine.

The air is precious to the red man, for all things share the same breath—the beasts, the tree, the man, they all share the same breath. The white man does not seem to notice the air he breathes.

What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, men would die from a great loneliness of the spirit. For whatever happens to the beast soon happens to man. All things are connected.

This we know. The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected.

Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

We will consider why the white man wishes to buy the land. What is it that the white man wishes to buy, my people ask me. The idea is strange to us. How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land—the swiftness of the antelope?

You may think now that you own Him as you wish to own our land; but you cannot. He is the God of man, and His compassion is equal for the red man and the white. This earth is precious to Him, and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its Creator. The whites too shall pass; perhaps sooner than all other tribes. Continue to contaminate your bed, and you will one day suffocate in your own waste.

But in your perishing you will shine brightly, fired by the strength of the God who brought you to this land and for some special purpose gave you dominion over this land and over the red man. That destiny is a mystery to us, for we do not understand when the buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses are tamed, the secret corners of the forest heavy with the scent of many men, and the view of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires. Where is the thicket? Gone. Where is the eagle? Gone. And what is it to say goodbye to the swift pony and the hunt? The end of living and the beginning of survival.

One thing we know. Our God is the same God. This earth is precious to Him. Even the white men cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all. We shall see.

understand the relationships between the sexes, between classes, between the races, between humans and animals, and between ourselves and our non-sentient environment.<sup>8</sup> Just as all members of the body are of value, so all members of the natural order are of value.

A shift in paradigm that gives greater recognition to our interconnectedness could also lead us to a more realistic posture with respect to the role of women in society and in the church, and make us less prone to accord unique status to one group of individuals or one class.

Physicists in the 20th century came to understand that neither the particle picture of matter nor the wave picture alone could provide a full understanding of the fundamental character of matter. Consequently, a new metaphor referred to as the wave-particle duality has become an integral part of all of modern physics.

As in physics, so also in theology, maybe it is time to modify our image of Father/God by adding the Mother/God dimension. By invoking such a duality in our image of God, our concepts of God will tend to be shifted from trivializing, anthrocentric overspecification to a deeper insight into the profound creative and compassionate character of the Godhead. We must come to recognize that our image is just that: mere images of much deeper realities for which our inadequate mental constructs provide merely the most rudimentary and partial representations. These limit our appreciation of God's role in his/her creation.

Apart from our ambivalence about time, all of these deeply rooted metaphors that shape our thinking and actions must be re-examined in order that our understanding may be enriched and our concepts reformulated for the

contemporary context.

Scripture reminds us that the Creator looked at all that had been made and declared it good. God has called on us to be caretakers, not only of the Earth and of its creatures, but more importantly, of those who live on the Earth: all are precious in God's sight. If we value the message of this church, if we are committed to the Christian imperative, then let us be faithful caretakers of God's creation and protectors of the environment. This will enhance and nurture the ecology of our faith in all its wonderful diversity and complexity.

The challenge is simply stated: let us begin a serious re-examination of our paradigms. We can begin with an examination of the time frame in which we will operate. If we engage in this effort with honesty, with openness, and with seriousness of purpose, we will discover new dimensions of our faith and broaden the horizons of the Advent movement. Our attitude toward environmental issues can be a telling reflection of our spiritual understanding.

But, if we retain a narrow focus, we will become mere hecklers on the sideline of major human events. If we take these challenges seriously and act responsibly, we will not only become more fully engaged with some of the great issues of our time, we will also find our experience enriched, our understanding expanded, and our metaphors transformed for a contemporary faith. We will feel energized, and this sense of excitement and meaning will be contagious not only for our own young people, but for countless others who are seeking answers in a world of confusion and despair. Most important of all, we will bring new meaning, understanding, and respect to both the challenge and promise of stewardship, service, and justice.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The relationship between environmental issues and human aspirations has significant overtones for our spiritual quest, and shapes our attitudes toward others as well as the rest of God's creation. This dimension has received increasing attention in recent years. A few examples will provide a flavor of the breadth of these concerns. Selected references are provided that illustrate the range of discourse.

For example, environmental issues were a major factor in the political and intellectual ferment that eventually led to the collapse of the iron curtain. The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Confession crafted recently by the North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology provides a compelling statement of interconnectedness, and echoes a similar theme expressed eloquently by Chief Sealth (after whom the City of Seattle is named) nearly 150 years before. The recent Rio conference was probably the single largest gathering in history to address the environmental issues. Other voices have also called attention to the spiritual dimensions of our relationship to the environment and the natural world.

This issue has not been a highly visible topic in the life of the Adventist Church. See, however, the editorial by Kit Watts in the *Adventist Review* (April 18, 1991), p. 5.

2. Water is an important greenhouse gas, and water vapor is obviously very abundant in the atmosphere. But it tends to remain in dynamic equilibrium since we are not introducing many new sources of water to the atmosphere. The fact that we are mining aquifers at an accelerating rate could alter this equation somewhat. However, the enormous quantities of water in the world's oceans tend to ensure the stability of the equilibrium. Of course, if the global temperature were to change, the equilibrium point would shift as well.

3. The principle is essentially the same as that which describes the operation of a greenhouse, hence the

name. In the greenhouse, the glass lets in the sun's rays but prevents the infrared radiation from escaping (since ordinary glass is opaque to infrared radiation). Obviously, in the gardener's greenhouse, the glass also reduces losses due to convection.

4. For example, the size of the grid used in present models is 250 miles on a side, hardly what one would call a fine-grained model.

5. Two or three degrees (whether in centigrade or Fahrenheit) may not seem like very much. However, if one realizes that the ice age, which resulted in ice nearly a mile thick as far south as the northern tier states of the United States, was characterized by a global temperature drop of only four to five degrees centigrade, then a two- to three-degree change becomes more interesting.

6. When an insurance company sets the premium on your life insurance policy, it considers the probability that, statistically, people live to about 75 years of age. So even if you are 30 when you take out your first policy, your premium is based on the assumption that you will live to be 75. But presumably no one is so naive as to believe that everyone insured by that company will live to be 75.

7. Clearly, it would be important in that reformation to help people understand the fundamental difference between the actuarial time frame and the personal time frame.

8. Maybe we should consider a new mission for the Geoscience Research Institute. What if the focus of that program were to shift somewhat to address the nature of environmental impacts, to consider the relationship of these issues to the mission of the church, and to devise programs that could enlist the energies and imagination of our young people? This could lead to a constructive dialogue between our scientists and theologians. It could lead to a positive and creative engagement with problems of immediate and pressing significance.



# The Compelling Case For Nature

A lawyer argues that nature has a right “to exist unmolested by humanity.”

by Glenn Coe

PART OF OUR ADVENTIST HERITAGE IS TO SEE things in sharp, contrasting terms: right and wrong, good and evil, pure and impure. There is little tolerance for ambiguities, for balancing. It is much easier to adopt positions and standards that do not allow for gradations: “no make-up” rather than “make-up that is tasteful”; “no jewelry” rather than “jewelry that is modest and becoming”; “no movies,” rather than “movies that make a compelling statement.”

Some would advocate a similar absolutist, purist position with respect to nature. I would submit that that position is unconvincing and, in the long run, does not advance the cause of nature. Instead, I suggest assessing the needs of humanity and weighing them against the legitimate and independent right of nature to exist unmolested by humanity.

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In law, the constitutional freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, even freedom of religion may, under certain circumstances, be limited if there is a competing and compelling state interest. The process calls for the balancing of the individual's constitutional rights and the needs of society. Satisfying society's needs must intrude as little as possible upon the rights of the individual.

Perhaps it is time to accord to Earth a comparable respect to that accorded to constitutional rights. Perhaps we should impose on ourselves the burden of articulating a compelling need before we encroach on nature. Even if “compelling” is too heavy a burden to impose, showing “some” legitimate need would provide a curb to our exploitation of nature.

Here is how this approach might apply to current environmental debates.

It could be argued that the need to wear furs is outweighed by the interests of nature. On the one hand, wearing furs is an insignificant human need, since there are many sufficient alternatives. Furthermore, the process by which animal skins are harvested does not respect

the legitimacy of nature's existence.

One could also reason that alligator and leather handbags, wallets, or belts can be forgone for the same reason, but could justify continued use of leather shoes until a synthetic material is developed that allows feet to breathe adequately to stay healthy.

Controlled harvesting of certain trees for construction of buildings or production of papers would seem to be defensible, provided it is accompanied by replanting and reforestation that substantially repairs the damage done by the original harvesting. Properly handled, this would seem to make unnecessary the cutting down of forests where endangered species make their homes, or the destruction of ancient trees or rain forests.

Harvesting the fish from the sea to provide food would seem to be defensible, provided it is not excessive and not done in a manner that results in significant, unnecessary destruction of other sea life. My wife threatened, along with other friends, to boycott Burger King, the fast food chain, because Burger King used Icelandic fish. In filling its quota for Burger King, Iceland killed whales. Subsequently, Burger King stopped using Icelandic fish and Iceland stopped killing whales, for all of which my wife claims credit.

The ode to creation found in Genesis 1 illustrates the competing and often conflicting values and principles present in the environmental debate. God created life in the trees and grass, life in creatures of the air and of the waters, life in the animals that roam the earth,

and life in humankind. It is clear that this has been a labor of love by our Creator-God who took personal delight in all that he brought into existence. But when God entrusted his creation to his children—the men and women who were told to populate the earth, exercise dominion over all the earth and over his created creatures—God did not abdicate his ownership of his creation. As the Psalmist says: “The earth is the Lord’s” (Psalm 24:1, NIV). This includes all living things that inhabit the earth. “Every animal of the forest is mine,” says the Lord, “and

the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine” (Psalm 50:10, 11, NIV).

It can be argued that Genesis, indeed the Bible in general, establishes that humanity has a higher priority in God’s creation than animal or plant life; that both may be taken to sustain human life. But as we respond to hu-

man needs by relying on the resources of creation, we must remember that we are accountable for how we fulfill the fiduciary responsibility God has given us for his creation.

It means that Adventist Christians should not begrudge the added cost of responsible, ecological stewardship; the cost of production without pollution. Practically, that means we should strenuously avoid all wastefulness, not only out of solidarity with the poor, but also out of respect for the living environment.

Adventist Christians need to join together in a fresh commitment to caring for God’s creation, a renewed vision of this planet as God’s earth.

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*It is time to accord to Earth a comparable respect to that accorded to constitutional rights. Perhaps we should impose on ourselves the burden of articulating a compelling need before we encroach on nature.*



# Earth in the Balance

An exploration of why Seventh-day Adventists hear in U.S. Vice-president Albert Gore's book *Earth in the Balance* echoes of Old Testament prophets and the book of Revelation.

by Roy Benton

**G**ORGE BUSH CALLED HIM "OZONE." During their vice presidential debate, Dan Quayle misquoted<sup>1</sup> his *Earth in the Balance*. Conservative columnist George Will said Albert Gore's 1992 book was "waste-basket-worthy," "a jumble of dubious 1990s science and worse 1960s philosophy . . . a powerful reason not to elect its author to high office."<sup>2</sup> These and other critics scorned Gore's key theme—that the environment should become "the central organizing principle" of the post-cold war world, complete with an ambitious "Marshall Plan" to restore ecological balance.

