Spectrum

The Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

Hypnotism

YES—JOHN BERECZ
SDAs SHOULD USE IT

NO—JACK PROVONSHA
IT MAY BE A SIN

MAYBE—SELMA CHAIJ MASTRAPA
IF IT'S LIKE PRAYER

AIDS HITS AFRICA:
WHERE ARE SDAs?

THE SOUND OF MUSIC
AS THE HEART OF SDA CULTURE

IS CONSERVATISM A HERESY?

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Spectrum

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Jubilees

This year *Spectrum* celebrates its 25th anniversary. The very first issue of *Spectrum* (Winter 1969) looked more like an elegant "little magazine" than the current, more journalistic *Spectrum*. Still, continuities outshine dissimilarities. Names in that first issue are familiar. Herold Weiss, who wrote a book review in the inaugural issue, is the author of "Adventism as Both/And, Not Either/Or," in this issue. Charles Scriven, who discussed the Christian and war, has recently written several provocative pieces in *Spectrum*. Five of the authors and editors listed in that first issue have become better known as presidents of North American Adventist colleges. Also in that first issue, the first editor of *Spectrum*, Molleurus Couperus (now retired from the chair of the department of dermatology at Loma Linda University School of Medicine) articulated the purpose of the journal in words that still seem to fit: "*Spectrum* is dedicated, from a Christian viewpoint, to probing the questions that trouble the minds of modern man and examining the illnesses that sicken society. We are much concerned about God's relation to the human situation."

Astonishingly, the journal spans roughly one-fifth of the life of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. (If you aren't already surprised by the youth of the Seventh-day Adventist church, consider that the life of Rochelle Kilgore, whose passing we note in this issue, comes within 24 years of coinciding with the life of the denomination.)

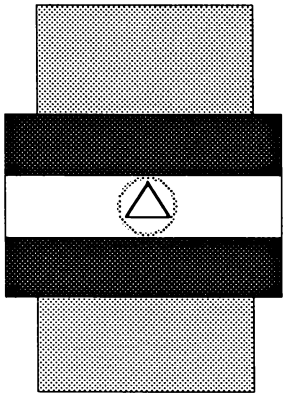
Over the past quarter-century, the existence of *Spectrum* and the church have become increasingly intertwined. The first issue printed several pieces on creation and evolution, an area where the journal has both reflected and contributed to the present diversity of church members' views. That initial issue also included an article on governmental aid to church-related schools and a cluster of differing viewpoints on Adventist participation in war. For a broadening cross-section of Adventists, the question is no longer, as it was 25 years ago, whether their church should become involved in such issues, but how.

Perhaps the most important example of how *Spectrum* and the life of the church have become interwoven is the sense of history that now permeates Adventism. This year's 150th anniversary of the Great Disappointment is not passing over 1844 as an embarrassing defeat, but a past event to be proudly celebrated in books, videos, and even a denominationally produced, $500,000 documentary on William Miller. 1844 is being reformulated, even as we speak.

It is not totally coincidental that *Spectrum* and the historical study of Adventism both came of age during the last 25 years. *Spectrum* published critical evaluations of Adventism's past written by an emerging group of Adventist historians trained in the study of 19th-century America. *Spectrum* also printed previously unpublished documents, such as the transcript of the 1919 Bible Conference. Church members began sensing that the writings of Adventism's founders, including those of Ellen White, reflected the influences of a previous historical period.

Subsequent issues will provide opportunities to explore differences between the early and later *Spectrum*, and between the journal and other tendencies within the church. Now, continuities and interrelationships seem more vivid, including celebrating the 25th year of *Spectrum*'s existence the same year Adventism is transforming the Great Disappointment into an anniversary celebration.

—Roy Branson



Letter From Nicaragua

An American teacher's diary recreates conversations with former Contras and Sandinistas who think the war isn't over.

by Sharon Harris

Old vehicles with faded red paint line the curb. A few of these cars are marked "taxi." The drivers lazily talk to one another, waiting for the next flight to arrive and the bargaining to begin again.

I am in Nicaragua, the faculty sponsor for a volunteer student group assisting an Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) project. It is June 29, 1992. Fifteen hours earlier I had left the Ontario, California, airport. Before long, the ADRA truck pulls into the parking lot and we begin our journey.

I soon learn that foreigners can expect to be robbed sometime during their stay. Contra and Sandinista soldiers unhappy with the current political system still roam the jungles, and earthquakes are as common as in southern California.

June 30

We travel to our home base, Somoto, just south of the Honduras border along the Pan American highway. The town is so peaceful it is hard to realize that just two years ago this area was involved in some of the worst guerrilla warfare in the world.

The students I am traveling with are interested in the Pan American highway. "Could we actually drive home from here?"

"Sure," I respond, "with a vehicle we could drive the Pan American highway through Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico." Somehow the idea that we could drive home assures them that we are not really so far away.

We feel privileged staying in a "hotel" across from the city square. It has a wonderful veranda where we enjoy the rocking chairs for our morning and evening worships. We have a little zoo in the back courtyard featuring an indigenous monkey, deer, and parrots that serve as our morning alarm clock.

The rooms are complete with bedbugs, millipedes, scorpions, and a resident rat. We stuff our duffel bags between the five beds in the "girls'" room. The beds are made of wooden slats covered with cotton pads. The shower is a faucet above our heads with plenty of cold water. We are told there is no hot water in all of Nicaragua. The toilet is contemporary with a few adaptations: there is no lid on which to sit. This minor inconvenience will no doubt become a hassle, as I am sure we will each experience the inevitable diarrhea. The back of the toilet is

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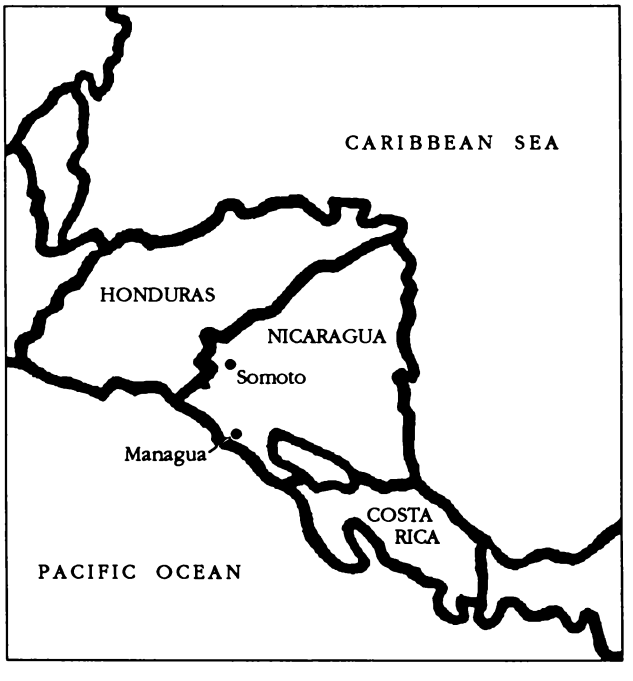
open so that we can turn on a faucet high above to fill the tank. Then we must reach down and pull out the stopper to flush.

July 1

Today includes a one-hour drive and five-kilometer hike to reach a remote camposina, or farm. Our drivers speed through every curve, every bump, every river. We pass farmers eking out an existence by planting corn and beans. Their homes are formed with twigs and mud. Inside are floors of hardened mud. Seating area is provided with tree stumps and carved logs. Chickens, pigs, and cats wander at will in and out of the homes.

Our journey by foot along a steep ridge and down into a lush valley ends at a small hut used as a school. The school mothers immediately appear from everywhere, eager to talk about their children and their families. Today the discussion is about breast feeding. The Nicaraguan ADRA health educator grabs her own breast to demonstrate feeding an infant and the women giggle with embarrassment.

The men are outside waiting. Through translation, I understand their discussion centers on women—their own women, other women, and women they hope to have. These men cannot read, have no jobs, no money, and little if any land to garden. Yet they have the ability to attract a woman and to feel the love that they can share.



I gaze across the mountains and valleys, all the way to Honduras and El Salvador. The foreground of green turns to blue. I am told that in the hidden valleys are countless land mines. Only a few months ago a farmer's shovel struck a mine. He was killed instantly.

Later, I meet an ex-Sandinista soldier. Hector is now an ADRA health worker. He poses for a picture with another ADRA worker who was formerly a Contra. Hector assures me, without emotion, that if they had met during the war, they would have killed each other.

Hector insists he did not want to fight, but the Sandinistas came to his high school and told him and his classmates they had to fight. He emphasizes that he had no choice. "They would have killed me."

Recalling his comrades, a certain nostalgia sweeps over him. As they marched through thick rain forests, he truly experienced friendship. But the price was high. He watched many of his friends killed by guns or swept down river in torrents. Hector, like most Nicaraguans, does not believe the war is over.

July 3

Our hotel is north of the town square, the cathedral sits kitty-corner from us on the east side, and the school sits on the west. Each morning and evening the cathedral bells toll to remind parishioners it is time for Mass. The square becomes quiet. I enjoy the sounds of music as the congregations lift their voices in praise.

During the day I am constantly reminded that the poor are controlled by the edicts of the Catholic Church. At the campo I listen to the health lecture on birth control. The women sit on a filthy plywood ledge in a mud and wood structure with a tin roof. The average Nicaraguan woman has eight children. Many of the children filling this room have bellies bloated from malnutrition. Puddles form under different children as they play. Their clothes reek of urine. Corina, the health educator, informs the women of the importance of family planning. She emphasizes that the children already born need the resources and attention parents can give to assure health. Corina urges the women to choose a group leader who can be the liaison between the child survival project and the camposina.

The women start arguing. Some become angry and refuse to be involved with birth control. A young girl in her 20s volunteers to be the leader, but

her mother immediately refuses to let her have any part in the program. An older woman without any teeth shrieks at Corina. A priest has told the woman if she uses birth control that she is sinning and cannot even enter the church. Another woman accuses Corina of encouraging the women in the room to sin. She argues that the Bible clearly states that any form of contraception is a sin.

Finally, a mother of six, who appears to be in her early 30s, quietly says that she will be the group leader to promote birth control. I marvel at this woman's courage.

