

Readers comment on "The Great Billboard Controversy," Waco, Loma Linda, the environment, and Islam.

Desmond Ford on the Danger of SDAs Joining the Anti-Christ

Congratulations to Dr. Frank Knittel for writing "The Great Billboard Controversy," and to *Spectrum* for publishing it (Vol. 23, No. 1). There is much more to this "can of worms" than is readily apparent.

The famous Merikay McLeod Silver case during the 1970s forced Pacific Press into a legal suit with the federal government. R. H. Pierson, the General Conference president at that time, gave a sworn affidavit (November 30, 1974), that used terms and ideas some considered to be papal.

Related to this is a footnote to the "Reply Brief for Defendants in Support of Their Motion for Summary Judgment" (March 3, 1975).

Although it is true that there was a period in the life of the Seventh-day Adventist Church when the denomination took a distinctly anti-Roman Catholic viewpoint, and the term "hierarchy" was used in a pejorative sense to refer to the papal form of church governance, that attitude on the church's part was nothing more than a manifestation of widespread antipapery among conservative Protestant denominations in the early part of this century and

the latter part of the last, and which has been consigned to the historical trash heap so far as the Seventh-day Adventist Church is concerned (Merikay McLeod lawsuit: Docket entry #84 EEOC vs. PPPA, C-74 20250CBR. Feb. 6, 1976).

This statement came from, and was approved by, the General Conference.

The July 29, 1990, *Arkansas Catholic* diocesan newspaper told of an anti-Catholic tract being circulated by SDAs called, "United States in Prophecy." This tract called Catholicism a pagan religion and referred to the pope as a beast. The paper reported the SDA response to complaints:

Herbert Ford, news director for the denomination, told the *Indianapolis Star* that Adventists who want to cling to the church's historic anti-Catholic beliefs represent only about 1,000 of the church's 750,000 North American members. . . .

Fred Allaback, an independent evangelist from Mount Vernon, OH, said that the "Prophecy in the United States," [sic] is a condensation

of "The Greater Controversy," [sic] written by 19th-century Seventh-day Adventist founder and prophet, Ellen G. White.

White's book, Allaback said, warned against the evils of the papacy and feared that Catholicism would become the official religion of the U.S. (*Arkansas Catholic*, July 29, 1990, p. 8).

Fourteen years ago, I wrote a two-volume commentary on Revelation, entitled *Crisis!* I pointed out that "Antichrist" is the New Testament term for all those who oppose Christ and his people by force or subtlety. In expounding Revelation 13, I suggested that the symbolism of this chapter reflects the liaison between Pontius Pilate and Jewish religionists of the first century. This symbolism also points to an eschatological church-state union similar in principle to that which occurred in the Middle Ages.

Classical commentators have long recognized in the two chief "beast" symbols of Revelation 13 allusions to threatening government and apostate Christianity. These two beasts work together to persecute God's people. Therefore, *we have no right to apply the label "Antichrist" to Catholicism unless it is linked with the state for the purpose of persecuting dissenters.*

I believe this was Ellen White's own mature view when she warned us that in the future, "we may have less to say in some lines, in regard to the Roman power and the Papacy" (*Evangelism*, p. 577).

Years earlier, she wrote:

There should be no going out of the way to attack other denominations. . . . There is danger that our ministers will say too much against the Catholics and provoke

against themselves the strongest prejudices of that church (*ibid.*, p. 574).

She would have heartily condemned the billboards under discussion—the work of David Mould and his sympathizers.

In Scripture, Antichrist is a genus, not any single power. The five uses of the term in the first and second epistles of John make this quite clear (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3, 7). To apply it today to any *single* power is to miss the import of Scripture. Furthermore, "The doctrine that God has committed to the church the right to control the conscience, and to define and punish heresy, is one of the most deeply rooted of papal errors" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 293). If our own church stoops to the defining and

the punishing of heresy, it also enters the ranks of Antichrist.

Desmond Ford
Auburn, California

P.S. By way of a general statement about *The Great Controversy*: it was a splendid tract for the times and enshrined principles of enduring worth. However, its exegesis at several points is now recognized by Adventist scholars as erroneous. The interpretations of Daniel chapters 7, 8, and 9 in *The Great Controversy* are fallacious, especially in the matter of prophetic dating. Similarly, some of its New Testament interpretations (including Matthew 25:1-13; Revelation 9:15; and Revelation 13), are mistaken. Ellen G. White did not originate these errors, but only adopted them.

Blaming SDAs for the Billboards

W as it serendipity, or just pure happenstance, that *Spectrum* included, at the end of its "apocalypse" issue, Knittle's wonderfully ironic piece on "The Great Billboard Controversy"?