By the success-is-the-best-revenge standard, Gore has won big. Bush and Quayle are gone, and Gore is vice-president. Most reviews of *Earth in the Balance* range from high praise ("a work of intelligence and passionate authenticity," says *Time*) to ecstatic ("a brilliantly

written, prophetic, even holy book, clearly pointing the way we need to change to assure the survival of our grandchildren," gushes M. Scott Peck.<sup>3</sup>)

The Harvard-educated Gore was a formidably informed and effective U.S. legislator on environmental issues for 15 years. Gore admits that he wanted to reach the voters not persuaded by his ecological warnings during a failed 1988 bid for the U.S. presidency. But it was the soul-searching following the near-death of his young son from a car accident that gave him the vision to write a book obviously driven by spiritual passion.

Gore persuasively argues that ours is a "dysfunctional civilization." Our abuse of nature has resulted in denial, addiction, and co-dependency—the same symptoms common to drug abusers. We "civilized" societies take for granted life-styles that arrogantly consume a dangerous share of natural resources. We even self-righteously criticize developing countries for the same abuses we have already committed in our own territory. We do not figure industrial waste into the Gross National

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Product of "goods and services."

In voices ranging from political strategist to scientific enthusiast, from philosophical historian to biblical interpreter, Gore speaks with breathtaking range for a politician. In impressive detail, he rounds up the usual ecological suspects: CO<sub>2</sub> buildup, ozone depletion, destruction of tropical rain forests, loss of biodiversity, excessive pesticides, incineration of municipal wastes, soil erosion, greenhouse effect, etc., etc.

Because these problems are entwined and global, Gore urges nothing short of a vast spiritual awakening, and a "Marshall Plan" in which rich nations help fund the environmental costs of developing nations.

Even the shortcomings of the book point to its authenticity. If Gore dilutes his prophetic passion by bogging down occasionally in 10-point plans, over-detailed explanations of committee testimony, odd metaphors and digressions, or minor slips of fact or arithmetic,<sup>4</sup> at least we know that the book is no cynical broadside ghostwritten for a politician with a sound-bite attention span.

To this voter, at least, Gore is impressively convincing. Even if one disagrees with Gore's clean-up remedies—Republicans, for example, may prefer business incentives to Gore's EPA-monitored "Superfund"—he makes a strong scientific case that only drastic action can avert doomsday. In any case, I wish to explore here Gore's call for religious renewal, which opens and closes the book and also dominates a 28-page chapter entitled "Environmentalism of the Spirit."

Gore, a devout Baptist, admits that a "cartoon version" of Genesis has been misused to license careless abuses. He cites other biblical texts to show that "dominion" should not entail "domination" nor "an arrogant and reckless attitude toward nature."

God commanded Noah to take into his ark at least two of every living species. Gore's

modern translation: "thou shalt preserve biodiversity." Gore's favorite story, repeated in interviews with *Christian Century*<sup>5</sup> and *Christianity Today*,<sup>6</sup> is Jesus' parable of the unfaithful servant. The servant was charged by the master to be vigilant against vandals. Likewise, we have a divine command to protect our planet.

Gore wishes that politically involved Christians would pay more attention to the environmental crisis. Liberals stress the social gospel, but do not see, for example, that most toxic waste dumps are located in poor neighborhoods. Conservatives are wary of siding with liberals who they think are soft on "godless communism" and big government. Gore says conservatives should learn that "many deeply committed environmentalists have become, if anything, even more hostile to overreaching statism than they are," having witnessed communist regimes committing the worst ecological sins.

Adventists do not fit neatly into Gore's liberal-conservative typology. Still, I think that several Gore themes can help us to connect environmental concerns with distinct SDA tenets. For example:

*The Sabbath.* Given our apocalyptic pessimism, we are tempted to give up on nature as part of a lost world. But in both theory and practice, when we rest on the Sabbath, we remember that God created nature and declared it very good.

*Love of Nature.* Adventists have always revered nature as a spiritual oasis in a sick world. In the 19th century, perhaps Adventists could simply escape the cities and find renewal amidst "God's other book." But Gore proves that we cannot now count on finding nature unspoiled anywhere unless we work for it.

*Simplicity.* Currently, each person in an industrial country uses many times more resources than those in poor countries. Though Gore doesn't stress it enough, we who live in rich nations need to develop a "small is

beautiful" life-style that uses fewer resources. We need to use fewer manufactured goods and travel less, and be willing to pay more for "clean" forms of each. Adventists should advocate simplicity as an ecological virtue, enlarging the vision that makes us known for simplicity in dress, entertainment, and eating.

*Holism.* In his concluding remarks, Gore says: "I have come to believe in the value of a kind of inner ecology that relies on the same principles of balance and holism that characterize a healthy environment . . ."7 Earlier, he spends many pages blaming religion for perpetuating Greek preferences for mind over body, spirit over nature, science over moral responsibility.

Gore himself goes far to the other extreme: "It is my own belief that the image of God can be seen in every corner of creation, even in us, but only faintly. By gathering in the mind's eye all of creation, one can perceive the image of the Creator vividly."<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps Gore wobbles as he walks the thin line between holism and pantheism, but Adventists should empathize. (Can you hear us, John Harvey Kellogg?) Even so, Gore's analysis serves as a corrective to those—including too many Adventists—who do not see the global environment as the home of God's activity. We should be ahead of fellow evangelicals who are struggling with the same issues (see Anthony Campolo's *How to Rescue*

*the Earth Without Worshiping Nature*).<sup>9</sup> Adventists should draw again from its heritage of holism and its corollaries, insisting that a healthy environment and a healthy body are crucial not only to spirituality but to a proper ecological order.

*Apocalyptic.* Of course, Adventist apocalyptic has been historically more attuned to spiritual conversion than preserving nature. But Gore thinks the former is needed to bring about the latter, so maybe we are already halfway there.

In many respects, the closest modern counterparts of the apocalyptic prophets are radical environmentalists: consider their shrill rhetoric warning of impending doom on a global scale, their faith in the power of a committed and knowledgeable few to blast an impatient trumpet for radical repentance. Indeed, Gore's language, like the final passages in Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth*,<sup>10</sup> often eerily echo the minor prophets and the book of Revelation.

Whether environmentalists like Gore get all their facts straight may be beside the point. In fact, if a prophet's role is part proclamation and part prediction, the most "successful" prophet is one whose proclamation is so potent that the prediction fails. If environmentalists like Gore prove to be Jonahs—so effective that their predictions are not realized—our grandchildren can rejoice that they did not proclaim in vain.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Quayle repeatedly charged that "on page 304," Gore advocated spending \$100 billion for his environmental "Marshall Plan." Gore did note that the original Marshall Plan to save Europe involved 2 percent of the GNP. In today's dollars that is about \$100 billion, but Gore nowhere says that we should necessarily spend the same amount now.

2. "Al Gore's Green Guilt," by George F. Will, *Washington Post* (September 3, 1992).

3. "A Crisis as Real as Rain" (book review), by Lance Morris, *Time* (May 4, 1992).

4. For a catalog of errors, real and imagined, see "Captain Planet for Veep," by Ronald Bailey, *National*

*Review* (September 14, 1992), pp. 40-46.

5. "Earth in the Balance: An Interview With Al Gore," *The Christian Century* (April 8, 1992), pp. 368-374.

6. "Preserving God's 'Very Good' Earth" (interview), *Christianity Today* (September 14, 1992).

7. Page 367.

8. Page 265.

9. Anthony Campolo, *How to Rescue the Earth Without Worshiping Nature* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, Pubs., 1992).

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# Resurrection of The World

Resurrection describes not only an historical event but also God's ongoing activity to save the world.

by Brian W. Harper

**S**URVIVAL ON EARTH SEEMS BLEAK AS THE environmental crisis worsens. Amidst the destruction, how should Adventists respond to the environmental crisis? Creation and incarnation dominate Christian understandings of ecology. However, I think that a third theological theme, the Resurrection, best illuminates the relationship of Christianity to the environment.

The Resurrection, otherwise known as Easter, reveals God's plan for the human and natural environment. The Resurrection is not simply an historical event, but an ongoing activity. Easter captures the essence of God's mysterious presence in the world. It compels us to take the natural environment seriously, and shapes our vision of the future. Easter should force Adventists to re-evaluate how we treat one another and the natural environment.

Two general views concerning the future and the coming of God's kingdom have dominated Christian thinking. One Christian view

of eschatology (the study of last-day events) is "other-worldly." God struggles with the evil forces of the world to establish his kingdom on earth; however, evil prevails over good until God decides to save the righteous and destroy the wicked. This includes the destruction of the natural world and the re-creation of a new earth. In this view, sin runs so deep that even the natural environment must be destroyed in order to restore perfection in creation.

Adventist theology is saturated with this "other-worldly" eschatological view. As a result, we have fostered ambivalent, non-caring attitudes about environmental issues. Like many evangelical Christians, we have become caught up in telling people about an other-worldly heaven, and forgotten that God first called Christians to live in the "here and now" of the world.

A second view emphasizes that God works with people to make the world a better, more just place, until it reaches a point where God can come a second time and establish his kingdom on earth. In this scenario, God's kingdom is "this-worldly." The undergirding

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assumption is that once a just social order is established it will cure the ills of the natural environment.

Adventists can be found who hold something like this second view. All Christians, they say, are people living “in between” God’s act in Christ and the final establishment of the kingdom of God. Adventists, they say, have been committed to bringing in the kingdom of God on earth. Our commitment to education and preventive medicine, for example, reveals our dedication to God and a holistic world view. In other words, some Adventists maintain room for Christian practices and institutions that affirm our place in a world not soon to disappear. Unfortunately, this second view of the end time has not reached the average layperson. Adventist eschatology is not necessarily wrong, but it needs to better articulate God’s relationship to the natural world.

What theological vision could help Adventists articulate an eschatological tradition that affirms and builds care for the natural and human environment?

Obviously, the creation of the natural world and universe by God was, and continues to be, a positive statement. The Earth in its original state was beautiful and perfect. Adam and Eve lived in harmony with the animals and natural environment. God made humans as the caretakers of the Earth (Genesis 2:15). As stewards in the service of the Creator, Adam and Eve were given power over every living thing. But the power to dominate was not to be abused, for the world did not belong to them but to God the loving Creator. As Lover, God was intimately involved in the affairs of the world. Apparently God walked and talked in the Garden of Eden on a regular basis (Genesis 3:8ff).

After the Fall, confusion replaced harmony as the primary characteristic of the world. From that time forward, humans have tended to abuse nature rather than care for it as good

stewards. Sin makes a creation based on an environmental ethic problematic. Human beings were created to love God and care for the earth; we have failed to do both. Our sinful nature compels us to take control of the earth from God.<sup>1</sup> Science and technology allow us to be more like God, as we entertain becoming creators ourselves. Arrogantly, we presume that technology frees us from the Creator, giving us power that was previously his alone. As pride clouds our vision, the civilizations we build devastate the natural environment.<sup>2</sup>

Christian theological traditions in the West, beginning with the Middle Ages and stretching to the present, provide the roots for the environmental crisis of today.<sup>3</sup> These Christian theologians brushed aside the tradition of stewardship for an anthropocentric view of the world. As humans assumed control of the Earth and its natural resources, God was pushed outside of the world. The outgrowth of this intellectual tradition can be seen in the environmental crisis facing the economic systems of both capitalist and socialist countries.

Sin destroyed the perfect harmony of creation, and has made the entire future of the world questionable. As long as theological and philosophical thought revolve around a pessimistic view of humanity—a nihilistic anthropomorphism—ecological disaster and social oppression will follow.<sup>4</sup>

The importance of stewardship has not been lost by Adventists. We can have a major impact on the formation of an environmental ethic that emphasizes stewardship as an integral part of God’s kingdom. However, an ethic based solely on creation or stewardship cannot adequately answer questions about the future world, because the story of God’s salvation is not complete.