July 4

This is our first Sabbath in Nicaragua. We go to a church nearly an hour's drive away on dirt roads. The church has four wood walls with holes for windows, a wood roof, and wood floor. This is the cleanest building I have seen in Nicaragua. The people are tidy, alert, and full of smiles. The anger and despair I have seen throughout the countryside is missing from these faces.

Adventism has brought education, not sought to control it. For these people the Adventist Church is liberating and educational. Interestingly, my students in America have not shared this experience, for they have found the church to be stifling and sometimes a hindrance.

July 5

Today, I go to the post office to mail a letter. Pedro wears his typical morning smile and delivers an English greeting. "Good morning, how are you?" He pronounces each word carefully and beams when he is finished. Pedro, in his early 30s, has already spent one-third of his life behind bars. He refused to fight with the Sandinista army and paid with 10 years of his life. Many of those years were spent in solitary confinement. That's where he learned English, in prison by himself. Now he walks up and down the street smiling, talking to everyone and speaking in English as often as he can. Somehow this 5' 3" brown-skinned man with wire-rimmed glasses and big white teeth expects more than a God who will alleviate suffering.

Today we go inside the homes and teach the women how to cook the foods that we are planting. The first family that we meet has eight children. The oldest daughter is pregnant by her stepfather. She is only 16 and is expecting her first child in three months. My students and I watch with amazement as mother and daughter compete for the father's attention and affection.

Tonight our worship hour takes on new questions. How does God view this wife, husband, and daughter relationship? How does God judge a 16-year-old girl and her 30-year-old mother who are desperate for food and desperate for love?

Trying to understand this relationship brings us to the age-old question, "Who will get to heaven? What is required?"

One student muses that maybe you just have to keep the Ten Commandments. But this comment results in an obvious question: "Does that mean this father, mother, and daughter will not be saved because they have committed adultery?"

Perhaps, my students agree, we are trying to make it too difficult. Will God save people simply because they are "safe to save"—because they are teachable in God's perfect ways?

Are these people "safe" to take to heaven? Will they be teachable? Do you think that God can teach us even after we get to heaven? The students are not sure.

The Farewell Party

After six weeks, our time in Somoto is over. We have built gardens, trained families to cook, delivered food and clothes throughout the countryside, and helped weigh babies in child survival clinics. The community with which we worked throws a party to bid us farewell and a safe journey back to the States. We know without question that being Western does not mean being the best. Through the eyes of these desperate, war-torn farmers we have seen another glimpse of God.

AIDS Hits Africa: Where Are SDAs?

A Johns Hopkins professor discusses the lack of SDA response to a pandemic that may soon kill 20 Adventists a day.

by Gilbert Burnham

As the toll from the AIDS epidemic in Africa continues to mount, the Adventist Church in some countries could soon be losing from 10 to 20 members a day to premature death from AIDS. The size of the threat to the church from AIDS has been seriously underestimated. Failure to appreciate the extent of the threat, and the church's decade of delay in addressing it in a rigorous and coordinated manner, is unconscionable.

Just as Adventism in America has been heavily influenced by North American cultural beliefs, Adventist youth in Africa are also influenced by traditional African and cultural norms. Although attitudes vary widely from culture to culture, many African societies do not commonly proscribe sexual relations before marriage.[1] In general, rapid urbanization and loss of traditional cultural norms, coupled with delay of marriage for educational reasons, have resulted in a longer period of sexual activity before marriage.[2] These cultural changes have undoubtedly influenced Adventist youth as well.

Adventists are part of an AIDS pandemic that is increasingly ravaging Africa (see chart, page 7). While it is true that by 1996 there will be more HIV-infected persons in Asia than Africa, three-quarters of those now infected with HIV live in sub-Saharan Africa, where one out of every 40 adults are infected (see map, page 8). Hardest hit are eastern and southern Africa. In some urban areas, one out of three are infected. Furthermore, Africa remains the world region least able to cope with the AIDS epidemic. Africa is saddled with a divisive colonial past, high birth rates, unstable governments, weak economies, loose marital unions, gender and social inequalities, and the feminization of poverty.[3]

As many as two-thirds of all HIV infections are acquired before the age of 25.[4] The extended family, long the safety net for disas-

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ter, is having difficulty with the numbers of orphans being created. By the end of the century, AIDS will have created 10 million orphans, the vast majority in Africa.[5]

A Threat to the Church

A glance at the typical population pyramid for sub-Saharan Africa (see chart, page 9) will bring home the risk that HIV poses to the Adventist Church. The population (and membership of the church) in almost all developing countries is young. Half of the church membership is under age 25 in many countries—the age group in which most HIV infections are acquired.

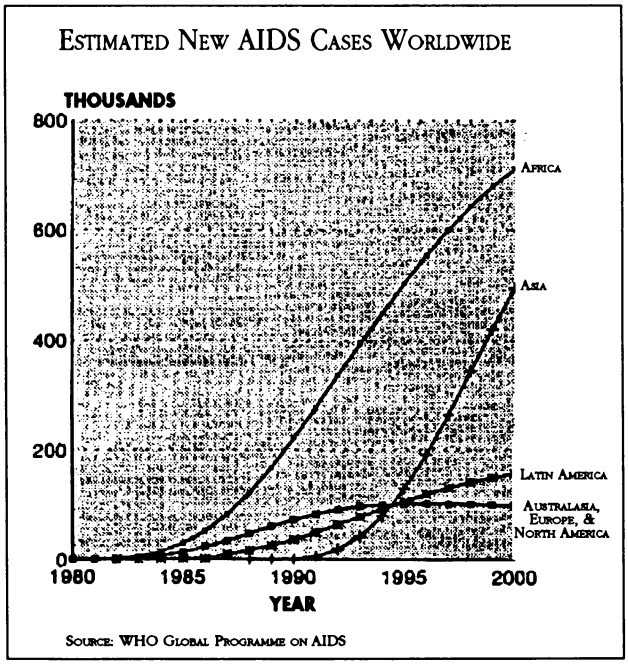
Qualitative data from Kenya (unpublished) suggests that sexual practices among unmarried Adventist youth differ little from those of their non-Adventist and non-Christian peers. Another study, in rural Malawi, found that girls who attended church regularly in villages where the Adventist Church was the predominant influence were little different in sexual practices from girls who did not attend any church regularly. In both groups, the onset of sexual activity was 13.4 years, and sexual relations occurred frequently in exchange for money or gifts.[6]

Despite its difficulties, Africa has strengths that enable it to cope—strengths that are absent in many developed countries. The continent has cohabited with death and disaster from the earliest of times. Mechanisms that helped the continent endure epidemics of smallpox, sleeping sickness, and measles, exploitation, and slave-taking from both within and outside the region, are not lost, and ensure the survival of the people. Despite political, linguistic, and tribal fragmentation, there is a cohesiveness to society which, in other cultures, has vanished. These strengths permeate the church as well. How then can these intrinsic strengths be harnessed by the church to combat the AIDS threat to its future?

As a starting point, the church can build on the now nearly universal appreciation that prevention efforts must concentrate on adolescents, particularly at the ages when sexual behavior patters are being established.[7] At the same time, it is now evident that the earlier information-based prevention campaigns have not resulted in the degree of behavioral change that was hoped for. This is also true for preventive efforts that focused primarily on condom distribution. The structures and organizations within the Adventist Church are well suited for the multi-directional, sustained approach to children and adolescents that will be required for an effective prevention program. The exact messages and approaches needed will have to differ from one culture to another.

The Family

A major emphasis must be placed on the family. This is where sexual behavior needs to be influenced at an early stage. Unfortunately, African parents are no more comfortable talking to their children about sex



than are parents anywhere else. Indeed, in many African cultures, sex education has traditionally come from aunts or grandparents, rather than from parents. With the rapid changes in African society and the loosening of the extended family, these traditional avenues can no longer be relied upon. This is an opportunity for the church to help parents accept the responsibility for the sex education of their children, while giving them the resources and encouragement they need.

Youth Organizations

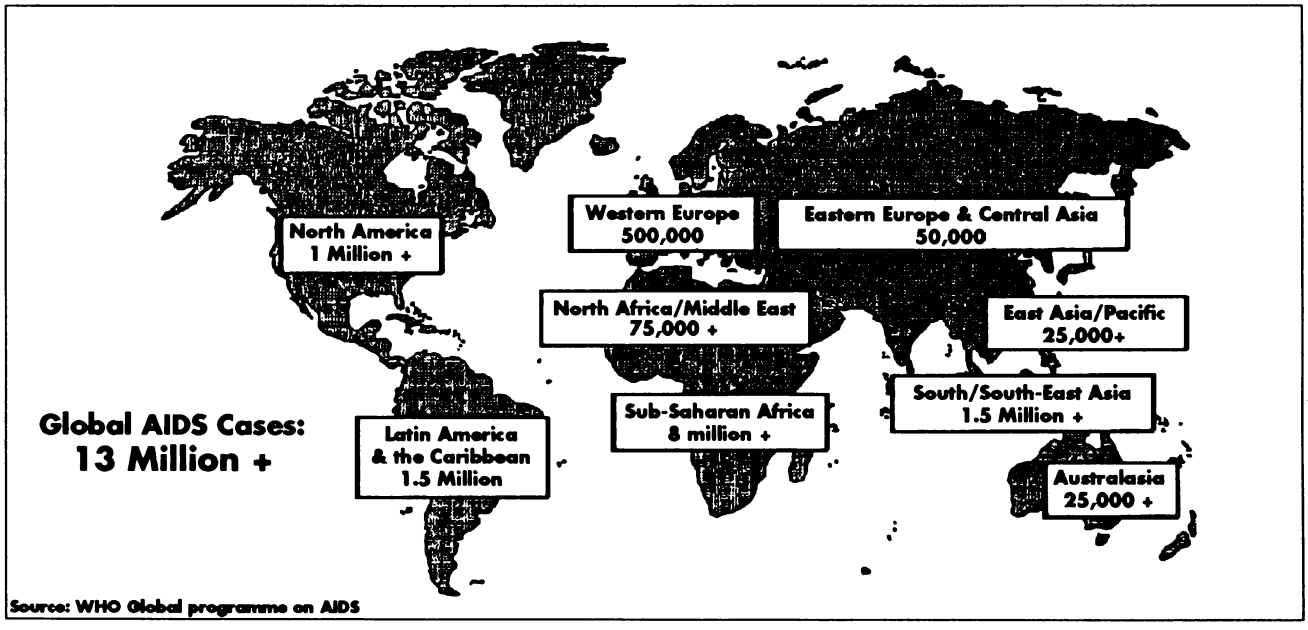
The church's youth organizations are key to reinforcing messages from other sources, both within and outside of the church. These organizations can help youth develop self-esteem. Young people learn most effectively from their peers. They need to engage in appropriate activities that teach the critical life skills necessary for responsible adulthood.