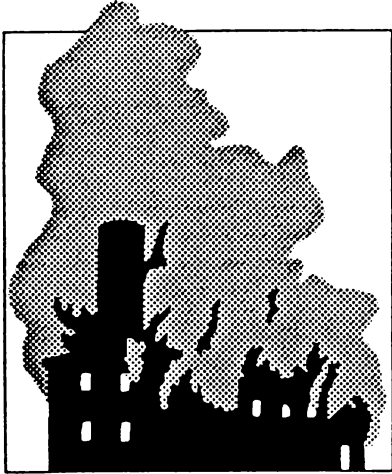
In Knittle's portrayal we glimpse our poor church caught on the horns of self-made dilemma. For a century, or more, we have emphasized apocalypse, expectant persecution and self-elected remnancy, etc., as "present truth," our very own doctrinal road to heaven, while deemphasizing the gospel. Now we are upset. Some followers have gotten the "real message" and want to run with it. The vignette of the General Conference explaining away the David Mould "controversy," while promoting *Day of the Dragon*, is both painful and a little ludicrous. We might laugh if we could only be bystanders. But, unfortunately, we can't. We are not bystanders. We are members of the supporting cast.

As I write these words the papal weekend in Denver is drawing to a close. I am relieved that, so far as I know, there have been no media shots of the controversial Mould billboards—and thankfully no rifle shots from a demented zealot or nut with close or remote Adventist connections. "Oh, but that just couldn't happen to us. Could it?" Oh, yeah? Tell it to Waco. In our zeal to confront, we forget that inflammatory words and methods may ignite unintended and very undesirable fires among "us" as well as among "them."

The possible connections and causes, for the Wacos and the Orlando-Denvers, etc., may not be so far apart as we would like to think. Maybe it was a good idea to get them all together in the same issue. Maybe, just maybe, we should be thinking about them all together.

Frank R. Lemon
Beaumont, California

Scriven's "Destructive Passion" Makes Him a Fundamentalist, Too



I had a number of problems with Charles Scriven's tirade against fundamentalism (Vol. 23, No. 1). These problems had nothing to do with Scriven's facts or theses, and everything to do with his attitude.

I have my own doubts about fundamentalism as an expression of Christianity. Mostly, they're prompted by attempts to implement it politically by the likes of Pat Robertson. There is an anti-modernist conservatism inherent in fundamentalism that can be considered apart from questions of orthodox Christianity. Scriven doesn't make this distinction as he lashes out at fundamentalism root and branch.

Scriven states that he had been cautioned against "an explicit reproach" of fundamentalism because it might be misinterpreted and thus end up being a rhetorical mistake. It would be more accurate to say that, by mounting an anti-fundamentalist hobbyhorse, Scriven has made a *tactical* mistake. *How* something was being said has gotten in the way of *what* was being said. This issue is at the heart of *The Great Controversy* billboards affair (c.f., "The Great

Billboard Controversy," Vol. 23, No. 1).

I can appreciate the point Scriven was trying to make—that "you walk a path of bravery and risk, all along acknowledging the imperfection of your knowledge and even of your prophecy . . ." How many times have I read a passage of Scripture 50 times, only to have it finally sink in on the 51st reading?

Yet even if fundamentalists see things differently, insisting on a one-size-fits-all outlook in interpreting Scripture, that's no reason to think that launching into a rav-

ing screed is the best answer. I mean, "fundamentalism is a dread disease, a demonic perversion, a groundwork for madness"? Does it really help if, in the course of arguing against fundamentalist passions, one comes off sounding like an ayatollah?

This, in fact, is the most striking irony of Scriven's piece. He states, on the one hand, that "fundamentalism . . . leads . . . to destructive passion." Yet what was the impression he left after his piece was over? That this was a man consumed with a destructive passion. It just goes to prove the old saying that you should choose your enemies well, for you'll become like them in the end.

Daniel Drazen
Berrien Springs, Michigan

Fundamentalism ≠ Koresh

As I read Charles Scriven's comments in "Fundamentalism Is a Disease, A Demonic Perversion" I began to wonder if my understanding of "fundamentalism" was at fault. So I got out my *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* to check my recollection. The first definition offered is, "The belief in the Bible as factual historical record and incontrovertible prophecy, including such doctrines as Genesis, the Virgin Birth, the Second Advent, Armageddon." My understanding of these "doc-

trines" has been revised over the years; however, I am still a fundamentalist as far as the dictionary is concerned.