The incarnation was a testament of God’s love for the natural environment. A human person bound himself to the flesh and our natural existence. However, the many traditions of incarnation theology all end with the

incarnate God, Jesus of Nazareth, dead on the cross. There can be no vision of the future if God is in the grave. It is true that the church Jesus established while alive enables God to live on in the memory of living disciples, but what kind of hope is that for a dying world? As the world's creator, lover, and savior, God is the only one who can save us from the devastation of the environmental crisis. As our only hope, God must be alive.

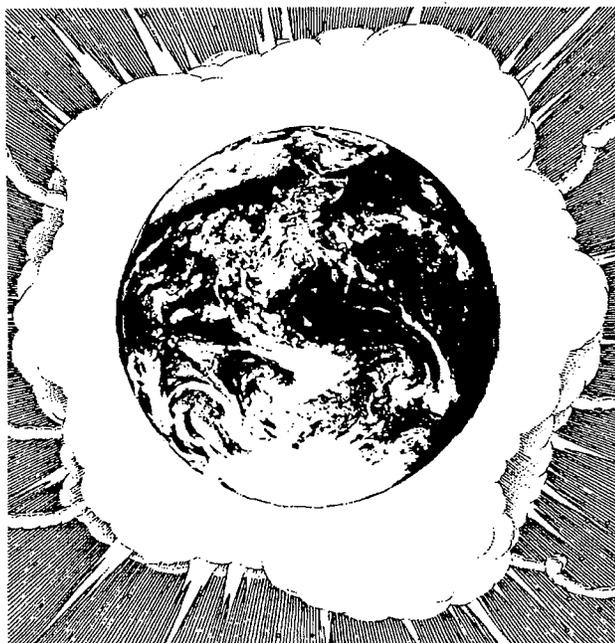
Christmas theology—emphasizing the incarnation of Christ—is good news for the world, but it means nothing without Easter. The word made flesh, in the person Jesus, was slain to save us in our sins. However, the good news of the Christian gospel does not end in death but resurrection. The Resurrection confirms God's triumph over sin and reveals his saving character and orientation toward the entire world. Our Christmas hope in the Christ child was sealed forever in the resurrection of Christ the Lord. The incarnation was not a separate event from the Resurrection, for "resurrection" is a part of what "incarnation" means.<sup>5</sup> Both events are a part of one continuous narrative about God's activity in the world. The point of the Resurrection is that the spirit of the risen Lord is still at work in the world and church—in the ordinary places of life.<sup>6</sup>

Easter could hardly have been an isolated past event, as it has been the center of Christian worship and hope throughout the history of the church.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, Easter describes the ongoing activity of God to save the world. The *presence* of God's spirit is real. It is a redemptive gift that transforms our ordinary lives and ordinary experiences in a world of darkness.<sup>8</sup> God *easters* in the ordinary lives of believers and in the life of the world. Easter as a verb provides us with the hope that even through such environmental hazards as nuclear waste, chlorofluorocarbons, and pollution, God has not abandoned us to figure out on our own how to solve the environmental crisis.

Our experience of the risen God's spirit in the ordinary places of life addresses ecological concerns in several ways. There is no conclusion to the gospel in light of Easter. Easter envisions a world that is saved. We have always looked forward to the "end of time"; however, we recognize this is not the end of all human existence. Those who are saved will enjoy the new earth and time with the risen Lord.

Everything we know about God, including the symbols we use to help us understand the depths of his mystery, are related to the surroundings of our natural environment. We experience God's spirit on earth. When Christians consume the elements of bread and wine, part of the natural environment, we are reminded that we not only killed the Creator on the cross, but we also go on killing his creation by our devastation of the environment.

Contrary to tradition, the celebration of the Eucharist does not only commemorate a death, but celebrates the resurrected life of Jesus Christ.<sup>9</sup> The bread and wine, which we eat and drink, comes from the earth and acknowledges God's *presence* here and now in the world and in the church. These symbols actually tie us to the natural and social envi-



ronments where the spirit of the risen Lord works for our salvation.

The dominant metaphor in Adventism pictures the resurrected Jesus at the right hand of God serving as our High Priest. The primary job of the High Priest is to save, and according to some strands of Adventist thought, the High Priest's work of salvation extends to the entire universe. God's cosmic plan of salvation could include some understanding of how God intends to deal justly with the animals and natural environment, which—through no fault of their own—are condemned to death because of human sin.

If God can save humanity, why is it hard to think he can save the natural environment? We

need not despair in the midst of the environmental crisis and the bleak future that seems to be ahead. The presence of God in the world through the spirit of the risen Christ is encouraging. The risen Christ, through the church and its symbols, can change the way many people think about and live with the natural environment.

Ultimately, however, our hope does not rest on the church becoming a powerful political force. Our hope finally springs from the power of the risen Christ to transform our lives and shape our future. The power of Easter can restore a better understanding of how we ought to live not only with one another but also with the natural environment.

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# What Are Adventists *Doing?*

Some do more than talk. Here's a breakdown of what's happening.

## Float Shows Church's Concern For Environment

by Lara Beaven

The General Conference and North American Division recently took disparate but significant steps to place Adventists within the environmental movement. North America dedicated a highly visible float to the cause of the environment and the General Conference Committee adopted its first official statement on the subject.

For the third consecutive year, the Seventh-day Adventist Church participated in the Tournament of Roses Parade. The theme of this year's float was "Enjoying and Caring for Nature," which was shown by two sets of animated floral waterfalls surrounded by animals and insects. For several years the Rose Parade has been televised internationally, but last year citizens of the former Soviet Union could see it, and this year the parade was televised to the People's Republic of China. As a result, in 1992, if they tuned in, some one-half billion people, worldwide, could see the Seventh-day Adventist float identi-

fying the church with concern for the environment.

Although an outside company, Fiesta Parade Floats, designed the float, Pathfinders and other Adventists, representing the nine regional areas of the United States and Canada, made and rode on the float that depicted outdoor activities such as hiking and camping. The 25-foot high, 18-foot wide, and 55-foot long float was decorated with thousands of flowers—40,000 roses, as well as dendrobiums, cattleya orchids, tulips, camellias, and gerbera daisies.

Norm Middag, North American Division Camp/Pathfinder specialist, was the principal force behind the planning and financing of all three floats. He says the theme of the 1993 float developed out of the Adventist traditions of outdoor exercise and nature observation as well as the tradition of stewardship. Middag explains that the concept of stewardship has been a part of the church for a long time, even though

it is only recently that the church has become excited about stewardship being understood as taking responsibility for the environment.

In addition to identifying Adventists with the environment through a Rose Parade float, the church in 1992 adopted an official position on the environment. A few years before, the South Pacific Division had drafted its own statement. In 1991, the denomination submitted a different statement to the Rio world conference on the environment, which some felt was embarrassingly inadequate. Preparations began on a fuller document.

The final draft emerged from a working group at the 1992 Annual Council that included teachers of science, theologically trained editors at the General Conference and laity, including one person from the South Pacific Division. As readers of *Spectrum* can see for themselves, the statement, "Caring for God's Creation," officially adopted by the Annual Council, provides theological reasons for endorsing the basic goals of the environmental movement.

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*Lara Beaven, a junior journalism major at Columbia Union College, is the editor of the Columbia Journal, the campus newspaper.*

1992 ANNUAL COUNCIL STATEMENT

## Caring for God's Creation

The world in which we live is a gift of love from the Creator God, from "him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water" (Rev. 14:7, NIV; cf. Rev. 11:17, 18). Within the creation He placed humans, set intentionally in relationship with Himself, other persons, and the surrounding world. Therefore, as Seventh-day Adventists, we hold its preservation and nurture to be intimately related to our service to Him.

God set aside the seventh-day Sabbath as a memorial and perpetual reminder of His creative act and establishment of the world. In resting on that day, Seventh-day Adventists reinforce the special sense of relationship with the Creator and His creation. Sabbath observance underscores the importance of our integration with the total environment. The human decision to disobey God broke the original order of creation, resulting in a disharmony alien to His purposes. Thus our air and waters are polluted, forests and wildlife plundered, and natural resources exploited. Because we recognize humans as part of God's creation, our concern for the environment extends to personal health and lifestyle. We advocate a whole-

some manner of living and reject the use of substances such as tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs that harm the body and consume earth's resources; and we promote a simple vegetarian diet.

Seventh-day Adventists are committed to respectful, cooperative relationships among all persons, recognizing our common origin and realizing our human dignity as a gift from the Creator. Since human poverty and environmental degradation are interrelated, we pledge ourselves to improve the quality of life for all people. Our goal is a sustainable development of resources while meeting human needs.

Genuine progress toward caring for our natural environment rests upon both personal and cooperative effort. We accept the challenge to work toward restoring God's overall design. Moved by faith in God, we commit ourselves to promote the healing that rises at both personal and environmental levels from integrated lives dedicated to serve God and humanity.

In this commitment we confirm our stewardship of God's creation and believe that total restoration will be complete only when God makes all things new.

tal hazard known to Americans. Fifty-two thousand Americans succumb each year to diseases related to secondhand smoking, including 3,000 who will die from lung cancer. In fact, environmental tobacco smoke causes 30 times as many lung cancer deaths as all other cancer-causing air pollutants regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency. Sharing supper with a friend in a no-smoking area of an otherwise smoke-filled restaurant means being exposed to air pollution that is six times greater than breathing the outside air of a metropolitan area during rush hour.

Until recently, religious organizations were noticeably absent from attempts to employ public policy to combat the tobacco companies. The Washington Institute, an Adventist institution, is leading America's churches to take tobacco seriously as a public policy issue.

Environmental tobacco smoke is part of the general problem of smoking in America. Active smoking kills more Americans (more than 434,000 yearly) than alcohol, cocaine, heroin, homicide, suicide, car accidents, fires, and AIDS combined. Add deaths from environmental tobacco smoke and you have the total for the first and third preventible causes of yearly deaths in the U.S.: 485,000 people (see chart, facing page).

Just as it had attacked studies of active smoking, the tobacco industry responded to the Environmental Protection Agency's report with the usual accusations that health advocates had skewed statistics. They would have us believe that their advertising—an area where the industry spent nearly \$4 billion dollars in 1992 to push their lethal products—has no effect on consumers' buying habits. Given that 90 percent of all smokers begin before their 20th birthday (50 percent start smoking by the age of

## Fighting Secondhand Smoke's Pollution of the Environment

by Bryan Zervos

The Environmental Protection Agency gave us, in January 1993, a chilling level of awareness regarding secondhand environmen-

tal tobacco smoke: It kills, and in a big way. Environmental tobacco smoke now has the dubious honor of being the greatest environmen-

14), the industry targets its advertising at children. And it works.

The December 1991 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) reported on a study involving six-year-olds and RJR Nabisco's Old Joe Cool ad campaign. The findings: the children more readily recognized Old Joe Cool (and the link with cigarettes) than Mickey Mouse. As Charles Scriven, president of Columbia Union College and chair of the Washington Institute's program council, wrote in an article for *Sojourners* (July 1992), this is nothing short of child abuse.