For example, in most traditional African cultures, girls undergo some sort of initiation rite around the time of puberty. Many of these rites contain messages, contrary to Christian beliefs, which can increase risk of HIV infection. Some local church groups have undertaken to "Christianize" these rites in many areas on an *ad hoc* basis.

For boys, initiation rites are less common. They usually learn behavior from their peers. Where male initiation rites do exist and where they involve circumcision, Adventist congregations, in conjunction with mission hospitals, have developed hygienic Christian alternatives. Building on traditional concepts of passage rites in an organized way would seem to be an excellent opportunity for the Adventist Church, not only to reaffirm the principles of Christian behavior and expectations for adults, but also to decrease the risks of losses among its own membership from HIV.

The School

In those countries where an active Adventist school system exists (and where the church can depart from the national educational curricula), important opportunities exist. In some countries, AIDS prevention, in the context of biology and sex education, has been introduced into the national curricula. However, Adventist teachers are often uncomfortable



with these discussions, and avoid teaching sex education/HIV prevention materials. The suspicion that sex education for children and adolescents will promote promiscuity is a universal misconception. Presenting sex education within a Christian context, taught by consecrated teachers, would be a powerful approach.

Personal and cultural sexual beliefs often pass as Christian doctrine. Knowing that cultural pressures are so strong that absolute abstinence is probably not achievable for most adolescents, should prevention efforts concentrate on only abstinence messages? Should there be fall-back stances, aimed at delaying age of first sexual contact, and limiting the number of sexual partners?

In many cultures, girls have little potential to resist sexual advances. Increasing self-esteem and negotiating skills have been part of many HIV programs aimed at adolescent girls. It would have to be decided how this could be adapted to a Christian context.

The position of Adventists concerning the distribution of condoms, which are at the center of most national AIDS-prevention programs, would have to be decided. Although not offering absolute protection, condoms do reduce risks and, from a public health standpoint and in the absence of behavioral change, are the most important weapon available to slow the AIDS epidemic.

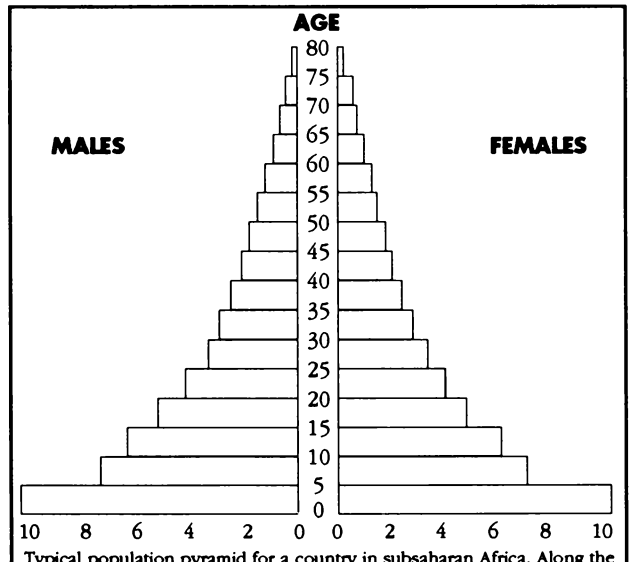
Educational Efforts Outside the Church

Should Adventists strive to reach persons outside the church with an AIDS message? Among the general society, Adventists have promoted programs relating to smoking, diet, and stress reduction. It is conceivable that AIDS messages for non-Adventists and, indeed, non-Christian groups could differ substantially from messages conveyed within the church. Would this be ethically acceptable or would parallel messages cause confusion among Adventist youth? Although an AIDS program based on Christian principles might be very effective in Christian nations in Africa, it might be misconstrued by some groups as an evangelistic strategy in disguise.

Caring for Those With AIDS

Caring for those in need, the ill and the dying, was a Jewish practice that brought admiration and adherents throughout the Roman empire. These practices were adopted by the early Christian church. It was an important reason why, as the Roman empire collapsed and the civilized world tumbled into the night, Christianity grew in strength.[8]

The AIDS epidemic offers the church an unparalleled opportunity to exercise its Christian concern for those in need. Hospitals in Africa cannot begin to care for all those in the final stages of AIDS. Home-care programs are gaining popularity in many countries, but there is a persistent prejudice against persons with AIDS. By their nature, home-care pro-



Typical population pyramid for a country in subsaharan Africa. Along the vertical axis are the various age groups, and along the horizontal axis is indicated the percent of the population falling into each age group. Roughly half the population will be under age 15.

grams are labor-intensive and are ideal for local, church-based initiatives. Such programs could counsel patients and their families, help the ill to remain an active part of the community, and provide access to services. This is presently within the capability of many Dorcas and community-service structures of the church. The benefits to both the church and the community would be immense. Methods exist for helping organizations such as churches to strengthen a community's capacity to help those with AIDS.[9]

What Has Happened Up to Now?

Unfortunately, the church has failed to effectively use its resources in response to the threat from AIDS. Although the destructive potential of the AIDS epidemic in Africa has been recognized for nearly a decade, the Adventist Church in some of the worst affected areas of Africa has expended its energy on side issues and half measures. The world church has been hesitant in its AIDS efforts, perhaps from a misconception that HIV is an infection on the margins of society or from a general discomfort with issues of sexuality. A General Conference AIDS committee was formed in 1987, with strong support from the Health and Temperance Department. It produced a laudable statement about AIDS, which was widely publicized within the church. Its next effort, to stage a conference on AIDS for Adventists and other Christian health workers in Africa, took place in Malawi in 1988. This conference tackled many of the behavioral issues responsible for HIV in Africa, and was highly acclaimed.

However, the Eastern Africa Division, whose territory includes much of the world epicenter of the epidemic (Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi, and Zambia), declined to participate in the conference. In fact, the division eventually took punitive action against some institutions that did participate. Within a year, the General Conference AIDS committee ceased to function for lack of funds and loss of interest. Within the Eastern Africa Division, which stood to lose so much from the epidemic, a coordinated program never emerged. Were its health and temperance department's messages anti-AIDS or anti-condom? It was sometimes hard to tell. A recent AIDS message was a bland, interdenominational restatement of traditional Christian morality, with little suggestion of how to move from rehash to reality.[10]

Meanwhile, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) has undertaken a number of successful AIDS projects in Africa. One of the most ambitious aims to counteract components of traditional adolescent initiation rites, which promote promiscuity and increase risk of infection. Many of these ADRA projects have been promoted by young, innovative local country directors. The flexibility, resources, and vertical structure of ADRA have aroused considerable hostility among some layers of the church bureaucracy that seem wedded to form rather than function.

Only in mid-1993 did ADRA appoint a full-time AIDS coordinator at the headquarters level, and not until September of 1993 did its AIDS advisory committee meet for the first time. The issues of development, human rights, basic Christian beliefs, poverty, and AIDS are inextricably intertwined. This makes the AIDS mandate an appropriate one for ADRA.

The church's long delay in effectively addressing the AIDS epidemic has hurt both the larger society and its own self-interest. Although valuable time has been lost on inaction, side issues, and fratricide, perhaps the enormity of the threat is now being grasped by elements in the church. If the church in developing countries is to protect its future, there must be no lapse back into the old comfortable *akinesis*.

From a personal standpoint, it seems fitting that this article was written whilst in Uganda, the vortex of the HIV maelstrom. The paradox of an epidemic spread largely by sexual means in this highly Christian country points up the difficulty everywhere in transforming knowledge into understanding and beyond—into behavioral change.

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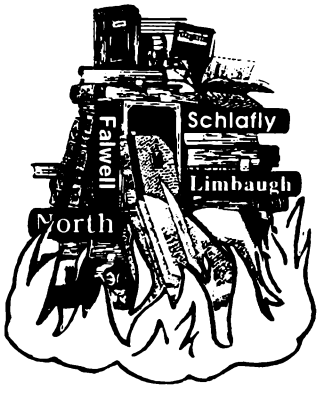

Is Conservatism A Heresy?

Although the words *conservative* and *conservatism* occur in Ellen White's published writings 30 times, "they are always used in a negative sense."

by David Thiele

IT WAS 1952. STORMS WERE BATTERING THE Netherlands, causing flooding. The police contacted the pastor of a rural parish of the Dutch Reformed Church. The area was so threatened by wind and wave that the dike had to be supported one Sunday if disaster was to be averted. The pastor was put in a quandary. He knew that the people there felt a deep obligation to strictly obey the commandments of God and to rigorously honor the "Lord's Day," as they considered it to be. He gathered his church council to discuss the issue, and the debate went back and forth.

Finally, the pastor said, "On occasion even the Lord disregarded the fourth commandment to meet human need; surely we can do the same." In response, one elderly member of the council rose to his feet and declared, "I have always been troubled, Pastor, by something I have never yet dared to say publicly. Now I must say it. I have always had the feeling that our Lord Jesus was just a bit of a liberal."

Ernest Kasemann, a New Testament theologian, tells the story to ask "Was Jesus a liberal?"[1] I want to ask a parallel question going in the opposite direction: "Is conservatism a heresy?"

At first, this appears a strange query. The church is well-known as a conservative institution. To oppose conservatism in such an environment is almost like being against motherhood! The Funk and Wagnalls Dictionary defines *conservative* as "inclined to preserve the existing order of things, opposed to change," and *conservatism* as "devotion to the existing order of things, opposition to change." It is easy to understand how conservatism manages consistently to claim the moral high ground. If something is working well, why tamper with it?