May I paraphrase a statement found in the article following Scriven's by Beatrice Neall ("Apocalyptic—Who Needs It?"). "But apocalyptic [fundamentalism] should not be rejected because enthusiasts have abused it. Abuse does not cancel use."

Neil Rowland
Lincoln, Nebraska

No to "Orgies of Revisionism"

For a century and a half, thousands of Adventists have immersed themselves in the apocalyptic portions of Scripture. Because one lunatic persuades a handful of others to bring on the apocalypse

with AK-47s, what logical basis can possibly be contrived for the orgy of prophetic revisionism suggested by *Spectrum's* authors?

Perhaps Charles Scriven has forgotten that Jim Jones was not at

all a fundamentalist, but a social-gospel liberal. Jones actively supported civil rights and similar crusades for social justice. Is it fair to question the rightness of these causes because of the paranoia, sexual manipulation, and violence that culminated in Jonestown?

Scriven and Warren approach breathtaking levels of absurdity when they claim that belief in absolute truth was responsible for the Waco debacle. Interest in Bible prophecy may indeed have been

Koresh's chief drawing card, much as social causes were for the followers of Jim Jones. But the evidence is clear that the Branch Davidians, like the People's Temple, were governed by charisma, hormones, and maniacal whims of one man, not by an objective standard of right and wrong to which all—including the group's leaders—were subject.

Kevin D. Paulson
Redlands, California

sition I hold precisely on scriptural grounds. One writer does object to my reading of Isaiah 48, but the objection is inexplicable in view of that chapter's insistent call to repentance and renewal.

Mr. Drazen agrees with the substance, but not the tone, of my remarks. His message is: "Lighten up." I am surprised at this when the occasion for what I wrote was . . . Waco!

My argument with the fundamentalist attitude is that insecurity suffused with arrogance and self-satisfaction feeds violence, whether psychological or physical. How could someone "appreciate" this precisely in Waco's shadow, and yet be incensed by passionate expression of the point? This is like asking a sportscaster to report home runs in a measured voice—except that in this case the offense wounds not only taste but also principle.

Let me say that if conceit is constructive, I will lighten up. If barbarous death, or even lesser forms of human hurt, are matters of indifference, I will lighten up. But not otherwise.

Charles Scriven
Takoma Park, Maryland

Koresh Endorsed Change, Too

I am not surprised that so many SDA leaders are asking why so many members of the SDA Church followed David Koresh. The answer is simple. They accepted the teaching of leaders who, like Charles Scriven (Vol. 23, No. 1), teach that "God wants us always to remain open to changes and renewal." The followers of David Koresh carried out these teachings very well. They prepared themselves for change and when David Koresh came along and offered them change, they changed.

Charles Scriven uses Isaiah 48:6

to show that "God wants us always to remain open to change and renewal." I read this text, I even used a Roman Catholic version of the Bible, but I could not see anywhere a call for change. Where does he get this idea that verse 6 talks about being open to change? As we read the Old Testament, we can see very clearly that God asks his people to keep his commandments and not change their ways for the ways of the heathens.

John Sanocki
Frenchtown, New Jersey

. . . and the Scriven Riposte

The term *fundamentalism* sprang up with the emergence, early in the 20th century, of evangelical Protestant reaction against "modernism." Although the modern outlook deeply deserves to be reacted against, fundamentalism came, in part through the sins of its defenders, to be associated with, and indeed to betoken, arrogance and self-satisfaction. That is why the newspapers now regularly use the term outside the Christian context, as in the phrase "Islamic fundamentalism."

The fundamentalist attitude—of arrogance and self-satisfaction—is what I call a dread disease, a demonic perversion and a groundwork for madness. We each feel insecure under challenge, but no iron law requires us to cope with insecurity by self-deceptive means: grace is sufficient to burn away panicky conceit and to infuse conviction with humility.

I have not been dissuaded from any of this by correspondents who write as believers yet invoke no scriptural arguments against a po-

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.

Jettison Koresh, Not Eschatology

Is there something in history which might give us a long-distance perspective on the Davidians of Waco? One group who traveled this painful road before us is the Anabaptists who live on in the Mennonites and Amish. The Anabaptists were that part of the 16th-century Reformation that closest resembles Adventism; they are our true Reformation roots. When the Waco events hit the news, the European media were not careful to distinguish the Davidians from European Anabaptists.