The Washington Institute is rallying the churches to support stiff excise taxes on tobacco. The institute is following its charter to "identify issues . . . that have historically been of concern to Adventists" and to "choose the organization involved with the issue that is recognized as being the best." Washington Institute program council members Roy Branson and Charles Scriven are leading the way in alerting Protestants to the dangers of active smoking and environmental tobacco smoke by writing essays in such leading journals as *Christian Century*, *Christianity Today*, and *Sojourners*. Roy Benton, professor of mathematics at Columbia Union College, is reporting in several journals on a nationwide conference on tobacco and youth he attended in the People's Republic of China. The Ministry of Health in Beijing welcomed public health ministers from each of China's provinces to plan health-education measures.

Working closely with religious advocates on Capitol Hill, the Washington Institute, in the fall of 1992, formed the Interreligious Coalition on Smoking OR Health. Since its inception, the Interreligious Coalition has encouraged mainline denominations to adopt official church statements regarding tobacco. Its co-chairs are Jane Hull-Harvey, as-

sistant general secretary of the general board of the church and society of the United Methodist Church; and Roy Branson, a senior research fellow at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics, Georgetown University. The quarterly newsletter of the Interreligious Coalition, *Religion & Tobacco Control*, is edited by the Washington Institute. The newsletter briefs members on action plans, news items, pending relevant legislation, and is distributed to all members of the U.S. House and Senate through the office of Jane Hull-Harvey. The Interreligious Coalition has also visited members of Congress.

It recently submitted testimony raising questions at confirmation hearings this January regarding Mickey Kantor's nomination to the post of United States trade representative. Philip Morris, the largest tobacco conglomerate in America, had hired Kantor's law firm to represent it in Washington, D.C.

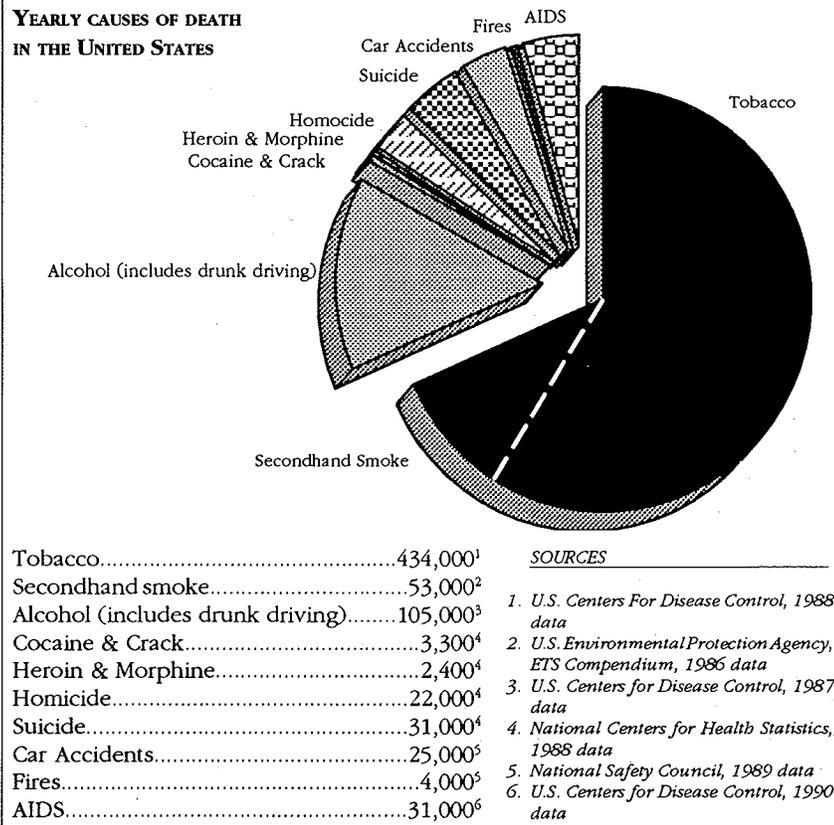
The Washington Institute and

the Interreligious Coalition recently participated in a summit meeting—"Tobacco Use: An American Crisis"—sponsored by the American Medical Association. The summit meeting, with the strong backing of the Washington Institute and the Interreligious Coalition, agreed to advocate the adoption of a higher tax on tobacco—an additional \$2 per pack at the federal level and an additional \$1 per pack at the state level. Higher taxes have proven to be the single most effective measure reducing the number of first-time smokers.

Those wishing to help in this campaign, or to learn more about the Washington Institute or the Interreligious Coalition, write to: Washington Institute, 7710 Carroll Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland 20912. Fax: (301) 270-2814; telephone: (301) 853-2303.

*Bryan Zervos, a graduate of Columbia Union College, is program coordinator of the Washington Institute.*

YEARLY CAUSES OF DEATH IN THE UNITED STATES



# Recycling College Campuses

by Chip Cassano and Theresa Yu

As the environmental movement gains momentum, the re-greening of Adventist college and university campuses has focused on recycling as a logical first step.

Near the end of 1991, Andrews University's *Student Movement* reported that student Stephen Ertel, with the assistance of Dr. Robert Wilkins of the chemistry department, led in forming ReCreation, a volunteer program that encourages recycling and conservation and educates the community about recycling. The program has grown steadily, and plans are in effect to incorporate 40 or more volunteers—students, faculty, staff, and administrators—to oversee and implement the recycling program.

Support from faculty and administrators has been encouraging. The program was granted a small budget, and one faculty member, Dr. Dennis Woodland of the biology department, offers extra credit to students of his Environment and Man class who participate in the program as volunteers.

A survey of students at Atlantic Union College showed that virtually all respond positively to suggested recycling programs, and plans are afoot that, if implemented, will have more than local impact.

Professor Gene Johnson of AUC's biology department is director of the Adventist Environmental Institute, an organization with the objective of developing environmental awareness. The organization hopes to raise enough money to develop a studio where a Mr. Rogers-type television show can be re-enacted, with the objective of educating children on the importance of maintaining a healthy environment by way of recycling.

The studio could also be used to produce educational videos focusing on environmental issues.

Like Andrews University's program, the recycling program at Columbia Union College was started several years ago by a student, Andrew Marter. Students have continued to oversee the program, but it has struggled for lack of funding and volunteer help.

This year a group of students, organized by senior Jill Potter, have taken steps to secure administrative support and funding for a campus-wide program. A budget

has been submitted that provides for purchase of necessary supplies, and payment of an hourly wage to students who will collect, sort, and transport recyclables.

The group also circulated a petition asking for student and faculty support. Potter says that the group's goal is to establish a recycling program as part of the way that the college does business, and to thus ensure that the program will survive, even if the current level of interest wanes.

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*Chip Cassano, a graduate student in the writing program at Johns Hopkins University, is assistant editor of Spectrum. Theresa Yu is a junior journalism major at Columbia Union College.*

# Adventists Among the Elephants

by Leonard Taylor

My wife and I have participated in five short-term, ecologically related projects with Earthwatch. Carlene and I have spent two to three weeks at a time working with scientists researching orangutans in Borneo, small carnivorous animals in Nepal, cranes in Vietnam, bottlenose dolphins in Costa Rica, and one of the world's last primeval forests in Poland.

We helped researchers with academic positions either in the United States or other major countries. No matter how remote the location of the project, the researchers were at ease with the unusual languages spoken and had wide contacts within the countries in which we worked. In many instances the researchers we joined had devoted decades—sometimes their entire professional lives—to the particular ecological project

we visited.

Typically, the projects accommodate five to 20 or so visiting assistants. Some will be involved with day-long hikes, others with less physical record-keeping. All the programs have several hours a day of lectures both in the field and in the camp.

Life at one project we joined, evaluating the small carnivorous animals of Nepal, can give a more detailed picture of Earthwatch. The government established large areas equivalent to our national parks to protect animals from a rapidly expanding human population. Earthwatch investigators tabulate the variety of species, information necessary for rational programs to maintain ecological balance within the preserves.

We reached our base of operation in the Himalayan foothills by using elephants as our sole means

of transportation, carrying us across rivers and through heavy foliage. The elephants also protected us from attacks by large animals, such as rhinoceroses, tigers and slothbears. At our base camp we slept on the ground in the open forest.

Our day usually began at sunrise, baiting new traps, with their accompanying cameras, and checking the old trap lines. Captured animals were tranquilized and given a complete physical examination. Several pages of data were written up on each animal. Selected animals were equipped with radio collars, and a team was given the responsibility of keeping the location of the animal known at all times by the use of directional radio antennae.

In the evening we gathered around a large campfire, with elephants standing guard in the deep shadows. The information collected that day was then entered into a

computer operated on batteries charged by solar panels during the day.

Financial support for basic ecological research is scarce. Participants like us, by providing their own transportation and paying for the opportunity to work with these researchers, are able to help keep these vital projects alive. By thus supporting basic research our financial contributions to Earthwatch projects were tax deductible. We also obtained a deep respect for other countries, their people, and their religions. A catalogue of Earthwatch projects can be obtained from Earthwatch, 680 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02272. Telephone: (617) 926-8200.

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*Leonard Taylor, chief of pathology and director of the clinical laboratory at Redlands Community Hospital, is an associate clinical professor of pathology at Loma Linda University. This piece was written in collaboration with Carlene Taylor.*

## The Wilderness and Mathematics

by Shandelle Henson

I have been an environmentalist ever since I can remember. I find God in the wilderness. It is my sacred cathedral and my playground. It is a mysterious acquaintance, a comfortable companion, and a stern disciplinarian. I wish to help protect wilderness for pragmatic, poetic, and moral reasons.

Lately, I have found a niche that has combined my career as a mathematician with my interests in ecology!

Last year for the first time I heard the exciting phrase "Mathematical Ecology." At the time, I was a Ph.D. candidate in theoretical mathematics at Duke University. I suddenly found myself in need of a new thesis advisor, and since my major

professor had been the only faculty member at Duke in my specialty, I was also looking for a new school. Then the director of graduate studies at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville department happened to mention a special research group: mathematical ecology! I was hooked. Now I'm finishing my doctorate in mathematics, only this time my research is in this new field of mathematical ecology.

The Environmental Protection Agency uses mathematical models as tools to make assessments of the risks new technologies bring to humans and to the environment. Such risk assessments are of utmost importance, for too often we put a new technology to work

without trying to understand what the consequences will be. For example, the advent of antibiotics seemed a certain victory over some diseases. It seems no one knew or cared that the short generation time of bacteria would allow "super bugs" to evolve that would be highly resistant to antibiotics.

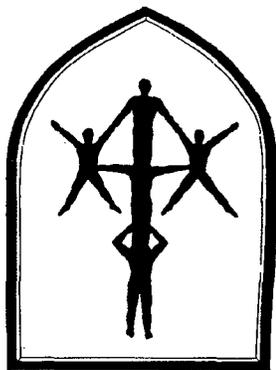
The result is that mathematical ecologists are constantly looking for new technology to help us correct the problems created by old technology. The philosophical implications are potent, disquieting, and unpopular. Even if we take a pragmatic stance and assume that we "can't stop progress," we should at least try to reason out what are likely risks of implementing a new technology.

No ecological system can be completely described mathematically, but our research group here at the University of Tennessee uses large systems of partial differential equations to model ecological systems. By using both theoretical and numerical means, and taking into account mathematical theory and empirical, biological data, we create powerful computer simulations of entire environments. In particular, our group at the University of Tennessee is modeling the effects of certain pollutants on natural aquatic populations and communities.

I enjoyed theoretical mathematics, but I always felt that my time and energy should have been used to more directly confront the world's problems. I wanted to feel like my research was useful. Through a seeming setback in my doctoral program, God directed me to an option I had not known existed. I'm so glad my mathematics can make a difference to the wilderness and the world.