It is not difficult to find biblical support for this position. Paul admonished the Thes-

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salonians, "Test everything. *Hold on* to the good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).[2] His admonition is clear: Be conservative with good things. Similarly, the risen Christ directs the church at Ephesus to "'*Remember* the height from which you have fallen! *Repent* and *do things you did at first*'" (Revelation 2:5). His command is that both a conservative frame of mind and a conservative life-style be adopted! Clearly, conservatism cannot always be a heresy.

It comes as quite a shock then to discover that although the words *conservative* and *conservatism* occur in Ellen White's published writings some 30 times,[3] they are always used in a negative sense! Notice the following examples:

> Those temptations are most dangerous which come from the professed servants of God, and from our friends. When persons who are uniting with the world, yet claiming great piety and love, counsel the faithful workers for God to be less zealous and more *conservative*, our answer must be an appeal to the word of God.[4]

> The true Christian will not become self-centered or *conservative* in his plans.[5]

> Elder M, as president of the _____ Conference, you have shown by your general management that you are unworthy of the trust reposed in you. You have shown that you are *conservative* and that your ideas are narrow. You have not done one half what you might have done had you the true spirit of the work.[6]

> But as real spiritual life declines, it has ever been the tendency to cease to advance in the knowledge of truth. Men rest satisfied with the light already received from God's word, and discourage any further investigation of the Scriptures. They become *conservative* and seek to avoid discussion.[7]

The reason for her negativity toward conservatism is more easily understood when we remember that early Adventism was a radical movement. Sabbath observance, health reform, soul sleep, and belief in the imminent return of Jesus represented radical departures from long-held traditions. Conservative Christians were deeply offended by such smashing of traditions! Ellen White would have none of it. The question to her was not "Is it old or new?" but "Is it true?" So it should be with us all.

Although the New Testament promotes a certain conservatism, its characteristic tone is not conservatism but "newness." It speaks of the new Jerusalem, a new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21:1, 2), a new covenant (Hebrews 8:8, 13), a new commandment (John 13:34), a new birth (John 3:3). Christianity is described as being like a new cloth that cannot be successfully sewn into an old garment and new wine that must be stored in new wineskins (Mark 2:21, 22). Those who are in Christ are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), part of a new humanity that transcends even the divisions between Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:15). Christians enter God's sanctuary presence through "a new and living way," opened up by Jesus' sacrificial death (Hebrews 10:20). They are promised a new name (Revelation 2:17) and that they will sing a new song (Revelation 14:3). The church is admonished to purge the yeast of the old life and be, as it were, "a new batch [of dough]" (1 Corinthians 5:7). Its teachers bring out of the storehouse both old things and new (Matthew 13:52). The New Testament does acknowledge that there are those who say, "'The old is better'" (Luke 5:38), but this is the attitude of the enemies of Jesus, not his followers.[8]

This is precisely the danger of conservatism: it can make a person unwilling to accept God's new work because it seems different to what God has done in the past. It is obviously true that none of God's deeds is ultimately "new" because God is unchanging (Malachi 3:6). However, situations, circumstances, and times change, creating the need for new expressions and new methods. Isaiah's assur-

ance that God would deliver Jerusalem from her enemies (Isaiah 37:33-35) seems very different from Jeremiah's insistence a century later that God would give the city into the hands of her enemies (Jeremiah 22:6-10). However, the times and circumstances had changed, and the message from the unchangeable God had gone from being one of promise to one of threat.

We can see how this works out in the history of the church at several crucial points. For example, the opponents of Paul were clearly conservative in insisting that circumcision was an obligation that was still binding on God's people. That rite had been imposed by God and for 2,500 years it had been practiced by the devout. Paul was clearly an innovator in declaring that it was no longer necessary. Thus, conservatism was the first heresy of the church.[9]

The same phenomenon can be seen in Adventist history. The 1888 General Conference saw the young progressives, Waggoner and Jones, being opposed by the older traditionalists, including Uriah Smith and the (absent) General Conference President George I. Butler. The battle lines were drawn over issues as diverse as the identity of the ten kingdoms of Daniel 2 and the nature of the law in Galatians. Those who felt that what the church had said in the past settled these issues, tragically found themselves opposing the mighty work God was attempting to do through Waggoner and Jones. In this instance, Ellen White sided with the progressives and opposed the conservatives, even saying they were being used of the devil![10]

Is conservatism heresy? It can be! If conservatism means we are so locked into the past that we cannot function in the present; if it means we ignore those clamoring for answers now; if it means we repeat the mistakes of our predecessors—then, clearly, conservatism is a heresy.

What then is it that determines whether the conservatism of an individual or an organization is constructive or heretical? Everyone is, to some extent, conservative and, to some extent, everyone is also open to progress. The conservative element gives stability and strength and is thus of tremendous value. It might be compared to the keel of a ship. The progressive element keeps us relevant and brings growth. If conservatism is the keel, progressivism is the sail. Both elements are essential and must be well matched for optimum effectiveness. A small boat with a tiny sail is stable but stationary. A healthy church will be composed mainly of moderates with some definite conservatives and some clear progressives. If it overbalances in either direction, problems will result.

We are living in a world of rapid change —the most rapid ever seen. It is staggering to realize that the world Ellen White was born into was, in many ways, more like that of Abraham than like ours! Technological changes continue at a bewildering rate; social upheavals are common place; attention spans are shortening. It seems that, as the late, avant garde artist, Andy Warhol, predicted, many people become famous—but only for "15 minutes" before the attention of the crowd is drawn to some other spectacle.[11]

This is not the time for the church and its members to be defending the ramparts of "How we did it (or said it) in the past." It is time for every genuine Christian, every church organization to be prayerfully, thoughtfully, creatively exploring ways of making the gos-

pel appear relevant to our contemporaries. We need to realize that methods born in 19th-century Protestant New England may be utterly unsuitable for 20th-century secular Australia and New Zealand.

Is conservatism heresy? It can be! If conservatism means we are so locked into the past that we cannot function in the present; if it means that we are ignoring those clamoring for answers now; if it means we repeat the mistakes of our predecessors rather than learning from them—then, clearly, conservatism is a heresy. In the context of the heretical conservatism of the 1888 General Conference Session and its aftermath Ellen White wrote:

> We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed.[12]

God help us, even as we "hold on to the good" to be willing to learn from the past and open to the future. That is orthodox conservatism!

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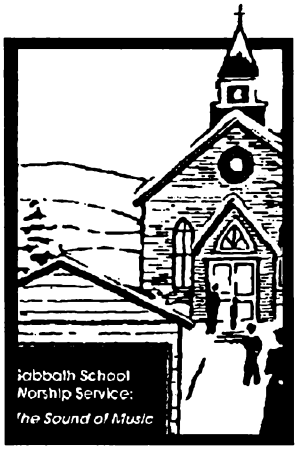

The Hills Are Alive With Thousands Of Adventists

The Sound of Music as "the heart of Adventist cultural literacy."

by Scott Moncrieff

I MUST HAVE BEEN ABOUT NINE YEARS OLD THE first time I went to see *The Sound of Music*. Up to that point I had developed as a culturally normal Seventh-day Adventist. I recognized all the actors' voices on "Your Story Hour." I had read *Brush Valley Adventure; Dookie, Sookie, and Big Mo; Singer on the Sand*; all the Sam Campbell books; and I had *Swift Arrow* practically memorized: "I love you as a brother, Swift Arrow; I cannot marry you, for I love White Rabbit. Somehow I must become White Rabbit's squaw."

But my normal development was about to be interrupted. On that fateful Saturday night, our family packed into the Volkswagen for the drive from Loma Linda to La Sierra. I dimly remember anticipating something about singing children, which would not of itself have excited me, but this was clearly going to be a big event, and I might as well be in on it. It was not to be. We arrived at the parking lot to an ongoing murmur of consternation. I don't remember if the projector had broken, or the reels hadn't arrived, or what, but there was some such fiasco sufficient to cancel the showing. We drove home in dudgeon, without even entering the auditorium.

I'm not sure how I continued to miss seeing the film over the next decade. I did see *The Love Bug* three or four times—I could measure my burgeoning adolescence in the transference of interest from Dean Jones and Buddy Hackett to Michelle Lee. I saw *The Yellowstone Cubs* a couple of times, all the Stan Midgely and Don Cooper movies. I fell asleep during *A Man for All Seasons*. Even though I hadn't seen *The Sound of Music*, I was absorbing it out of the very air I breathed. "Do Re Me" was part of the basic music curriculum.

It wasn't until college that I actually saw Maria and company hiking across the silver screen. It was Sadie Hawkins reverse weekend at Pacific Union College, and I got asked to *The Sound of Music* by a hardened veteran

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of a couple dozen encounters. She was thrilled to be initiating a virgin, as it were—probably the last one on Howell Mountain. She brought popcorn and sang all the songs. I thought it was nice, but like many another initiate, I was left wondering, "Is that it?"

The years have slipped by. I've seen the film several more times, and I've seen my children watch the film. A couple of years ago, our four year old went through a three-month stage where he insisted on being called Friedrich, and calling his mother and me Fraulein Maria and the Captain. He insisted he was 14, and told his teachers at preschool to call him Friedrich. I was beginning to fear this phase might be permanent, but it was replaced by a new and consuming interest in pirates.

You don't have to take my word for it—you can probably trust your own experience—when I tell you the *The Sound of Music* is at the heart of Adventist cultural literacy. Of all the films ever made, ahead of even *Ben Hur* and the complete Walt Disney set from *Old Yeller* to *Treasure Island* and *The Computer Wore Tennis Shoes*, *The Sound of Music* holds a special place in our cinematic heritage. It is *the* film we all hold in common.

"Climb Every Mountain" was the class song for the graduates of 1968 at Laurelwood Academy. It was also the class song for the graduates of 1968 at Grand Ledge Academy. "Climb Every Mountain" was probably the class song for a lot of other academies in the late 1960s. When the first Adventist showing of the film in Colorado occurred at Campion Academy in 1969, people drove from across the state to attend. The gym was "packed to the rafters," according to one observer, for the most successful senior benefit in memory.