The Anabaptists were radical reformers, and their radical emphasis was on the Bible as their source of authority. Thus they rejected the Mass, practiced adult baptism, and emphasized discipleship. Pacifism and separation of church and state were also among their chief characteristics, and their early history was marked by eschatology and apocalyptic speculation. They also had their prophets. Melchoir Hoffman was a prophet who evangelized extensively in Strasbourg, Holland, and low Germany. Hoffman thought that the New Jerusalem would be established in Strasbourg. Though he remained a pacifist until his death, some of his followers who took up the prophetic mantle shed their pacifism. They desired to establish the kingdom in Holland and low Germany. One group took over the city of Munster and among their innovations was polygamy, interestingly enough. Another group took over the Old Cloister in Holland, and yet others raised riots in Amsterdam. The state churches responded quickly. Munster and the Old Cloister were taken by force, the apocalyptic residents slain, and the persecution of all Anabaptists throughout Europe intensified—if that was possible.

Not all Anabaptists of the low countries joined with the militants. Dietrich Philips and Menno Simons reorganized those Anabaptists who rejected the prophets and held to Anabaptist tenets more like their fellows in Switzerland, Austria, and south Germany. At every opportunity, they distanced themselves from the militant Anabaptists and soon even their fiercest opponents recognized the differences between the pacifist and militant Anabaptists. Menno and his followers were so successful that when Holland gained its independence from Spain, the Calvinist government was largely tolerant of its Anabaptist population.

The Mennonites, along with the other Anabaptists, paid a price for their new image. They jettisoned the eschatology and apocalypticism that once characterized Anabaptism. They distanced themselves so thoroughly from this New Testament doctrine that when Menno wrote a treatise on the resurrection, it was about

resurrection as an allegory of conversion. There was nothing there that Paul would recognize as his “blessed hope.”

In modern Anabaptist treatments of the Christian faith, eschatology tends to be relegated to an appendix or a single statement that is briefly and superficially explained. I have two 20th-century Mennonite books on doctrine that do not give eschatology its own chapter. Munster occurred four-and-a-half centuries ago and Anabaptists are still living it down.

Events like the Davidian debacle could have a similar effect on Adventism. Some would prefer we dropped or toned down our eschatology and placed it far in the background. If, however, we retain our radical commitment to the Bible, we need to understand we retain the risk of repeats of Waco and Munster. As much as I honor our legacy from the Mennonites, I cannot accept their solution to the image problem. This is part of the risk of radical commitment to our faith.

James E. Miller
Madison, Wisconsin

FBI Demonized the Davidians

First, your very headline is provocatively prejudicial. No Davidian ever called it “Ranch Apocalypse.” That was a creation of the media, and is part of the demonization of Koresh and the Davidians. You can’t begin to understand what happened when you start from that frame of reference. They called it Mt. Carmel—and if you had just used that, or the all-encompassing “Waco,” you would’ve gotten closer to a setting for the truth.

Next, your first writer says, “apparently self-set conflagration.”

The first word may be a disqualifier, but when the rest is accepted as fact by 80 percent of the public, this goes too far. No one knows for sure how the fire started. But since the FBI told four stories in the first few hours, and the Davidians told only one—and it is consistent with what we all saw—I will tend to believe them. So you want to tell me about the “experts” who said so? Did anyone tell you that the team leader wrote the text and taught courses in fire analysis for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF)? That

another one had a wife who was a secretary in the Houston ATF office? And the third had done work for the ATF before? Hardly an unprejudiced group of "experts," in my mind.

The caption for the picture on page 36 leaves something unsaid. That is essentially the way it was reported—but not what the little girl really said when I saw her interviewed on TV, as she drew the picture. She was asked what she was drawing and she said, "holes from the bullets," as she jammed the pencil onto the roof time after time. That puts a totally different light on it. You may remember that when the lawyer (Dick DeGuerin) was still being allowed into the compound, he reported holes in the overhead from bullets fired from the helicopters. That is what the kid was talking about.

Finally, we were all raised on the same prophecy stuff that Koresh carried to the end. Let me ask you: What does the SDA story tell you to do when you "flee to the mountains"? One hundred years ago, you might find isolation—a place to hide. Just what are you going to do in an age where they have satellites that can see tennis balls, airborne heat detectors that can tell where you laid down hours earlier, where we have instant communication—and when the government uses tanks, helicopter gunships, armored men, and machine guns on its own citizens as first resort? Koresh was smart enough to realize this. So he decided that the next logical step was to be armed to defend his camp.