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*Shandelle Henson, a graduate of Southern College, is a Ph.D. candidate in mathematics at the University of Tennessee.*



# Adventists on The Move

Adventist athletes compete in world championships, and Adventist linguists bring news from Albania and Turkey.

## Acrobatic Adventists

by Sharise Esh

On November 26-28, 1992, four Adventists—a doctor, a teacher, a law student, and a hospital cashier—competed in the 1992 Acrosports World Championships held in Rennes, France. They placed sixth—higher than any other group representing the United States. In doing so, they have made the United States eligible to send a group from their category to the 1993 World Games, held next summer in Amsterdam.

Robb White, Rick Schwartz, Mark Velasco, and Jon Velasco, the only Adventists in the competition, train at Spring Valley Academy, where Rick Schwartz is head coach. More than 200 other Adventists are currently competing at the national level, with some 700 more striving for eligibility at the six Adventist

institutions that offer competitive acrosports.

While the sport is not well known in the United States, it has been very popular in Europe, China, and the former Soviet Union for more than 50 years. It is expected to be a demonstration sport in the 1996 Olympic games.

Acrosports, also known as sports acrobatics, is quite similar to gymnastics. However, instead of working on traditional gymnastic equipment, such as the balance beam or uneven bars, the athletes use other gymnasts as their equipment—building pyramids, tossing and catching people in the air.

Acrobats choose partners and then train and compete with only these partners. They can choose from five categories—men's pair, men's four, mixed pair, women's pair, or women's trio. There are also four levels of competition in which these groups compete—novice, intermediate, advanced, and elite. When competitors reach the elite level, they are eligible to attempt qualification for international competition.

Adventists became involved in sports acrobatics back when the sport was still at the

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developmental level in the United States. Pioneers like Robert Kalua, currently coach of the Andrews University Gymnics, helped shape and influence the direction of sports acrobatics in this country.

In the early 1950s, Kalua witnessed a simple acrobatics demonstration by a couple from Hawaii. Enthusiastic about what he had seen, he began collecting information on acrobatics and training at Pacific Union College with a friend, Gene Wilson. In 1957, Kalua and Wilson went to Loma Linda University. There, with a pick and shovel, they dug out the side of a hill. After leveling it off, paving it over, and setting up a few simple pieces of equipment, they had their first "gym."

After two years, Kalua and Wilson decided they were ready to take their team on the road. After much discussion and letter writing, this team—the "Gymnics"—secured an invitation to perform at the 1959 Adventist Youth Congress in Atlantic City.

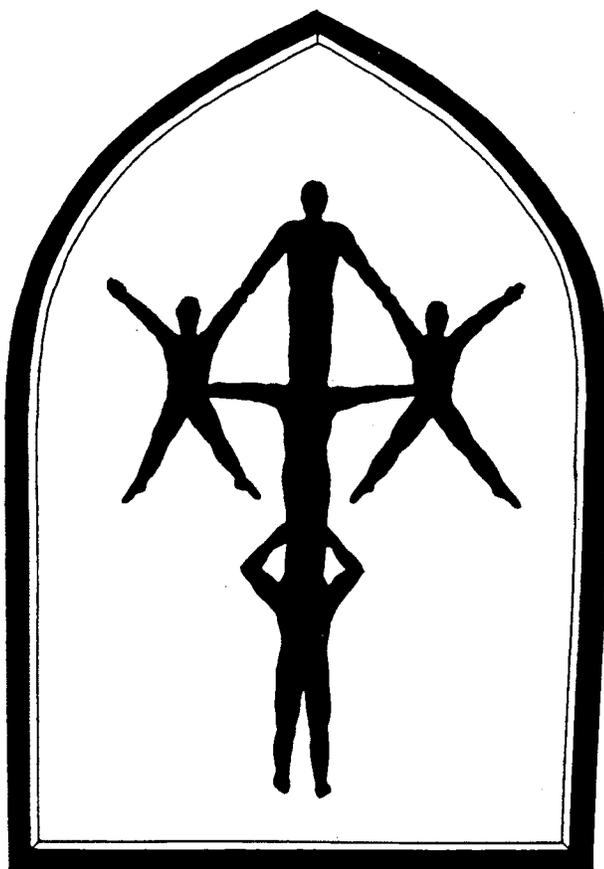
Acrobatic demonstrations at this time involved pyramid building; simple beam, bars and vault routines; trampolining, and some comedy. As the Gymnics performed their three-ring circus-style show, Kalua watched to see the reaction of denominational officials. These General Conference leaders, all lined up in the front row, were poking one another in the ribs, motioning wildly at the different stunts, unable to take everything in. It was this team and this performance that launched acrobatics into the Adventist system.

Soon exhibition teams similar to the Gymnics were springing up all over the Adventist system. Now, nearly every Adventist academy and college in the United States has a gymnastic/acrobatics team.

With so many teams, Adventist colleges began holding clinics each year for training purposes. At one of these clinics, held at Walla Walla College, Dan Hoff, a national coach for the United States Sports Acrobatics Federa-

tion, spotted Vanny Dye, a former student of Kalua's. He approached him about joining a men's four. This brought Adventist acrobatics into the competitive arena. Joining Dye in the distinction of being the first Adventists to compete were Craig Patterson and Tonya Case, competing in a mixed-pair routine.

After training only six months, Dye's men's four won their division and the elite men's four national title at the 1986 U.S. National Championships held in Mobile, Alabama. Dye was the first Adventist to win a national title. Later that year, this men's four earned a silver medal at a friendship meet in Poland, becoming the first U.S. men's four to medal in international competition—Adventist or otherwise. Dye's group went on to win the national title again in 1987 and, at this competition, scored high enough to qualify for the world championships, held in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. They placed fifth.



About this time, Roger McFarland, coach of the team at La Sierra, became interested in competitive acrobatics. Contacts McFarland had made, combined with an article he had read about two other Adventists competing, prompted him to take six of his students to the 1987 U.S. National Championships held in Hawaii. By 1988, La Sierra was hosting the national championships, with 26 Adventists competing. In 1989, Adventists took another turn, with Kalua hosting the National Championships at Andrews University. Adventist participation had now reached 86.

At this point Robb White, Mark Velasco, Jon Velasco, and John Greenidge began training at Andrews University. They competed and won the elite national men's four title for two years.

In the third year the group picked up Rick Schwartz—head coach at Spring Valley where they were now training—after losing partner John Greenidge. This group held their title at nationals and even scored enough points to move on to international competition. It was this group that placed sixth at the 1992 world championships.

During Friday's finals at the 1992 world championships, the group ran into difficulty with sundown, and unanimously chose not to perform one of their routines. The group came out sixth all around, scoring higher than any other U.S. group at the competition, and higher than any other U.S. men's four at an international competition. This score secured the United States a spot in this division at the 1993 World Games, at which acrobatics will be included for the first time. They, along with Vanny Dye, are the only Adventists to reach this level of competition.

Rick Schwartz, the fourth and newest partner, also coaches Spring Valley Academy, which is the largest Adventist competitive team, sending more than 20 competitors to the national competition each year. Spring Valley has become a very strong team, winning medals for almost every entry they make.

Other Adventist schools are now becoming involved. Union College and Columbia Union College have sent teams to the last three national championships. These two colleges combined have managed to take home two team awards and 15 medals.

It is now estimated that one fourth of all acrobats competing in the United States are Adventist. Nine hundred Adventists are competing members of the federation, with more than 200 of these competing at the national level. Not surprisingly, Adventists are moving into leadership positions. La Sierra coach Roger McFarland is a member of the United States Sports Acrobatics Federation Board and Executive Committee. Spring Valley coach Rick Schwartz serves as regional director for the Mideast.

## Diplomat & Missionary: Pilgrims on the Road

by Roy Branson

Two recent visitors to Washington, D.C. came from countries with very few Adventists, Albania and Turkey. They updated two stories previously printed in *Spectrum*. Megan Shehu and David Dunn also embody the health and creativity of the Seventh-day Adventist community.

### Diplomat in Albania

Megan Shehu is a member of the foreign ministry of Albania. Three years ago, she was marching with fellow university students in the streets of Tirana. They could have

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*Roy Branson, a senior research fellow at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University, is the editor of Spectrum.*

all been shot. Instead, their demonstrations helped overthrow the remnants of the most repressive dictatorship in Europe.

Enver Hoxha, first secretary of the communist party, ruled Albania for 40 years, from 1946 until his death in 1985. Loyal to Stalin and enemy of all Soviet liberalization, Hoxha closed more than 2,000 places of worship, tortured and executed thousands of believers, and wrote into the nation's constitution that "the State recognizes no religion whatever and supports atheist propaganda." Hoxha's successor clung to power until 1990.

In the spring of 1992, Megan, at 21, graduated with honors from the University of Tirana and its program in linguistics and literature (her thesis was on the nature of double-negatives). After scoring among the top 2 percent in a government examination, she was invited to join the foreign ministry. Her university-long practice of teaching herself English—three hours a night—then proved critical. The United States Department of State arrived in Tirana and, after conducting a round of competitive interviews, invited Megan to be the youngest of only 10 Albanian officials to attend a month-long seminar at the Foreign Service Institute in Washington, D.C. Other invitees included the president's chief-of-staff and his principal foreign policy advisor.

That was not all that happened to Megan in 1992. In September, after studying many months, she was baptized as a Seventh-day Adventist, one of only about 100 in the entire country. She confirms *Spectrum's* 1991 report (Vol. 22, No. 1) that her home congregation in the capital, Tirana, includes the pioneer Adventist Meropi Gjika (now 88), and her two sons, Thanas, a professor of literature at the University of Tirana; and Viktor, one of Albania's most prominent filmmakers.

As soon as she arrived, in February 1993, for the State Department seminar in Washington, D.C., Megan's instructors fulfilled their promise to find fellow believers. Her first Sabbath in

America was spent with the Adventist congregation in Martinsburg, West Virginia. Her second Sabbath she greeted worshipers at the 11 a.m. service of the second-largest Adventist congregation in North America, the 3,200-member Sligo church in Takoma Park, Maryland.

Megan told amazed churchgoers, and a Sligo discussion Sabbath school class, that she comes from a Muslim family (although not formally religious). Indeed, Megan's paternal grandfather was a muezzin, the cleric calling pre-war Albanians to prayers at a mosque. Her maternal grandfather was a professor, imprisoned by the Hoxha regime for his democratic ideals.

Megan began studying the Bible when three American boys, speaking English, arrived at the University of Tirana. Later, when she decided to become a Christian, her family initially had problems, but are now reconciled. "They see that my Christianity has made me much more joyful. Besides, they love me." Before the Sabbath school class was over, Megan was saying how proud she was of her Albanian culture—"as ancient as Greece's"—and smilingly asking about differences in lifestyle between Albanian and American Adventists—the latter seemingly more rigid.

Both Albania and Adventism can rest assured that in Megan Shehu they have an accomplished and winsome diplomat.

## Modern-day Livingstone in Turkey

David Dunn loves being a missionary. He also loves adventure, so he makes certain they always go together. The key, as for Megan Shehu, is linguistic ability. At the famous Berlitz language school in Washington, D.C., David became something of a legend for his rapid mastery of Arabic. He now teaches in a Turkish high school.

During Megan's first week in America, David was completing arrangements to bring up to 100 non-Adventist Turkish students to Columbia Union College for a summer of English-language instruction. He also told some of his story to a Sligo church Sabbath school.