At the Andrews University premier, Adventists who wouldn't see the film in a theater drove down from Toronto on Sabbath afternoon to swell the hallowed halls of Johnson Gymnasium. People from all over Maine drove to Atlantic Union College for the showing, and when the sound system went out, the audience supplied the music from memory. One of our friends at Andrews University remembers a vacation in New York where she talked her father, an Andrews professor, into taking her and her brother to a showing of *The Sound of Music* at a theater. Her mother wouldn't go because if there had been a fire in the theater, she "wouldn't have been ready."

The previous generation knew where it was when Kennedy was shot. We know where we were when we first saw *The Sound of Music*. I asked my Argentinean wife, a latecomer to the American cultural scene: "March 1974, Glendale Academy," she replied, without hesitation. And it's not just a film that many of us have seen. It's a film we've seen again . . . and again . . . and again. One of my students told me that even before her family owned a VCR, every December her mother would rent a VCR and a copy of *The Sound of Music* for a family showing.

Some Adventists would no doubt rather have a more subtle and intricate film as our church's central cinematic legacy—perhaps something like *The Seventh Seal* or even *Jesus of Montreal*. The fact is, we have *The Sound of Music*. Why? Some reasons apply to any audience for the film.

The film has a lot to offer children—it gratifies several of their central fantasies. First of all, children are tremendously important in the film. They are seen and heard—and appreciated. As the stars of Captain von Trapp's party, they sing "So Long, Farewell" to a group of admiring guests. They win over the Baroness by crooning "The Sound of Music": "Georg, you never told me how enchanting your children are." They put on a wonderful puppet show, and they top off their accomplishments by winning first place at the Salzburg Folk Festival. The typical child who watches the

film can thrill to imagining himself or herself just as talented and appreciated as these screen children.

Furthermore, the children are cute, friendly to each other, and abundant—growing on trees, to adapt an image from the film. All of us who worried about crooked teeth or acne, who fretted about having no one to play with except one "dumb little brother" or sister, can bask in 172 minutes of raised self-esteem, sibling perfection, and plenitude.

But even from a child's point of view, the film does not exist in a pure state of naive wish fulfillment—a sufficient cloud on the horizon allows the wish fulfillment to pass the suspension of disbelief. The children have lost their mother several years earlier, and their father is encased in a shell of stern repression. Enter Fraulein Maria.

One of Freud's more fruitful discussions, in my opinion, describes a supposedly universal phenomenon he calls the Family Romance. In the family romance, children reach an age where they begin to see deficiencies in their parents and begin to compare their parents with other parents, real or imagined. Not surprisingly, children are able to imagine better parents than their own: in material possessions, character, talent, community prestige. And they align themselves with these imagined parents by supposing themselves temporarily misplaced children, out of their real home, who will someday be rescued when their "real" parents return to claim them. There are many examples of this fantasy being played out in literature: in Dickens' novels, for instance, or in the children's classic *Nobody's Boy.* One might say Adventism itself is based on a celestial family romance where God, the perfect Parent, rescues us out of this vale of tears and takes us to our heavenly home.

A strictly terrestial version of the family romance takes place in *The Sound of Music.* Having had only the shadowiest of mothers and a distant father, the children are virtually orphaned before Maria marches through the gates singing "I Have Confidence." This replacement fairy-godmother mother can magically make play-clothes out of old curtains, sing enchanting songs, and, most important, make the children feel and be enchanting themselves—"Is there anything you can't do, Fraulein?" asks Baroness Schraeder. Not only is Maria perfection herself—she brings the captain around. In one of the more sentimental scenes—I found myself torn between tearing up and gagging when I reviewed it the other day—the captain's heart melts when he first hears the children singing. He joins in the chorus, and then awkwardly embraces them all afterward. Thus, the children are elevated from an essentially dysfunctional home to a perfect one. This is an imaginative pattern that many children devour.

From a parent's point of view, the film supplies two obvious lines of attraction. First, we have good "wholesome" entertainment for our children. The story is pretty well innocent, sanitized, uplifting, etc.—only the puppets drink beer—and secondly, kids like it. Parents know how unusual this combination is, and they treasure it. Finally, parents of

my generation can look at the film nostalgically, as a reminder of their own childhood.

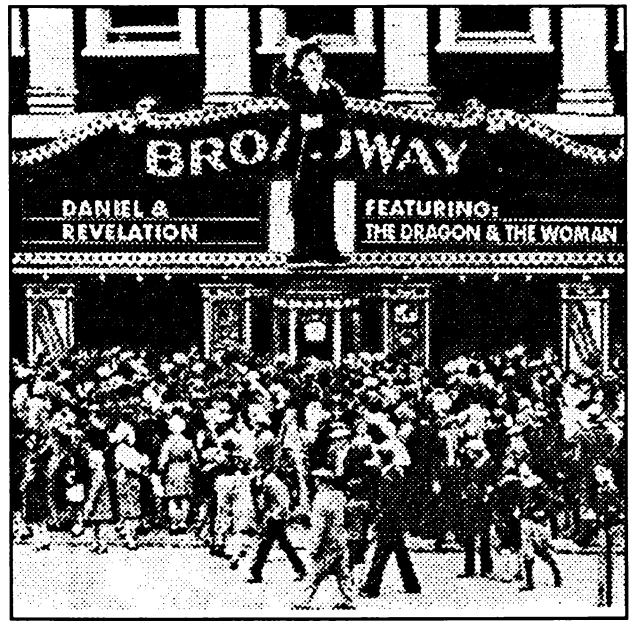
But perhaps there are some more particularly Adventist reasons why we watch the film. It is certainly full of motifs we find familiar. I don't want to insist too much on the apocalyptic flight to the hills in the face of unwarranted persecution. After all, this time it is the Catholics fleeing the Nazis, instead of the Adventists fleeing the Catholics, an irony we should appreciate; but what Adventist child hasn't at one time or another daydreamed about that always imminent flight?

I remember being captivated by a book about the Waldenses as a child, all their adventures hiding out in the hills, and, if my memory serves me correctly, occasionally fighting back and vanquishing their opponents. I also read *Flee the Captor* a few times, and knew, in my imagination, every cranny of the rock face John Weidner descended, while the frustrated Germans cursed from above. I thought about what kinds of canned goods I'd like to take on our flight, if and when the time should arrive. Fleeing to the hills was part of the topography of my Adventist imagination.

But more obviously and perhaps more convincingly, the film taps into our repressed desire for song and dance. As Adventists, we have forbidden all uniform movement, except for Pathfinder drill marching—and note how we excel there. I am not trying to make an argument for academy sock hops, but I think our ban on dancing may have produced some ill effects. Inside many Adventists lurks a Fred Astaire or Ginger Rogers, all dressed up with nowhere to go. We want to sing and dance, to perform in musicals, even if they seem dumb and sentimental.

When I was at Loma Linda Academy, we had a class party with "folk-marching," a euphemism for square-dancing. Many of us had never really moved in a patterned way to music before, and we found it so enchanting that five or six of us signed up for square dancing lessons at a local mobile home park. We spent the next eight Tuesdays do-si-do-ing in a smoke-filled community room, while a caller with "Joe" emblazoned on his silver belt-buckle called out the numbers.

The Adventist tension with song and dance is part of a larger tension we feel between the church and the individual, which the film also explores. I think there is a spiritual crossroads at which we feel we must strike out on our own, apart from the church, or deny ourselves and commit wholly to the church. Part of Maria wants to be a nun and part of her wants to live in the world, apart from the abbey. "How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?" ask the nuns; and many Adventists, who also feel a tension about their degree of commitment vs. autonomy *vis à vis* the church, might ask "How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria's?" Like many Adventists, Maria appreciates the church and wants to be a part of it—at times she longs for a self-annihilating commitment—yet she and the mother superior doubt her fitness for such a commitment, and in many ways, Maria seems unfitted for the strict abbey life. For all it offers in terms of community and spiritual aura, the church can also be

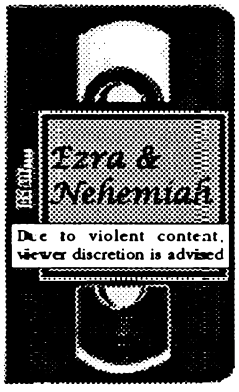


overpowering, oppressive. Many in my generation, I suspect, are not "Seeking a Sanctuary," to use Bull and Lockhart's rubric for Adventism, so much as seeking some kind of mediation between the sanctuary and the world.

Cinematographer Ted McCord created a special dark-to-light transition when Maria leaves the abbey walls to go to the captain's house, and that feeling of being out from under watchful eyes censuring our movements is shared by many Adventists and ex-Adventists.

Maria relishes freedom of movement and voice on the road, enjoys her new confidence, her sense of self as she faces life on her own, out of the shelter of conventional wisdom. However, when she comes face to face, up close with the captain during an Austrian folk dance, she flees back to the abbey; she isn't ready to deal with the troubling emotional situations freedom brings.

Maria's resolution is one much desired by many Adventists. She lives out from under the abbey walls, yet has the approval, blessing, and friendship of her sisters. She is at peace with the church and herself, enjoying both community and individuality. This Sabbath, think about how—like Mission Spotlight and Nuteena—*The Sound of Music* is an integral thread in the fabric of our Adventist lives.



I Cursed Them And Beat Them . . .

Nehemiah would expect Adventist liberals and conservatives to get busy creating true community.

by Alden Thompson

I JUST FINISHED READING *SPECTRUM*'S REPRINT (*Spectrum*, Vol. 23, No. 2) of "The Historian as Heretic," Jonathan Butler's introductory essay to the revised edition of Ron Numbers' *Prophetess of Health*. It was a poignant reminder of Adventism's struggle to bring scholar and believer together.

There was a time when a saint and scholar could live in the same skin. Could it happen again? Could the books of Ezra and Nehemiah help? Maybe—if we would read them.

Puzzles and Horrors

But that is precisely the problem, for the first line of defense against the puzzles and horrors in books like Ezra and Nehemiah is to avoid reading them. Do *we* value ethnic purity over marital fidelity, stress the communal at the expense of the individual, and support leaders who curse and beat the disobedient? Whether liberal or conservative, most of us find it hard to imagine *our* God adapting to a culture like that. So to the extent that we read Scripture at all, we tend to gravitate to safe passages that describe our kind of God.