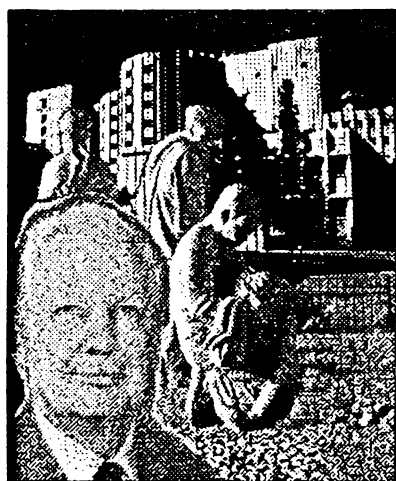
Bob Patchin
Villa Park, California

fection.

Even in hindsight, there are no simple answers. The issues are complex and some have a long and turbulent history. The traditional rivalry between departments of internal medicine and surgery at medical schools is also present at Loma Linda University, and the internal medicine faculty consider that the surgeons have been dominant for most of the past 30 years. Dr. Hinshaw and Dr. Shankel have very different administrative styles. As Bonnie Dwyer reported, Dr. Hinshaw has a remarkable foresight and acts decisively to make even unpopular changes. Dr. Shankel is by temperament a consensus builder who sought to protect the Department of Internal Medicine from the impact of changes.

Considering the complexity of the issues it is not surprising that, at times, the actions taken were imperfect. But the university administration's actions were not sinister. I hope that the following observations will provide a useful perspective to the discussion:

Grievance Committee Member Says LLU Action Not Sinister



The Loma Linda issue of *Spectrum* (Vol. 22, No. 3) was insightful and refreshingly positive. I suspect that documentation of a dispute between faculty in the Department of Internal Medicine and

the administration will generate the most discussion. The events surrounding the departure of Drs. Shankel, Grames, and Williams from the School of Medicine are among the most painful in the 17 years that I have been a faculty member in the School of Medicine. These are colleagues who have served with distinction. Dr. Shankel, in particular, epitomized for students and physicians the Christian physician that they sought to emulate. I was a member of a grievance committee and of the School of Medicine Executive Committee when the charges and counter charges were examined and recommendations were made that influenced the course of events. I have often asked myself what could have averted the conflict and disaf-

1. The university dismissal policy has been faulted because the grievance hearing was post-dismissal. The policy had recently been revised after extensive and public discussions with the faculty. The faculty were accustomed to a post-dismissal grievance hearing and no one, including the aggrieved faculty members, had publicly proposed changing to a pre-dismissal hearing. After the dismissals, when Dr. Shankel and the AAUP raised the issue, the merits of a pre-dismissal hearing were then obvious and the faculty forum promptly initiated the process to revise the dismissal policy. Dr. Behrens has taken administrative action to ensure that

no one will be dismissed without a formal pre-dismissal hearing while the policy is being revised.

2. Although there was no formal pre-dismissal hearing, the dismissal of Dr. Shankel came after extensive discussion and attempts to solve the problems. I was a member of a grievance committee that heard evidence presented by Dr. Neal Bricker, with the assistance of Dr. Shankel, relating to the dispute between Dr. Bricker and his former research colleague, Dr. Wechter. This dispute was central to the distrust between Dr. Shankel and School of Medicine administration. Despite some concerns about possible bias, and some tense moments during the hearings, the objectivity of the committee deliberations was exemplary. University administration may have been surprised by our recommendations. I still regret that there were not more members from the Department of Internal Medicine on the committee to witness that process. The discussions by the executive committee were vigorous, and the the dismissals were supported only after a strong consensus developed that reconciliation was no longer possible.

3. The school of medicine and the university adhered to university policy. With the university on academic probation and facing an imminent site visit from the accrediting organization, the president, the School of Medicine executive committee, and the board of trustees knew that the accreditation team would investigate the dismissals to determine whether the current policy had been followed. As reported in *Spectrum*, the WASC commit-

tees concurred that the policy had been followed.

4. A conflict of this complexity would not be resolved by reconstructing a "pre-dismissal" hearing for the aggrieved faculty members, as they have requested. The polarization is, unfortunately, too great. Even where there is agreement about the issues and events, people have drawn very different conclusions from the same facts. Some of these conclusions assign motives to the actions of others and various parties hold to their conclusions passionately. An extensive hearing before the Clinical Sciences Faculty Advisory Coun-

cil failed to satisfy the aggrieved faculty members and members of that body are skeptical that any other hearing will be accepted unless the aggrieved faculty members are exonerated.

The healthcare industry and university medical centers, in particular, are currently undergoing unprecedented changes in which we can only estimate the wisest course of action. It is a stressful time for management and faculty alike. Our best strategy is to cool the rhetoric on both sides and to allow time for healing.