Partly because of his language skills, the General Conference sent David and his family to Kuwait. While he pastored a congregation made up largely of non-Kuwaitis, David cultivated Kuwaiti friendships. He chatted easily in cafes, and was beginning to become acquainted with members of the ruling families. The son of missionaries, David planned to stay in Kuwait with his family for years.

Then the Iraqis invaded. David was the American Adventist caught behind Iraqi lines in Kuwait City (reported in *Spectrum*, Vol. 21, No. 2). He survived through the efforts of Muslim Kuwaitis who had stayed in the country to work in the underground resistance. He had spent time getting to know them; they now helped their friend.

After a brief respite in the United States, David returned to the Middle East on a special mission with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). This time he traveled to Istanbul, then trekked through eastern Turkey, not stopping until he had penetrated into Iraq, indeed to its northern capital, Mosul. There, under protection of the United Nations, he helped the Kurds survive the months after the Gulf War.

Then in 1991 the church had a new assignment. Despite decades of effort, and the purchase of a large building near the famous Bosphorus in Istanbul, Turkey—according to David—still has only eight Seventh-day Ad-

ventists. The denomination wanted him to start work in new areas. So, David retrieved his family from the United States, and took them to Iskanderun, a port in Southern Turkey, near Syria.

The Dunn family knew no one when they arrived. They sat down in an outdoor restaurant and David and his wife began doing what they do best—getting acquainted. In that first conversation, they learned that the high school to which the well-to-do business and government leaders sent their children needed an English teacher. After the first candidate left the country, David was employed (he turns his salary over to the Middle East Union). He and his family are now part of the life of Iskanderun. The Muslim parents who have come to know and trust him for his work at the high school are the ones who will be paying for their children to be taught at an American Adventist college.

Now the church wants David and his family to move again—this time to Istanbul, where David has been invited to become a faculty member at the well-known Roberts College, founded early in this century by American Presbyterians.

No one ever questioned the commitment to Christian missions of David Livingstone, the famous Scottish missionary to Africa. But Livingstone the preacher was also driven to be Livingstone the adventuring explorer. Those who have heard the 20th-century David, and who find themselves, for some reason, in Turkey, should be prepared, if they are in some sidewalk cafe, to look up, recognize a round, quizzical American face, and say, "Pastor Dunn, I presume."



## Servants or Friends? Graham Maxwell's Latest Book

Reviewed by Gordon Bietz

Graham Maxwell, *Servants or Friends?* Redlands, Calif.: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992. \$15.95 hardcover; \$9.95 paper. 224 pages.

From the first chapter on, Graham Maxwell has a pastoral objective for his book. He seeks to reach a generation of people turned off to Christianity. The book opens with a variety of his personal experiences with people whose distorted concept of God drove them away from the Christian church. Maxwell seeks to bring them back by picturing God as seeking our friendship rather than our servitude.

Anders Nygren, in his classic work *Agape and Eros*, builds a paradigm of contrasting motifs through a word study of *agape* and *eros*. He sees the world and everything in it fitting into one of these words. Graham Maxwell is doing

the same with the motifs *servant* and *friend*. He gets these words from a phrase in John 15:15 where Jesus says, "I no longer call you servants, . . . Instead, I have called you friends . . ." (NIV). One might question building such an extensive picture of God based on one text, but then Nygren used only two words and one of them isn't even in the Bible. I illustrate Maxwell's contrasting motifs in the table below.

The bias of any theologically conversant Adventist will have them looking for some praiseworthy or damning clues in the book that reinforce their ideas about Maxwell's ideas. There are those who would suggest that the paradigm doesn't stand up theologically because of the way it deals with the cross (God's supreme demonstration of his love, according to Maxwell, as compared to a forensic

Gordon Bietz graduated from Andrews University with M.Div. and D.Min. degrees. He has been pastor of the Collegedale SDA church for 11 years. He was awarded the Merrill Fellowship and spent three months studying at Harvard University during the fall of 1991.

ISSUE	SERVANTS	FRIENDS
Questions	Don't ask	Freedom to question
Obedience	From fear	From love
Revelation	Sinai and thunder	Still small voice
Hell	Fire from God	Love from God
Faith	Leap in the dark	Leap into light
Communication	Dark speech	Plain speech
God	Judge to appease	Father to love
Law	Restrictive instruction	Loving guidelines
Obedience	Fear of punishment	Trust of law-giver
Sin	Breaking the rules	Breaking the relationship
Salvation	Legal transaction	Supreme demonstration
God's wrath	Anger	Absence
Judgment	Records in heaven	Record of heart
Atonement	Making amends	Making friends

view of his death as a sacrifice). Maxwell's theory of the atonement is not the focus of the book, though his ideas come through.

I am not a theologian. I am a pastor who lives a long way from the semiarid land of theological hair splitting, so I won't get into all the implications for the doctrine of atonement. I simply know that the picture of God presented by Maxwell ministers to people whose lives have been abused by religious demagogues and who don't experience God's peace. Some will suggest that there are many inappropriate theological thoughts that minister to people but in the end lead them down the garden path to destruction. I agree. I don't believe that this paradigm is one of those.

One test of the God-as-friend paradigm, aside from whether it is theologically valid, is "Does it work?" I answer that question with a decided "Yes." I might not be as exclusive in using the servant/friend paradigm as Maxwell is, but it nonetheless makes a very distinctive contribution to Adventist thought. Several of my parishioners has come to me with a reflective question about eschatology or the atonement. Their reflections have been stimulated by coming in

contact with Maxwell's ideas. I don't necessarily believe that Maxwell's paradigm answers all the questions about the atonement, but then that wasn't the goal. Certainly other theories also fall short of making clear this event that we will study for eternity.

When it comes to thinking about God, we all need to take off our sandals like Moses and walk very carefully. No one picture is the *singua non* picture of God. I find that many perspectives deepen one's appreciation of Scripture, and of God.

The book is "an easy read." It is filled with illustrations, both pictorial and written. The points are made clearly. Just pick up the book *Servants or Friends* and you have the feel that this is not published for the Adventist Book Center. There is a clear attempt to reach a wider audience than might find their way into an Adventist store. It is good to see an attempt to publish to the larger community rather than just having continuing conversations with ourselves.

I recommend the book to you. Give it as a gift to friends who are struggling with their perception of God. It may just open up a whole new vista and enable them to receive God's friendship.

than addressing only the symptoms and casualties of those structures. This results, the authors contend, when Adventists individually and corporately throw off such inhibitors to social action as the deep-seated fallacy of ancient body/soul dualism; internalize the Old and New Testament roots of social concern; and set their own house aright by dismantling the black conferences of the North American Division.

Readers will notice that the case for social concern is not made by caricaturing the church. Positive recent developments are acknowledged: our forays against the tobacco industry, the release of General Conference statements on selected public policies, revisionist interpretations of the Adventist church in Peru, integration of the South African church, and the like.

Noteworthy also, the prescribed social activism does not spring from the hearty individualism that we rightly or wrongly equate with liberalism. Indeed, the authors' valuation of the individual, which is not altogether clear, seems low—at least too low for triggering the remedial passions that are wanted. As in the Hebraic and conservative traditions, the individual becomes truly human only as the member of a group.

Social activism, as generally understood in Adventist circles, misses the mark. Too smart to voice the dualism they deplore, Dudley and Hernandez do not separate spiritual concerns from social concerns and then uphold the latter. It only seems that they do this. Social concerns are emphasized because they are the more neglected component of the Adventist mindset.

For the authors, the desideratum is always an integrative holistic model that brings into creative tension all dimensions of human life. Soul and body become one. Evan-

## SDAs: Conservative *and* Liberal

Reviewed by Gary M. Ross

Dudley, Roger L., and Edwin I. Hernandez, *CITIZENS OF TWO WORLDS: Religion and Politics Among American Seventh-day Adventists*. Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1992. \$14.95 paperback. 318+ pages.

Gary M. Ross, who received his Ph.D. in history from Washington State University, is the congressional liaison for the General Conference of SDAs.

This book appears to be a manual for social activism and an empirical demonstration that Adventists need it. On closer analysis, it is not quite either of these things.

The later chapters of the book, the part where recommendations emerge, describe what ought to constitute the relationship between religion and politics: a commitment to the radical, prophetic kind of social involvement that transforms oppressive structures rather

gelist and activist coincide with singleness of purpose and mission. No aspect of human life escapes the power of the gospel. And all of this because, for Ellen White, "the union of Christlike work for the body and Christlike work for the soul is the true interpretation of the gospel."

The authors ask, Is it empirically the case that Adventists shun politics and neglect the social side of things? In this book advocacy, such as that which is outlined above, follows inquiry. Turning, then, to the section written by the authors in their role as social scientists, we find inquiry aplenty—and surprisingly meager results.

Able researchers that they are, Dudley and Hernandez disclose their methodology, acknowledge the shortcomings of questionnaire-generated data, and qualify the results. A survey of 419 adult lay members in North America on religion and politics forms the basis of their study and produces the eventual thesis that Adventists "vary on their politics according to certain measures of religion and background variables such as ethnicity."

Ambitiously, the book first identifies differences among Adventists in religious beliefs, behaviors, and experiences. Pastors and church administrators should draw heavily upon this material as they nurture their parishioners and determine policy. For example, questions on orthodoxy discovered beliefs in the imminence of Christ's second coming to be unexpectedly low, and belief in a works-oriented doctrine of salvation to be unexpectedly high. While at the experiential level Adventists were found incorporating much subjectivity and emotion into their religion, church-related practices such as attendance, tithing, witnessing, and the conducting of worship in the home

produced a mixed and quite disturbing picture. Given the North American Division's recent book-length repudiation of such unofficial journals and ministries as *Our Firm Foundation*, it is curious that these journals were rarely even known to the respondents.

The question posed next is whether social variables determine the religious differences among Adventists. Comparisons between the measures of religion and such demographic groups as gender, religious background, marital status, age, ethnicity, family income, and level of formal education revealed considerable predictability in the areas of age and socioeconomic status. That is, religious commitment increased among the elderly, perhaps because of the increasing imminence of death; and it fell markedly among the affluent and professionally trained. Apparently, when the former leave the scene one cannot expect the latter to take up the mantle and support the church with equal commitment.

A chapter follows on how Adventists responded to the political, economic, and social issues current in 1988. Most favored a "liberal" stance on socioeconomic and peace issues, such as the elimination of racial discrimination and the establishment of peaceful relations with Russia. But Adventists took a "conservative" position on strictly political concerns, like law and order—perhaps reflecting their own law-oriented soteriology.

Having determined what American Adventists are like religiously and politically, the authors proceed to their "major research task": the demonstration of how the first quality influences the second. They lament that "the nature of the relationship between religion and politics is—in the final analysis—elusive." They also in-

sist, with Niebuhr, that correlation does not prove causation, given that social variables intervene between religion and politics. Their assumptions set the stage for scanty empirical results. Nevertheless, the book holds that "while the effect of religion on political views is by no means strong, it does exist, to some extent, independent of that of demographic considerations."

The measure of religion found to serve best as a predictor of political attitudes and behaviors is orthodoxy or ideological commitment. Where this is strong, Adventists either withdraw from politics completely or take conservative political positions. But three things can complicate this correspondence: religious liberty issues, military offensives, and ethnic experience. Indeed in such contexts the orthodox become markedly liberal, fearing that school prayer could break the wall of separation between church and state, that war and killing could curtail the spreading of the gospel, that obsession with law and order could undermine the freedom and justice that minorities (but not only minorities) crave.

We knew already, of course, that the attendees of Sabbath "rallies" on religious liberty look like, and sound like, conservatives while zealously voicing the liberal agenda on church and state. It is the conspicuous absence of moderate, middle-aged professionals that I wanted explained.