The practical result is a diminished Bible, a "unity" that avoids the diversity in the text. David Scholer, representing a so-called "moderate" perspective in a debate on biblical authority, put it this way:

> The so-called "left" is prone to construe diversity as contradiction and consequently eliminate texts; the so-called "right" is prone to obliterate diversity by predetermined harmonizations and consequently eliminate texts. In either case, parts of the Bible are ignored or even rejected, in one case rather openly and in the other case rather subtly or even unconsciously.[1]

While conservatives could never formally jettison the hard parts of Scripture, Paul's

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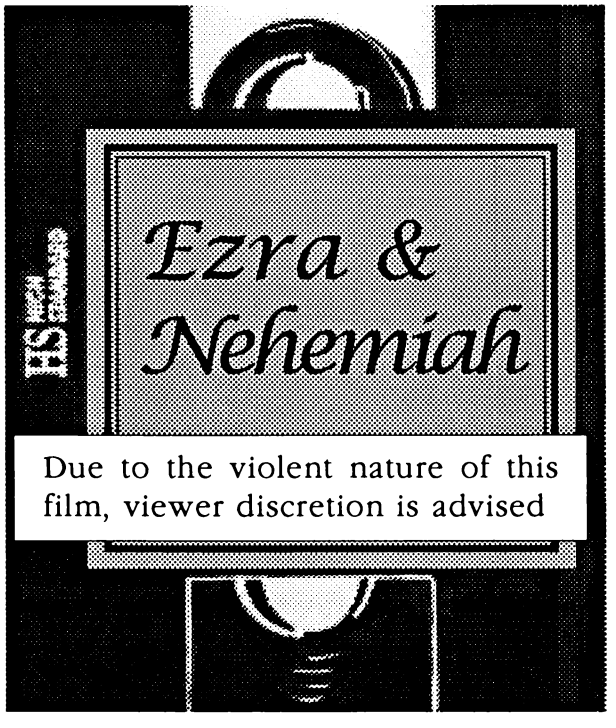
counsel to think on the "lovely" (Philippians 4:8) does invite misleading idealization. When, for example, the cover of the Sabbath school quarterly on the books of Samuel (first quarter 1991) featured a lovely Hannah with a handsome young Samuel chasing a butterfly, it did not prepare the readers for 1 Samuel 15 where God commanded the slaughter of the Amalekites, including the women, children, and animals; and where Samuel "hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord" (1 Samuel 15:3, 33, NRSV).[2] Understandably, the Sabbath school planners have decided to control the exposure to Scripture by returning to thematic quarterlies twice a year.

Selective reading of the Scripture, however, may shield us from the very texts that reveal God's compassionate condescension. A gracious God, willing to be all things to all people, is prepared for radical adaptation. That's an underlying assumption of this essay. If Jesus is the touchstone of everything good, then Ezra and Nehemiah can be instructive without being oppressive, for we are not constrained to see them as absolute norms. Yet these books were indeed part of Jesus' Bible and ours. So let's take them seriously and look more closely at those features that are most likely to puzzle or horrify modern readers.



Wild Man Nehemiah

Nehemiah sins against our ideal role model. If Jesus said to turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:39), Nehemiah seems to have gone the second mile for the express purpose of smiting the other cheek. Discovering that some had kept their non-Jewish wives, he "contended with them and cursed them and beat some of them and pulled out their hair" (Nehemiah 13:25). Too violent, Nehemiah. Too violent.

But why shouldn't he be violent? His was a violent age. God's messengers, even when "inspired," are not necessarily ideal role models. For Christians, Jesus will always be *the* model. Yet less-than-exemplary exemplars in Scripture provide something like "allowable" limits for a people of God in a sinful world. Even Paul, living in the light of Jesus' example, did not always maintain his 1 Corinthians 13 ideal. Thus we may admire Nehemiah for his active pursuit of worthwhile goals without feeling obligated to applaud his hair-pulling techniques.

Nehemiah, the man of action, however, should not tempt us to overlook Nehemiah, the man of prayer. For us, the man of action is always wound up tight. In the morning he hits the ground running and he never slows down until he falls into bed at night—if he goes to bed at all. By contrast, when Nehemiah heard how bad things were in Jerusalem, he turned to prayer. In his own words, "I sat down and wept, and mourned for days, fasting and praying before the God of heaven" (Nehemiah 1:4).

That impulse to pray in time of crisis finds an echo in Ellen White's clarion call before the General Conference delegates in 1901, at a

time when many feared that the church was facing disintegration: "Let every one of you go home, not to chat, chat, chat, but to pray. Go home and pray. Talk to God. Go home and plead with God to mold and fashion you after the divine similitude."[3]

In our day, however, prayer is more than simply a resource for addressing particular problems. It is also a crucial factor in preserving a sense of the sacred. In our secular age, information and analysis put every authority at risk. And those authorities linked with the holy (God, Scripture) are perhaps most vulnerable. The aura that surrounds the holy in traditional cultures evaporates before the onslaught of modern analysis. In an academic setting, close study of the Bible can diminish the traditional sense of the sacred and completely destroy it unless steps are taken to encourage "sacred" conversation.

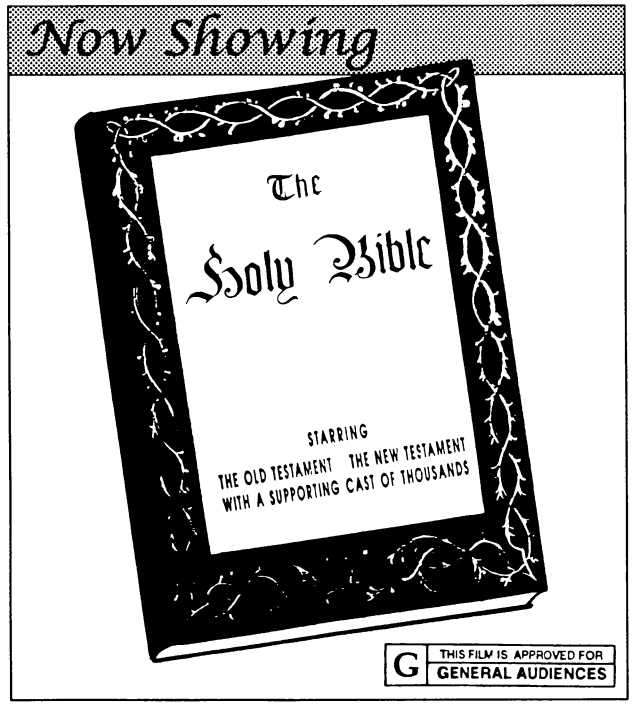
In that connection a powerful sense of God's presence growing out of a lively devotional experience may have been the key factor that enabled Ellen White to be both free and analytical with Scripture without losing a sense of its sacredness. She could juggle parallel texts and adopt differing interpretations for the same biblical passage while still retaining a "high" view of Scripture.

Non-pietists might worry that prayer could be a substitute for rigorous thought or essential activity. That wasn't true for Nehemiah or for Ellen White. Prayer was preparation for action and an invitation to even clearer logic. Nehemiah, in particular, tells us that in God's work, people of action are people of prayer.

Foreign Wives

Christians who believe Jesus destroyed the dividing wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 2:14) can scarcely fathom the call for ethnic purity, especially at the cost of marital fidelity. It must be first said, however, that the biblical perspective on marriage, divorce, and foreigners is not monolithic. Paul said "the unbelieving wife is made holy through her husband" (1 Corinthians 7:14). In the Gospels, Jesus decreed no divorce at all (Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18) or divorce only for "unchastity" (Matthew 5:32; 19:9). By contrast, Ezra and Nehemiah demanded that foreign wives be sent away in obedience to Mosaic law (Ezra 9-10; Nehemiah 9-10, 13; cf. Deuteronomy 7:3; 23:3-6). Yet, under specified conditions, Mosaic law also allowed an Israelite male to keep a beautiful woman captured in war (Deuteronomy 21:10-14). Even within the Old Testament, Ruth the Moabite and Naamah, the Ammonite mother of Rehoboam (1 Kings 14:21), the only one of Solomon's 700 wives to be mentioned by name, are notable exceptions to the very laws enforced by Ezra and Nehemiah. Finally, Isaiah 56:3-5 welcomes into the assembly of God's people the eunuchs and foreigners forbidden in Deuteronomy 23:1-6.

If Scripture varies in its stance towards marriage and foreigners, then the "emergency" that motivated Ezra and Nehemiah can be



taken seriously without making it normative for all time. While the Old Testament can be remarkably large-hearted—Isaiah 19:18-25, for example, even declares that Egypt and Assyria would be just as much God's people as Israel—such openness was not possible when Israel's faith was at risk. In a Jewish temple at Elephantine in Egypt, for example, Yahweh, Israel's God, actually had a female consort, just like the old Canaanite gods. The same Elephantine records testify to the breakdown of human compassion. When Nehemiah 5 interrupts the all-important narrative of the rebuilding of the wall to address the issue of internal slavery and high interest rates, it is against the backdrop of Elephantine documents that confirm at least one instance of 60 percent interest per annum. Records in the larger world of the Persian empire reveal one case of interest at 100 percent per month.[4]

In Jesus Christ all ethnic claims are suspect. Never again can ethnic purity take priority over marital fidelity as it did in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Yet given God's choice to witness to the world through an ethnic community, we can find solidarity with Ezra and Nehemiah at the level of "faithfulness to promise," for they were calling the people back to their covenant with God. *Covenant loyalty* for them carried all the weight and more that the word *promise* does for us. It meant severing all ties that could put the covenant at risk. For them, as for us, if promises to God mean nothing, can the collapse of all promises be far behind?

No doubt the teachings of Jesus have played an important part in the individualism that now dominates Western thinking. But what about our promises to God and to one another? Are they alive and well in Adventism? Or do we just mirror the American scene? In a remarkable article on the breakdown of the American family, remarkable because it appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, Barbara DaFoe Whitehead claims that "fewer than half of all adult Americans today regard the idea of sacrifice for others a positive moral virtue."[5]

From anguished scenes in Ezra-Nehemiah we can learn about the value of promises. Then we can move to the New Testament and ask, in the light of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, what it means to be faithful to God and to one another.