Barry Taylor
Loma Linda, California

Environmental Stewardship Celebrated in Hymns



Concerns for the ecological balance (*Spectrum*, Vol. 22, No. 5) have not been totally forgotten by traditional hymn writers. The productivity of nature is well expressed in a hymn by Matthias Claudius: "We plow the fields and scatter / The good seed on the land / But it is fed and watered / By God's almighty hand" (561).¹

Hymnals are almost replete with references to the beauty of God's creation: "This is my father's world; / I rest me in the thought / Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas / His hand the wonders wrought" (92). Another example is the favorite by

Joseph Addison, "The Spacious Firmament" (96), sung to music arranged from F. J. Haydn's *Creation*.

The wonders of the universe are expressed in Albert Bayly's hymn "Lord of the boundless curves of space / And time's deep mystery, / To Your creative might we trace / All nature's energy" (97).

Most hymn writers, however, have ignored the problems relating to environmental stewardship. But contemporary hymnists are now often responding to the challenge of human accountability in caring for our natural environment. A 1989 hymn by Herman G. Stuempfle "O God, Who Formed This Fruitful Earth,"² in the second stanza reminds us: "The earth with all its fullness, Lord, is yours and yours alone; / Yet we its riches seize and hoard as though they were our own. / Let poisoned air, the ravaged land expose our wanton, wasteful hand."

Hymn writer Barbara Owen's

1970 hymn "God of Green Earth"³ is an excellent summation of environmental concerns. A slight alteration in the first stanza would make it wholly consistent with creationism.

God of the green earth, /
Singing with growing,
Lord of the ocean, / From
which life sprang,
Teach us their wisdom, / Born
at creation
When the planets danced and
/ Morning stars sang.

Teach us respect for / Forests
and marshlands,
Not to defile them / With
ignorant greed;
But love tall redwoods, /
Crowning the ages;
Love the brown loam and /
Small fertile seed.

Makes us to love all / Our
fellow creatures:
They not too humble, Nor we
too great.
Wildcat and beaver, / Bee
and brown sparrow,
Have earned equal rights to /
This earthly estate.

Stay us from killing / With
arrogant science
Men, beasts and plants we /
Do not understand.
With love comes wisdom, /
Compassion and patience;
Justice for all things, / Peace
in the land

The final lines of Fred Pratt Green's hymn, "God in His Love for Us." (641) confirms the Christian concern for the world that God has loaned us:

Earth is the Lord's; it is ours to
enjoy it, /
Ours, as His stewards, to farm
and defend.
From its pollution, misuse,
and destruction,
Good Lord, deliver us, world
without end!"

Paul E. Hamel
Berrien Springs, Michigan

1. All hymn numbers refer to the *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*.
2. *The Hymn* (April 1991), p. 38.
3. *Ibid.* (October 1970), p. 1.

subordinate and sacrifice him to the collective. They are anti-Christian, since Christianity states that man is a volitional being created in the image of God and possesses free will. Environmentalism is an assault on freedom and the individual. Hard environmentalism worships nature as a god and propounds a poisonous philosophy inimical to man.

Unfortunately, this same thought is echoed by Glenn Coe in his article "The Compelling Case for Nature." He writes, "I suggest assessing the needs of humanity and weighing them against the legitimate and independent right of nature to exist unmolested by humanity." This is mere nonsense—nature does not have "rights," legitimate or otherwise. And the presumption that man molests the environment is nihilistic.

I do not believe man is some despicable virus or blight infecting "Gaia" or "Mother Earth" as the hard-core environmentalists would have us believe. Rather, I am convinced man is created in the image of God and his God-endowed nature is that of a builder, creator, and innovator in his own right. Man is a transformer of nature and as such has produced innumerable products, tools, machines, and technologies with untold and unsung benefits for individual men and women. I am very happy for, and I enjoy the benefits of electricity, automobiles, airplanes, furniture, houses, textiles, plastics, ceramics, supermarkets, refrigeration, tools and appliances, pharmaceuticals, paper, books, computers, stereos and CDs, air-conditioning, gas heating, hot and cold running water, etc. These products and technologies have improved the quality of life and health for literally billions of people. I applaud technological innovation and the advance of human civilization.

I believe just as it is misguided for Christians to espouse socialism

Is Environmentalism Christian?

I was surprised by the ideology espoused by most of the authors writing on the environment in the January issue of *Spectrum*. The fundamental premise presented by this special section seemed to be that "nature" has more value than man.

It is a false and dangerous notion that nature has intrinsic value that supersedes that of man himself; and that man is a blight upon the environment. Activists in the environmental movement though have made such blatant claims: "Human happiness and certainly human fecundity, are not as important as a wild and healthy planet.