A further letdown: a Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America known to be undergoing an influx of blacks and Hispanics is assessed by an instrument that slights minorities; and a people's stance on public issues is assessed without mention of abortion. For some, these acknowledged weaknesses will loom too large to be excused.

Preoccupied as I am with this church's role in the public sector, it

is also hard to share the authors' sense that the denomination's social concern is inadequate. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency, a very far-reaching dynamic of the church, seems not to count at all. And what about the community services of local churches? Super-seding Dorcas, these efficient, professional outreaches deserve attention and approval.

Few books reach their central task so slowly. About 100 pages of material precede the above report of the empirical findings. Yet this is a virtue, too. They pack valuable information on the reversal of conservative Protestantism from involvement in society to withdrawal from society to engagement in selective aspects of state and national life; and valuable information also on the relationship of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to the U.S. government since the mid-19th century. Exciting research by George Marsden, Jonathan Butler, Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart laces this historical introduction.

Indeed, theoretical constructs undergird the book throughout, and constitute a major strength. The timing of this book's publication is another merit. We who have just endured a race for the White House, watched Global Mission become our church's top priority, listened to debates over national health insurance, and applauded the integration of the Adventist Church outside North America *cannot but* welcome, read, and use this book.

## Milton Murray's Dream

Reviewed by Loren Dickinson

Ronald A. Knott. *The Makings of a Philanthropic Fundraiser: The Instructive Example of Milton Murray*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Publishers, 1992. \$23.95, hardcover. 237 pages.

Milton Murray, the subject of this book, never himself aimed to write a book about what he does best—raise and give away money. Even less did he ever intend to have one written about him.

But his admirers thought differently. They've produced *The Makings of a Philanthropic Fundraiser: The Instructive Example of Milton Murray*.

Murray could have written it. The book's single dominant feature ends up being an array of verbatim quotes and Murray philosophy garnered and arranged by author Ronald Alan Knott. (Knott and Murray spent some six months together in early morning interviews to develop the substance of the book.)

Knott, with some considerable skill, blends Murray's views with more factual description of Murray's life, detailing a variety of family and personal influences Murray experi-

enced en route to raising millions for the church and other entities.

The book's most compelling point is not so much what Murray has done but what he is. One senses a man of intrepid style with the singular goal of raising and sharing money for good causes. Persistence and ethics may rank highest as Murray's greatest assets.

Murray offered Knott a rare and candid insight into the state of affairs at Loma Linda in the 1950s. Early in his career Murray worked to establish public relations at the former College of Medical Evangelists. He admits in the book to being both challenged and annoyed at LLU's reticence to see value in public relations and philanthropy. That has dramatically changed, probably in part due to Murray's early work there.

The book, published by Jossey-Bass, is not holy writ. Clear and fair-minded, but not holy writ. People who don't know Murray are not likely to buy it. Those who do may wish for something more than description. Interpretation, perhaps.

Still, it offers a picture of a significant church figure, setting out to be useful, and finding out that he succeeded to a measure greater than he would ever admit. That may be worth writing about.

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Loren Dickinson is chair of the communication department at Walla Walla College.



## From Heavenly Sanctuary To Earthly Synagogue

Recently you printed an article about Good News Unlimited with an interview with my father, Des Ford (*Spectrum*, Vol. 22, No. 1). I think I was the only outsider to sit in on the Glacier View Conference, which saw the Adventist Church strip my father of his ministerial credentials.

Many people have asked me my opinion of what happened. I can sum it up in a sentence. Adventism's best and brightest wailed and gnashed their teeth for a week over the question of whether Jesus moved from the holy to the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary in 1844. But on that silly question rests everything for the Adventist.

Only a minority of Adventists understand the heavenly sanctuary doctrine, but you must believe it or you're not really an Adventist. You're just another Christian who happens to eat an abundance of natural food prepared in as natural a way as possible.

Let me give you an analogy. (I've adapted it from one offered by the Jewish thinker Dennis Prager in a lecture entitled "Faith vs. Reason.") If you believe your car is the best car and the very best way to travel from Pacific Union College to Weimar, you are likely to be passionate about your Mercedes-Benz. But if you view your car as just another vehicle, you're not likely

to be passionate about your Ford. A car you believe in you will take care of and pass on to your children. But with just another Ford, you'll trade it in easily when you see something better come along.

In the past dozen years I've seen Adventists who retain their belief in the doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary retain their religion. And those Adventists who've become too sophisticated to believe in a last judgment have frequently traded in their faith for other, more attractive, less demanding vehicles to heaven.

Adventism's gospel revolution (the belief that the sacrifice of the divine Saviour did it all 2,000 years ago and that there's consequently nothing to fear from a judging God so long as one is in Christ) can be seen in a specifically Christian sense as another explosion of the religion's antinomian (good deeds don't count for salvation) core and in a general sense as just another human rebellion against a higher moral law (which traditional Adventism somewhat embodies).

And where do I stand on the movements of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary? I think it's all nonsense. I'm converting to Judaism.

Luke Ford  
Newcastle, California

*Spectrum readers respond by writing short notes, longer epistles—even poems—about sanctuaries, gays, odysseys, families, and standards.*

# Fellow Pilgrims Join Gladson's "Odyssey of Humility"

Dr. Gladson, in his article entitled "Convert to Scholar: An Odyssey in Humility" (*Spectrum*, Vol. 21, No. 5), shares with us his not-so-quiet despair. He is part of a lengthening list of those who share his opinions and write similar articles.

These past two decades have seen a multiplying of detractors. I have not always been quiet but I have listened to them and read their offerings. No one really points to a viable alternative other than the one many of us have chosen. We have lashed ourselves to the mast of the good ship Remnant People and prepared to ride out the storm. We feel the strength of the timbers beneath our feet. The ship is battered bow and hull and bids to take on water by and by. Professor Gladson cries out for us to prepare to man the boats, or perhaps to become nondenominational and survive in that manner; however, we are surely and rightly afraid of tempestuous and unknown seas. No one has yet shown us a truer chart or more reliable compass. If we are in grievous fundamental doctrinal error, then only the Holy Spirit can help us and he must do so quickly.

H. N. Sheffield  
Madera, California

Jerry Gladson's essay, "Convert to Scholar: An Odyssey in Humility" (*Spectrum*, Vol. 21, No. 5), brought to mind a poem I wrote when searching for a new concept of God after disillusionment with traditional Adventism.

## Resources

I, who question the existence of a "personal" God,  
Find myself in awe, wonder, thanksgiving,  
And praise to some higher force  
Available to those who open themselves  
To new experiences, and fresh insights.  
Who make an effort to live to the utmost  
A useful, effective life in and for themselves  
And those within their circle of influence.

Some power which recognizes in a human being  
A longing for the ultimate in true happiness;  
Which makes unimaginable resources available  
To those who are seeking truth  
By a realistic approach, without guile or subterfuge.

These resources become available,  
Not in answer to prayer,  
For we are benefited in ways that we could not  
Know to pray for or desire,  
Perhaps not even recognize at the time—  
In fact, praying for specifics  
Would limit the infinite miracles available.

It might be a book, or a letter, a poem or a song,  
The thoughts of a friend or an unknown scholar,  
Or even a fresh insight into familiar material;  
A coincidence of time,  
Of all things coming together  
In an inexplicable harmony.

Persons may unknowingly become the channel  
Through which such miracles occur—  
Being in the right place at exactly the right time,  
With the specific solution to another's problem  
Without any knowledge that a problem exists.

I hesitate to say there is a God  
Carrying on this function moment by moment,  
Because it is so contrary to what I believed  
About a personal God who waits for us to ask  
And manipulates lives without permission.

It is more understandable to me  
To believe that this capability is inherent in humans,  
Making available the resources of the universe  
Through an awareness of the intricate complexities  
Of the human mind—  
Its emotions, feelings and intuitions;  
To believe that we were created in the image  
of a power beyond comprehension.

Clela Waddell  
San Diego, California

## Daniel and Revolution?

While keeping in mind that Adventism, from its founders, has a heritage that places high value on searching the Scriptures, we were awestruck by the article in *Spectrum*, Vol. 21, No. 1, on the massacre of Yugoslavia—shredding families and neighbors. During the agony, crying and dying, a pastor in Zagreb is conducting Daniel and Revelation

seminars five nights a week (not to criticize him, please).

However, do we Adventists find it easier to search the Scriptures, sometimes, than to become involved in searching out how to meet our neighbors' needs?

Robert Lee Marsh  
Glendale, California

## The Family Revisited

Not long ago you published a special section on the family, including some reminiscences of a father (*Spectrum*, Vol. 22, No. 2). It reminded me of my early years in Boston.

My memories of my father are wrapped in Sunday doubleheaders at Fenway Park, with picnic baskets of food—carefully prepared by my mother—sunny skies and grass. Real grass. And, of course, Ted Williams.

My father was a frugal man, thus we always sat in the bleachers (back in 1946, \$1.50 would seat four: 75 cents for my father, and 25 cents each for my two brothers and me). I never minded sitting in the bleachers. Hunched over the first row railing, I could peer down at Dom DiMaggio, and, over in left field, not far away, was my idol, Williams, the greatest hitter ever.

My father died back in 1967, his life cut short by an auto accident. At first, his injuries were not seen as life threatening. Later he was taken into surgery and died before I could say good-bye. In the ensuing years, I have lost out on a lot of precious things: hundreds of games of Scrabble, countless rounds of golf, and, most importantly, endless discussions about baseball.

When my father talked about baseball, such names as Cobb, Gehrig, Ruth, Speaker, and *Walter Johnson* would invariably sneak into the conversation. For some reason, my father gave special billing to *Johnson*, perhaps because my father loved an underdog, and *Johnson* pitched for the hapless Washington Senators, perennial doormats of the American League. My father's attitude, I'm sure, explains why I have a special affection for the Chicago Cubs.

Growing up in Boston with too much time on my hands, I took on some questionable character traits. My brand of fraud took two major forms. The first of these had to do with bumming quarters on Boston Commons. The second bit of chicanery took place at Greater Boston Academy. On select days, when the Sox were playing an afternoon game, I would lay my head on my desk and feign a headache. It generally took about two hours before my teacher, Mr. Hammond as I recall, directed me to go home. Once safely out of sight of the school, I would run the mile and a half to Fenway. There, outside the ballpark on the street, I would spend the next three hours trying to shag a foul ball . . .

and waiting for Williams to exit the park. Game after game I waited, and game after game I failed to find the exit he used. And, of course, I also failed to get his autograph . . . back then.

My father never would have approved of paying for a player's autograph, but he did approve of the way I eventually got Williams' signature on a baseball. Back in 1960, when the Sox and the Minneapolis Millers met in an exhibition game at Met Stadium, I used my college press card to gain entry to the playing field. After circling Williams a number of times, I moved closer and listened to him respond to real reporters. I even mustered enough courage to ask him to pose with me for a picture, and he agreed. But that wasn't my biggest coup. On impulse, as the game was about to begin, I marched into the Sox dugout and sat down . . . next to Williams. And there, for six glorious innings, all under the watchful eyes of the usher (who, I suspect, thought I was a Boston writer), I revelled and listened to each and every word Williams said.