Government to the Rescue

The Persians not only supported Judaism with money, they also spelled out brutal punishments for anyone interfering with Jewish renewal: impale him on a beam drawn from his own house and make his house a dunghill (Ezra 6:11, 12). Nehemiah's cursing and beating seem genteel by comparison.

American Adventism treats the idea of church-state separation almost like an eleventh commandment. But when our ethics are informed by all of Scripture, the issue appears to be mostly a pragmatic one. In a secular culture, one can argue for rigorous separation of church and state. But we should be ready to ask if the relegation of religion to the private sphere may actually increase the power of a secular culture to dominate our lives, for in public matters we must pretend that religion is irrelevant. In the words of an advertising blurb for Stephen Carter's *The Culture of Disbelief* (BasicBooks [HarperCollins], 1993), "we force the religiously devout to act as if their faith doesn't really matter."

As for brutal forms of punishment, could they conceivably reappear as our culture suffers more and more from random and organized violence? Can we "turn the other cheek" at the civil and corporate level? From prison, in the aftermath of his plotting to overthrow Hitler, Dietrich Bonhoeffer struggled with the question of violence and found himself increasingly attracted to the Old Testament: "My thoughts and feelings seem to be getting more

and more like the Old Testament," he observed, "and no wonder, I have been reading it much more than the New for the last few months. . . . I don't think it is Christian to want to get to the New Testament too soon and too directly."[6]

Sacred Place and Ritual

Sacred place and ritual, so important to Ezra-Nehemiah, easily disappear in our day. But if we have no sacred place, neither high church ritual nor low church passion, how can we preserve a "sense" of the sacred in our secular world? Ari Goldman, religion correspondent for the New York *Times*, addresses such issues in his remarkable commentary on religion in a secular age, *The Search for God at Harvard*. The book chronicles the year Goldman spent at Harvard Divinity School under *Times* sponsorship. Even though the *Times* has been owned by Jews since 1896, Goldman thinks he was the first Sabbath-observant Jew ever hired by the paper.

Though by no means unique, the Harvard scene illustrates how the modern academic world puts the sacred at risk. In one striking narrative, Goldman tells the story of Fran, a young Christian Science woman (like Goldman, one of many curiosities at Harvard), who quite innocently and confidently spoke up in class one day on the topic of life after death. She referred to the resurrection in John 11, the story of Lazarus, as though it were a genuine historical event and proof for life after death. "There were audible snickers in the room," notes Goldman, adding: "In certain academic circles, especially at Harvard Divinity School, the Bible can be picked apart, examined, debated, and condemned but never, never accepted at face value as historic fact."

"When the snickers died down, the discussion continued as if Fran's suggestion that the Bible is history had simply not been made. It was apparently too outrageous even to contemplate."[7]

Prominent churchmen adopt a similar line. Episcopalian bishop John Shelby Spong, for example, bluntly disposes of the supernatural in the Gospel birth narratives:

> Stars do not wander, angels do not sing, virgins do not give birth, magi do not travel to a distant land to present gifts to a baby, and shepherds do not go in search of a newborn savior. I know of no reputable biblical scholar in the world today who takes these birth narratives literally.[8]

There has to be another way, for if the historian and the believer must be at war, the pendulum will continue to swing. Every Fundamentalism will breed a reaction, and every reaction will breed a new Fundamentalism. Adventism has been caught in that costly battle long enough.

Ezra and Nehemiah remind us that when the surrounding culture threatens faith, God's people must take special steps to preserve their faith, their sacred place, their sacred ritual.

Community and Individual

In contrast with our preoccupation with the individual, Ezra and Nehemiah put corporate needs first, whether deporting foreign wives (Ezra 10), canceling debts to one's fellow citizens (Nehemiah 5), or deciding who

should live in the city (Nehemiah 11:1, 2). Admittedly the debt issue pitted the individual rights of the rich against the individual rights of the poor. But it was the good of the community that dictated the decision on behalf of the poor.

Ezra and Nehemiah sensed that faith is preserved in community. Though they gave of themselves unstintingly as individuals, their goal was a strong community. When Nehemiah threw down the challenge, it was the response of the community that assured success: "Let us start building!" they said. With that, "they committed themselves to the common good" (Nehemiah 2:18).

The New Testament, too, knows of the importance of community (Hebrews 10:25) as do modern sociologists. Commenting on the attempt of neo-orthodoxy to recover some sense of transcendent "objectivity" in matters of faith over against the "subjectivizing, compromising" efforts of "liberal theology," Peter Berger observes: "Put crudely, if one is to believe what neo-orthodoxy wants us to believe, in the contemporary situation, then one must be rather careful to huddle together closely and continuously with one's fellow believers."[9] It may affront our intellectual pride, but much of what we consider reasonable is nothing more than the consensus of our peers. So let us choose our peers with care.

Historian and Believer

When the Enlightenment rejected ecclesiastical authority in favor of human reason, a Fundamentalist revolt was perhaps assured. And though our post-modernist age is distinctly less optimistic about the all-conquering capabilities of human reason, the old paradigm dies hard. Thus many continue to define the issue simply as believer vs. historian: you are one or the other; you cannot be both. In that connection Jonathan Butler's comment is revealing when he states that Ron Numbers and Arthur White of the Ellen G. White Estate "saw the issues in the same stark terms."[10] Both assumed the same paradigm, for both assumed that the "truth" would be destructive to faith. The only difference was that one was willing to sacrifice faith in order to see the evidence, while the other did not wish to see the evidence for fear it would destroy faith.

I well remember sitting in as an invited guest on Numbers' meeting with the West coast Adventist historians in 1980, an event Butler mentions. When the question came up in an informal question and answer session, Numbers said he could see only two alternatives: (1) pursue the truth and destroy the church; or (2) abandon the search for truth in order to preserve the church.

There has to be another way, for if the historian and the believer must be at war, the pendulum will continue to swing. Every Fundamentalism will breed a reaction, and every reaction will breed a new Fundamentalism. Adventism has been caught in that costly battle long enough.

In my own writing on Scripture, I often appeal to Ellen White as the basis for a non-Fundamentalist approach to Scripture. I insist on honesty with the text. That means seeing what the text is and hearing what it says. And the text says too much about God, providence, and miracles for me to join in the snickers at Harvard. I am not prepared to accept a world without God, or Scripture without miracles. And I can hear several million amens from my brothers and sisters in the Adventist faith. Adventist academics should be able to join in the hearty amens, too, as they continue their wholehearted search for truth. It was Ellen White who said, "Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation."[11]

Unless we are prepared to say that this world is all there is and that we have followed cunningly devised fables, then we must follow the godly example of Ezra and Nehemiah. And we must listen to the book of Hebrews admonish us: "Consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24, 25).

A survey of the history of ideas shows how easy it is to be victimized by the contemporary mode of thinking. None of us can stand alone very long. So, like the beleaguered Jews in Nehemiah's day, let us come together, look each other in the eye and declare, "Let us start building." And it may be said of us as it was of them, "So they committed themselves to the common good" (Nehemiah 2:18). Taking Scripture seriously is a great place to start. By God's grace, *Adventist Review*, *Ministry*, *Spectrum*, Sabbath School, General Conference, Review and Herald, Pacific Press, and many more can participate in a back-to-the-Bible movement in Adventism.

The influence of Jesus' words make me reluctant to adopt Nehemiah's cursing, beating, and hair-pulling. But I do like to listen when my friend Nehemiah turns pietist, reminding me that once when he faced a serious crisis of faith in his community, "he sat down and wept, and mourned for days, fasting and praying before the God of heaven" (Nehemiah 1:4). Jesus said that such spiritual exercises are best done in private (Matthew 6:1, 5, 6). But with that kind of preparation in private, the hearing of God's Word in public just might touch us as it did the disciples on the road to Emmaus: "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32).

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Adapted from M. C. Escher's "System IIIA"

Adventism as Both/And, Not Either/Or

An Adventist theologian says the biblical God is greater than the certainties of either liberals or conservatives.

by Herold Weiss

AT THE 1992 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE Andrews Society for Religious Studies in San Francisco I was amused to hear a well-respected Adventist theologian claim that the Bible does not teach retributive justice. Instead, it teaches social justice. The theologian flatly asserted that retributive justice is not a biblical teaching, and then gave some proofs to show that social justice is biblical. If this speaker amused me, I was amazed when the one who gave a prepared response—and later the audience, containing most of the Adventist theologians in the North American continent—failed to question such blunt misrepresentation.

Readers of the Bible know that at the core of Deuteronomy, of the deuteronomic historians, and of the exilic prophets is the teaching that humans, and God's people in particular, have gotten and will get from God what they deserve. If that is not retributive justice, I don't know what is. They also know that the Book of Job is the great theological debate about the merits of conceiving God's justice as retributive.

On the Sabbath before Christmas 1992, a seminary professor preached to our Spanish church in Berrien Springs. His burden was to expose what he considered an ominous trend in Adventism: an emphasis on the certainty of salvation as God's activity. According to our visiting preacher, this kind of theology is unbiblical, dangerous, and contrary to the Adventist theological heritage. Adventists are not Augustinians who trust God's grace to do everything; rather, we are Arminians who recognize that human agents must do their part. We do not agree with Calvin's doctrines of total depravity and predestination, thereby leaving our salvation to God, basing our certainty on his sovereignty. All this is unbiblical. For our illumination we were given a long list of texts pointing out the conditionality of salvation. The

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refrain of the morning was 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall" (RSV).

Readers of the Bible, however, know that any number of Psalms praise God because salvation is his doing and humans can rest assured in his power. The Gospel of John is one extended affirmation that those who believe that the Son is one with the Father *have* eternal life.

My experiences at San Francisco and Berrien Springs left me pondering what lay behind them. After some reflection I am ready to offer a tentative answer. Rather than to work my way slowly toward it, I will offer it up front in all its stark simplicity: Both anecdotes demonstrate that Adventists have been trained to think in terms of either/or. Whether we are trying to catch up with a major theological trend that has been already firmly established for the past 20 years, or trying to prevent a tradition from informing our theological horizon, it is assumed that in order to defend one position, another must be attacked.