... We have become a plague upon ourselves and upon the Earth. . . . Until such time as Homo sapiens should decide to rejoin nature, some of us can only hope for the right virus to come along" (David Graber, quoted by George Reisman in his essay *The Toxicity of Environmentalism*).

The heart of the environmental deception lies in the belief that "all life and even non-life, is part of a larger collective organism; variously called 'Mother Nature,' 'Planet Earth,' and 'Gaia'" (M. Gemmill and J. Lehr, *Ecology's Ancestry*). These notions repudiate man and

since it is anti-freedom and anti-individual; so it is wrong for Christians to promote ideological environmentalism since it is anti-man and anti-civilization. Wilderness does *not* have intrinsic value over and above man. I choose civilization and responsible technology over wilderness.

Environmentalism is also a movement or philosophy that has definite political overtones. Roy Benton writes approvingly of Al Gore's fervid, committed environmentalism in his article "Earth in the Balance," referring to Gore's book of the same name. Gore is a good example of an environmentalist who has a strong political agenda. Environmentalism in his

hands will certainly be used as an excuse for more government intervention, manipulation, and control, with consequent loss of individual freedom of choice and rational decision making. We should consistently deplore and oppose this sort of government-backed environmental ideology. There *are* free market solutions to environmental problems as abundantly demonstrated in the book *Rational Readings on Environmental Concerns*, edited by Jay H. Lehr, Ph.D. I highly recommend this volume to the authors and readers of *Spectrum*.

Robert Haynes, M.D.
Ukiah, California

prised at the amount of energy, time, and money Adventists have spent attempting to justify their belief that God made the world. How the world was made is indeed an intriguing riddle, but the answer, regardless of the way it turns out, need not concern us spiritually. Attempts to provide scientific support for God's activity (a futile task) demonstrate lack of trust in his creatorship.

Could it be, though, that Adventists are beginning to care for their earthly house (a rewarding task) without first detailing how it was made? *Spectrum's* recent cluster of articles on environmental stewardship (Vol. 22, No. 5) made me hope so. I appreciated each piece.

James Hayward
Berrien Springs, Michigan

Beyond Creationism, Caring

Eleven Christmases ago, my dad gave our young daughter a beautifully crafted dollhouse. He made it all himself—windows, shutters, stairways, porches, shingles, window boxes, even furniture—at least that's what he told us.

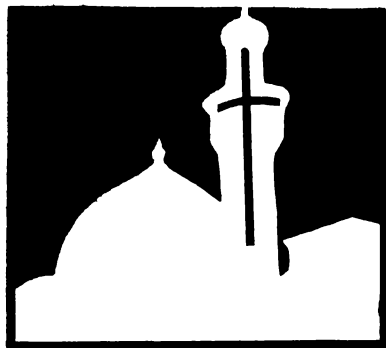
I suppose we could have demanded to see if he owned the tools necessary to build such a structure. We could have examined the materials to see if they

were available from local suppliers. We could have even hired a forensic expert to see if Dad's fingerprints covered his purported handiwork. But we had no reason to doubt his word, given our relationship with him. Our chief concern was to care for this heirloom in ways consistent with its value and our belief that it was given in love.

Many people would be sur-

EDITOR'S NOTE: Several readers have called attention to the controversy surrounding the speech of Chief Sealth reprinted in Spectrum, Vol. 22, No. 5. Multiple versions of the speech are known to exist and, while it is generally conceded that Chief Sealth gave a memorable speech urging respect for the environment, it is unclear how much the various versions have been embellished.

"Adventist Muslims" Misleads Muslims and Misguides Mission



As an Adventist and an Islamicist, I read with interest the recent issue of *Spectrum* (Vol. 22, No. 4) devoted to Muslims and mission. It is a pleasure to note a new generation of Adventists struggling to display a more positive attitude toward the achievements of Muslim culture.

I was, however, first amazed and then aghast at Jerald White-

house's report of efforts to create a community of dissembling "Adventist Muslims" in a justly unnamed country. Certainly, as he suggests, it is wise to distinguish between religious and cultural conversion, but the elements within Islam which he seeks to retain as Adventist, at least temporarily, are more elements of pan-Islamic law than local Muslim culture—e.g., canonical prayers, Ramadan, the two Ids. It is an oddly skewed pan-Islamic reified Islam and not a regional Islam that is being encouraged and replaced by degrees. That

is, the theory seems to require Islamization of the culture being subjected to Adventist re-interpretation and proselytization. This "Islam" is one that apparently non-Muslim Adventists know best since, Whitehouse observes, "Muslims do not develop a questioning mind." This is antiquated and ethnocentric, if comforting, orientalist nonsense that does no justice to Muslim education or rationality. Christians do not have a monopoly on intellectual curiosity.