My wife and I took a whirlwind tour of New England a few year ago. As we drove into Boston the night before our flight back to Minneapolis, we "suddenly" found ourselves at Fenway Park. The Sox were off to Oakland for the American League play-offs. Somehow we found an entrance, and an attendant guided us to the grandstand area behind first base. It was just after dusk and a heavy fog had enveloped the park. Only a few lights were on, presenting an eerie picture. Soon another couple joined us. For about five to 10 minutes, the attendant shared some of Fenway's history before hinting that it was time to go. As we were leaving, I heard the other woman remark, "Why would anyone want to visit an empty park?" I glanced at her companion and he looked my way. I believe he was

thinking what I was thinking: there are some things in life you can't explain to others.

I'm not a preacher (my two children might beg to differ), thus I claim no right to moralize. But please allow me just one "ought" or "should," founded on 25 years of working with children and parents: children grow up in a hurry, and parents need to relish each precious moment.

If you are a father who has lost a step or two in your relationship with your children, I'd suggest the ballpark. If you don't have much money, sit in center field. True, it's far from home plate and much of the

action, but that can turn out to be a plus—you'll have more time to talk to each other. And, if it's cold out and you have need of an overcoat, perhaps you can smuggle in some home-prepared food.

And, just for teachers of elementary school students: see that kid, third row back, last seat on the right? The one with his head on the desk? Before you send him home, be sure you check the morning paper. If your local baseball team is playing an afternoon game, forget it! The kid's faking it.

Len Colson  
Plymouth, Minnesota

## Friends of Gay Adventists' Families

You recently published a special section on the Adventist family (*Spectrum*, Vol. 22, No. 2). Approximately eight years ago, my husband, Jon, and I found ourselves involved with the parents of gay children. Our first experience was when we got to know a couple from New Westminster whose son had AIDS. Their son did not tell his parents that he was gay until he contracted the disease.

Another experience came just after Christmas when we were involved with helping two Christian families deal with the guilt, anger, and hurt when their gay sons committed suicide. They were all alone and felt they could not tell their pastor or friends that they had a gay son who just committed suicide.

We soon realized that we had much to learn about homosexuality. Our immediate response was to love and respect the families involved. However, we found ourselves in the midst of confusion. We are still learning about the hurt in

the gay community and their parents' concern.

Since a homosexual orientation can be hidden indefinitely, there are far more people affected by homosexuality than many Christians think. Most experts feel that approximately 10 percent of the population is homosexual. Yes, it is likely 10 percent of the Seventh-day Adventist population is gay.

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*Letters to the editor are always welcome, and will be considered for publication unless otherwise specified. Direct editorial correspondence to Spectrum, P.O. Box 5330, Takoma Park, MD 20913 (U.S.A.). The editors reserve the right to condense letters prior to publication.*

Most of these homosexuals hide their sexual orientation. Outwardly, they pretend they are straight. Inwardly, they feel rejection, hurt, and shame. In addition to the pain of the children, there is the pain of their parents, many of whom either know or suspect the homosexuality of their children. Since many homosexuals marry to avoid suspicion, we can also add to this list the pain of their spouses. Add to that the number of brothers, sisters, children, uncles, aunts, and friends who may suspect the secret but say nothing. Even if homosexuals are a hidden, and often forgotten, minority in our churches, the issue still directly concerns us all.

Our church is built on the teaching of Christ and his unconditional love of people. He taught us to "love your neighbor as yourself" (NIV). The homosexual is our neighbor. We need to start to care for this group of people who are hurting: the homosexuals, their families, and their friends.

Jon and I have just recently started a confidential support group within the Adventist Church for parents, relatives, and friends of homosexuals. The new group is called SIMON/CARRYING THE CROSS WITH ADVENTIST PARENTS AND FRIENDS OF LESBIANS AND GAYS. We would like to talk and write to other parents and friends who are struggling with this issue. We are not planning support groups but will share experiences on a person-to-person basis. In addition to providing this peer support we will be trying to give support to the new outreach network ARTA (Adventists Responding to AIDS). Anyone interested in information please contact us: Jon and Mabel Norcross, 313-5550 Cambie Street; Vancouver, BC Canada V5Z 3A2; or telephone (604) 325-1400.

Mabel Norcross  
Vancouver, Canada

## Life-style Standards Must Be Reasonable, Not Traditional

As I read Ernest Burse's and Greg Schneider's articles (*Spec-trum*, Vol. 22, No. 2), I was struck with both authors' labored assumption that all church standards must be rationalized on the basis of strict theological consistency. In reality, there are many legitimate models by which to measure and rationalize church standards.

The standards of healthful diet; exercise; abstaining from the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco; sexual monogamy; as well as those of marital fidelity and moderation in all things are, today, medically recognized as health restoring and disease-preventing practices. It would seem that the research model provides a more logical defense of such church standards than does strict consistency with theological ideals.

It stretches the imagination to rationalize abstaining from the use of meat and pork on the basis of their social symbolism. It also seems a little out of touch to describe such a choice on the basis of boundary setting and "entry level" behaviors in establishing early group identity. To substitute sociological theory for the accumulated medical evidence of the health-promoting and disease-preventing aspects of the traditional Adventist diet seems to ignore the role of research in preserving health.

When counseling young substance abusers, for example, one is constrained to keep the conversations in the here and now. It is typically more helpful to direct the young person's attention to the current state of his liver than to the future state of his soul.

To beg the question of the elimination of pork on the basis of social symbolism, group identity, and theological consistency seems to ignore,

to some extent at least, known reality. The banning of jewelry as a church standard is a little harder to defend on the basis of the research model, since it appears to be a medically benign form of self-expression in most instances. Unfortunately, the church has also placed itself in the difficult position of defending an arbitrary standard differently on the basis of geographic regions. The wearing of a wedding band cannot be acceptable in Europe and unacceptable in America in these days of global motility. An apparent inconsistency with changing times in the application of church standards leads to the labored efforts we have seen to defend a policy that may not be defensible.

Young adult Adventists see through the thin veil of boundary setting as a frail attempt by the church to arbitrarily control their behavior in areas that may best be left to the judgment of the individual. It is not easy for Adventist parents of another generation to admit that the youth may have a legitimate point.

A similar example of the boundary-setting rationale involved the advent of the video cassette recorder. When the movie theater—a building traditionally outside Adventist boundaries—moved into our living rooms, the boundary-setting rationale collapsed. Young people purchased video recorders in record numbers, but had no basis for evaluating and choosing what to watch. Parents had not explained sufficiently the effects of visual and auditory images on value development, or the emotional impact of violence on the limbic centers of the brain. It is little wonder that the

educated young adults in the church balk at arbitrary boundary setting.

There is a report that native Indian hunters have been known to stretch simple cloth fences around the natural habitat of the Bengal tiger. The report describes the hunters then proceeding to set fire to the grasses enclosed by the cloth boundary. The tiger, believing that he cannot penetrate the boundary, permits himself to be captured when he might easily have escaped.

We have drawn many arbitrary boundaries around the life of the church. Our young people, unlike the tiger, push against these boundaries and find them to be made of cloth—filled with holes and inconsistency and patched over by arguments that do not stand the test of time or technology. They break through these boundaries into a world for which they are ill prepared because they have been lovingly sheltered and bonded to a particular group identity rather than given principles on which to evaluate their actions. The sophistication of today's Adventist youth demands more relevant defenses for our church standards.

A final point addressed in both articles is the sacred autonomy of the individual in choosing how to relate to the Lord and how to work out his or her own salvation. Arbitrary church standards may well defeat the very purposes of the church in drawing others to Christ.

Bruno Bettelheim, the child therapist at the University of Chicago, noted a profound truth with regard to boundary setting for young people. It was his belief that it took no brains at all to put bars on all of the windows. Nor, he believed, did it take any brains to take the bars off of all the windows. What took the brains, he explained, was deciding which windows to put the bars on and which windows to take the bars off of in providing safety for children. It seems as if the church has

occasionally engaged in the practice of putting bars on all of the windows, with little regard for their need. Have we not also neglected to consider the opportunity to make

little choices in order to learn how to make the great choices of life?

Lillian Moore  
Glendale, California

## Our Standards Say Reform

Basaninyenzi's letter and Bursey's and Schneider's articles (*Spectrum*, Vol. 22, No. 2), revolved around Adventist standards and semiotics. While reading them I felt there was something missing. As Schneider demonstrated at the end of his article, semiotics is not a sufficient rationale for the standards. Not even the semiotics of community belonging is sufficient.

Standards are one issue, and community and its semiotics are another. Adventist standards are not based on the semiotics of community but on something more basic—something we call law. This law was established by people with a vision of reform. While the law is not the vision, it serves as a foundation for those with the vision.

To understand the nature of the community that holds these standards, we must recognize that the Adventist denomination or movement is not the church, but rather a portion thereof. We proclaim this institutionally, in the law of our denomination. Our standards are, and should be, those of a reform movement, but they do not define membership in the community of God's family.

Furthermore, church standards are, by necessity, external laws. External laws are never perfect, and, when pressed, inevitably produce uneven control over inappropriate behavior (as demonstrated by Schneider's example of expensive automobiles and cheap jewelry). We cannot monitor lust, greed, and hatred the way we monitor adultery, theft, and violence. Although

Jesus gave our unmonitored thoughts and motives equal weight with monitorable crimes (see Matthew 5-7), he later contrasted the legalistic tithing of mint, anise, and cumin with great abstractions like justice, mercy, and faith (see Matthew 23:23, 24). Still, he said that the tithing of mint, anise, and cumin should not be neglected. Tithing cumin and straining out gnats still have their place, even in New Testament ethics—even when consistency cannot be regulated in a practical manner.

If we see the jewelry issue primarily in terms of money, jewelry may seem a gnat. But we often forget to bring non-monetary values into the jewelry issue. Traditionally the jewelry question revolves around the twin issues of personal decoration and utility. Often we treat utility as an excuse for jewelry—in the case of a flashy watch, for instance. But utility, as well as price and good looks, plays a vital part in the value of a watch. Utility isn't everything, but it does exercise a restraining influence and preserves some value statement distinct from decoration.

Jewelry that is only jewelry has no utility. A watch may say about its owner, "I like to be decorated," but it also says, "I need to know what time it is; I have commitments." A wedding ring says, "I am married." Jewelry just says, "I like to be decorated."

There is jewelry that is not flashy and that is worn as a concession to the culture, but Adventists who want to wear jewelry are usually not interested in that kind of jewelry.

Traditionally, jewelry makes no

valuable statement about its wearer. Within a community that frowns on jewelry the wearing of jewelry may make a statement about the wearer's relationship to the community, but the "I like to be decorated" statement is highlighted and may indicate problems of self-image in the wearer (especially among teens). The jewelry standard does have a significant semiotic element, but the semiotics of belonging to a community is a relatively minor component.

The jewelry issue may not be our most important standard, but it does draw the line somewhere, and it is foolish not to. Our denominational standards are part of our denomination's reform program, standards we share with many other reform-minded denominations. Something about our standards says "reform." We liken ourselves to Elijah and John the Baptist (the second Elijah), reform-minded prophets who proclaimed their messages in rough clothing and lived in the wilderness. Elijah and John had no use for frippery. Though they did not require others to live as they did, they did require basic reforms.

Whether we are Elijahs or just his followers, one important part of our reform movement is an intolerance of frippery. The proliferation of frippery in the lives of our members, whether it be jewelry or expensive cars and watches, is directly tied to a loss of vision.

Our standards were established by people with this reform vision. The standards are not the vision and do not create the vision, but they do put limits on those who associate themselves with the vision. As Bursey pointed out, the standards are the threshold, not the center of the vision.

P.S. How soon do you think we can dump the neckties?

James E. Miller  
Madison, Wisconsin

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