The final picture that emerges is of a series of Adventist agents provocateur surreptitiously utilizing the high tradition of Islam (specifically the Qur'an as reinterpreted by Adventists) to subvert believing Muslims step by step. It is an arrogant and dangerous stance for Adventists to assume. Perhaps we

should look more to dialogue and understanding and less to confrontation and subversion.

Whitehouse concludes that "the forces of evil arrayed against this ministry are real." Indeed, the scheme acts to confirm Muslim views of the invidious and insidious nature of much Christian proselytization and, in so doing, compromises our more structured and valued medical and social ministries in the region. The "change agents" are unfortunately left exposed, but they are exposed by this misguided ministry and not by any innate "forces of evil" within Islam. In the past, I have always identified myself as Adventist to inquiring Muslims. I now hesitate to do so.

Derryl N. MacLean
Burnaby, British Columbia

minent return of Isa.

MacLean's characterization of my statement, "Muslims do not develop a questioning mind," as "antiquated and ethnocentric, if comforting, orientalist nonsense," is a misreading of the intent of my statement. I do not at all deny or downgrade the high education and intellectual curiosity of many in the Islamic community. However, at the grass-roots level where this ministry is operating, one must realize that the majority of Muslims will give far higher weight to *takeed* (traditional interpretation handed down from religious leaders) than to *ishtihad tafseer* (personal effort to try to understand the meaning of the passage). I dare say that Islam has no monopoly on this, either.

He further notes that the statement "the forces of evil arrayed against this ministry are real" implies these evil forces to be in Islam itself. This was certainly not the intention of the statement. In fact, the ministry is based on the assumption, among others, that Islam is *not* an "evil empire." However, evil forces are at work in all places to subvert spiritual growth and wreak havoc in the earth. That includes within Islam and closer to home, even within Adventism. MacLean must know that the majority of Muslims, in practice, are part of what can be termed popular or folk Islam, where belief in evil forces of various kinds and participation in various rituals to obtain blessing and power for protection forms a large part of their informal worship. We or they (the believers in Jesus in this ministry) are only safe as we take personal refuge in our faithful allegiance in God.

Dr. Jack Provonsha in his recently published book, *A Remnant in Crisis* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1993), challenges our thinking regarding this work:

. . . and Whitehouse Responds

Mr. MacLean's letter raises several questions that concern how we view ourselves as Adventists and our mission, as well as how we view Islam. As I have lived among Muslims for several years, spanning a period of 25 years, participated in and thoughtfully observed various Adventist and other Christian traditional, institutional approaches to Islam, I have come to the deep conviction that in such high solidarity honor cultures as we find in Islamic peoples, we must somehow divorce ourselves from an institutional Christian or church identity. It is much more helpful to see ourselves as an Adventist prophetic movement among all peoples. To approach Islam from this identity requires an incarnational ministry among the people, living the principles of the gospel and the end time message in that context in ways that will meet the spiritual

heart cry of the common Muslim. That will bring to sincere Muslim the assurance that there is a God-appointed Mediator for their sins, that they can face the coming day of judgment (in which they already believe) with confidence of sins forgiven through faith in Isa (Jesus) as their redeemer.

A recent evaluation of this particular ministry by an Adventist team which included, among others, an individual with many years of experience in Muslim countries and a doctorate in Islamic studies, and a church administrator also with many years of experience in Islamic countries, indicates that the ministry is in fact achieving just such objectives. The groups of believers are, in fact, experiencing spiritual formation, a deepening faith in Isa (Jesus), and are developing a clear identity as God's prophetic movement in the Muslim community, preparing themselves and others for the im-

I've sometimes wondered whether the finishing of the work in Islam, where cultural and social ties are so powerful and all-encompassing that entry of the Christian message has been virtually impossible (there is only one Adventist to every 50,000 people in the Middle East), may have to depend upon the indigenous movement within Islam. Might the members of such a movement preserve most of their cultural

ties with Islam while capturing the essence of the gospel? Conceivably, such might even consider themselves to be "true Muslims" much as Christians, following Paul's attitude in the New Testament speak of "true Israel." Would we praise God for it? Would we even dare to foster it? Would we grant them institutional autonomy, or would we insist that these "true Muslims" sign on our Adventist institutional dotted

line, including sending their tithes and offerings to the right place?

May we have the courage to move forward in incarnational ministry that a body of true believers might glorify God in this end time among all peoples, each giving praise in its own culturally unique manner.

Jerald Whitehouse
Silver Spring, Maryland