Once Adventists caught up to the fact that in order to be politically correct one had to be for social justice, we began to find in the Bible evidence that the kingdom of God is not a personal but a social reality. Amos, Hosea, and Micah regained their voice among us. During my student days at the seminary in Washington, D.C., my professors denounced the social gospel as unbiblical, the creation of Chicago liberals of the 1930s. When in 1958 I took a course in exegesis of Hosea in Hebrew at the seminary, we spent the quarter deciding whether Gomer bath Diblaim had been the real wife of Hosea or an allegorized figure in his literary imagination.

In those student days we read word studies denying that the kingdom was a social reality. According to those word studies, the Hebrew word for *kingdom* did not refer to national or geographic entities, but meant *sovereignty* or *rule*, and was to be understood in an atomistic fashion. Thus God's kingdom has to do with his dominion over individuals, just as British citizens are under the sovereignty of their queen wherever they may be.

Those word studies are now justifiably seen as good examples of special pleading. I gladly witness some of my own former seminary students taking a stand for the social gospel. As a matter of fact, it is not just the pressure to be politically correct that impels us to give the gospel of the kingdom its legitimate social dimension. The concept that the kingdom is basically a social reality is biblical. But why do my former students assert that the biblical warrant for social justice or the healthy skepticism called for by human agency in salvation makes it necessary to deny biblical warrants for retributive justice and certainty in salvation? Why does it have to be either/or?

I would suggest that at work here is the assumption that truth is One. Adventism arose and marched into history led by the banner of THE TRUTH. In our scale of values the top spot is occupied by TRUTH, and those who follow such a banner are eager to trample down all errors. According to this vision, the Christian life is a continuous search for truth. In this search we advance from truth to truth until we arrive at THE TRUTH, which is at one and the same time ALL TRUTH (notice singular). When truth is the highest good, this invariably means that at one time or another we will need to step on humility, justice, and love in order to reach it. This approach seems to make it necessary for us to have an extra supply of revelation that guarantees OUR TRUTH.

Not so long ago, the news was full of the debate following George Bush's decision to grant pardons to six members of the executive branch under Ronald Reagan after they were charged by a special prosecutor of criminal wrongdoing in connection with the Iran-Contra

scandal. What interested me about this episode was that while some argued that even though the prosecutorial investigations had been going on for six years, they should continue as long as necessary for the American people to learn the truth about Iran-Contra. Others argued that the fetish for establishing all the details of that sorry affair would not necessarily serve justice, and might, in fact, do great damage to the guarantees of confidentiality essential to the consultations between a president and his advisors.[1]

Making the truth a *sine qua non* is not necessarily healthy, either to the body politic or to the community of faith. Health, love, and forgiveness are important considerations that, at times, may take precedence over truth. Establishing those times is what moral dilemmas are all about.

Are we justified in reducing God's salvation to our Adventist version of it? To claim that our message is THE TRUTH that solves the problems of all peoples everywhere is quite presumptuous, if not incredible. As Adventists we may defend the legitimacy of our claims. I do question the necessity to make our claims exclusive.

My second point is that reducing THE TRUTH to propositional statements is reductionist and therefore misleading. Reading the letters of Paul, I find many things that intrigue me no end. One such is that in the letter to the Galatians Paul refers four times to "the truth" or "the truth of the gospel" (Galatians 2:5, 14; 4:16; 5:7, NIV). It is clear that when he wrote Galatians, Paul was at his fighting best (or worst). He did not pull punches, and even landed one below the belt (Galatians 5:12, pardon the pun). He engaged in a heated dispute about "the truth of the gospel." I have read the letter many times searching for the passage where Paul reduces that truth to a declarative sentence, but to no avail. Most of us would feel very uncomfortable if anyone suggested that for Paul the truth of the gospel is that Jews and Gentiles are to eat together, or that Gentiles should not be circumcised. In fact, how to understand Paul's attitude toward circumcision is not all that clear. On the one hand, he insists that "neither circumcision nor uncircumcision" avail for anything, which is the negative way of saying that for God circumcision is a matter of indifference. On the other, however, he is involved in a major debate about circumcision, giving it thereby quite a bit of significance. What are we, then, to make of this debate about circumcision with which Paul defends "the truth of the gospel"?

What is the biblical truth about justice?[2] About salvation? About circumcision? Those who presuppose that Truth is One are caught by the either/or syndrome and are bound to give us something less than the biblical truth. As a matter of fact, on almost any given topic the Bible teaches both/and.

I imagine the reason most of use refuse to admit this is that we do not want to affirm that Truth is not One, but Many. But how can anyone who claims to be faithful to the whole Bible deny pluralism in the Scriptures? If anything, the Bible is its own strongest argument for pluralism. The only reason some sincere Christians believe in righteousness by faith and others just as sincerely believe in salvation by works is because the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments, teaches both. It is only by carving out canons within the Canon that biblical truth can be exhibited as One. Dealing with the biblical witnesses to

God's kingdom, we have to come to terms with their incommensurability (that is, the inappropriateness of comparing two entities for which we have no common standard of measurement). It is unwise to stack them up and count them. The truth we are searching for is not found at the top of the pile. Salvation, after all, is not a truth but an *experience*. The Gospel of John very wisely identifies the Truth not with any biblical passage but with a Person who lived outside the pages of the Bible.

Reflecting on this leads me to agree with Raimundo Panikkar when he argues that the truth is neither One nor Many, but both One and Many. Pluralism is not plurality but openness.[3] Pluralism does not affirm the ultimate truth that Truth is Many. Neither does it consider itself a transitional stage before final unity is attained. Reality is incommensurable with both unity and plurality.

Reading a recent issue of *Spectrum*,[4] I was drawn to Hugh Dunton's placing of Mohammed and Ellen White on parallel tracks and tracing lines of comparison and contrast. He starts confessing to "hard choices" that may cost him friends:

> First, if one accepts either of the prophets on his or her own declarations, there is only one way of salvation. Neither way permits much flexibility, if any. To move to a position of religious pluralism is to go beyond what either of the protagonists believed. A pluralist view would therefore be almost a "higher revelation," and falsify the original messages (p. 40).

Dunton's willingness to be boxed in, in more than one way, is another example of the either/or mentality. His considerable grasp of Islam, which his article amply demonstrates, does not offer us a path to enlightenment when it is placed at the service of a very narrow apologetic task—introducing Ellen White to Moslems.[5] What makes it necessary for us to deny others in order to affirm ourselves? Is it the need to claim a monopoly on salvation and God's power, fueled by our either/or mentality? Either God chose us, or he didn't.

The Bible itself presents more than one way of salvation. Who are we to reduce it to ours? Faced with the Assyrian threat toward the end of the eighth century B.C., the prophet Micah announced that Jerusalem would become a heap of rubble and the hill where the temple stood would be plowed like a field (Micah 3:12). His contemporary, Isaiah, on the other hand, affirmed that, even if the rulers and the people would pay for their sins, the monarchy and the temple were secure (Isaiah 4:5, 6).

Salvation has been understood differently by different people at different times depending on their existential understanding of what they need to be saved from. In the Old Testament, salvation is from hunger, injustice, dishonor, and oppression, and it is to be achieved on earth. In the New Testament, salvation is from the power of the law, the heavenly intermediary powers, sin, and death, and it is to be gained in heaven. Are we justified in reducing God's salvation to our Adventist version of it as expressed toward the end of the 20th century? To claim that our message is THE TRUTH that solves the problems of all peoples everywhere is quite presumptuous, if not incredible. As Adventists, we may defend the legitimacy of our claims. I am not questioning their validity. I am questioning the necessity to make our claims exclusive of all others. Ours should be a relational, rather than an exclusive, distinctiveness.

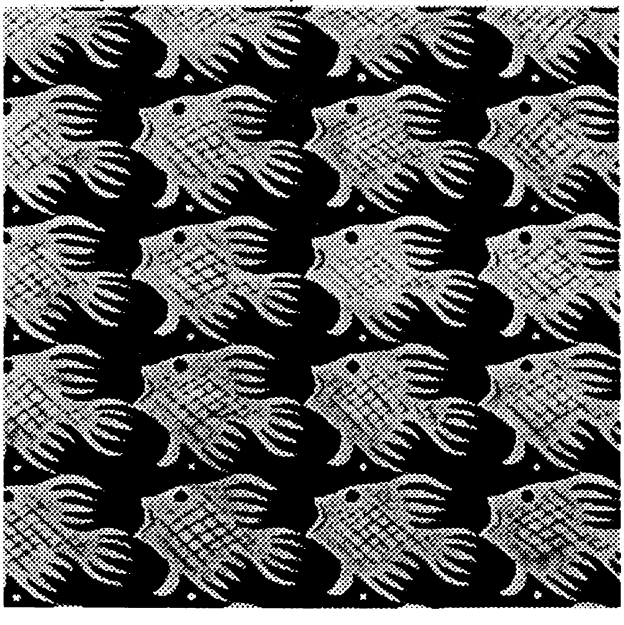
Pluralism does not claim a "higher revelation" that falsifies both Mohammed and Ellen White, as Dunton would have us believe. Rather it allows both Mohammed and Ellen White to have their say, just as both Micah and Isaiah, Paul and James have theirs in the Bible. Pluralism does not claim superior knowledge. It just reminds us of the virtue of humility in our epistemological claims. It also discourages us from colonial adventurism in our mission-

ary efforts. Pluralism takes away from us the imperialist tradition that entered Christianity with Constantine and has kept Christianity launching Crusades ever since.

There are two basic reasons why we should change our thinking from either/or to both/and. The first, as argued above, is that the Bible itself is pluralistic. The second, closely related to the first, is that any pretense to having built the edifice of truth is suspect of being nothing but an ideology. In other words, the presentation of truth in propositional statements is from the biblical perspective reductionist and from the philosophical perspective ideological.

The attention given to hermeneutics in the recent past has made us aware of the flaws in our hermeneutical circles. Ultimately, there is no hermeneutic without presuppositions, even when we make every effort not to allow our presuppositions to determine our methods or our results.[6] This means that in our exegetical work, as Willi Marxen (and many others) reminds us, we must make every effort carefully to lay out our presuppositions and distinguish between pre-understandings and pre-judgments.[7] Students of the Bible come routinely to the text with both. Do we approach the texts in order to have our prejudgments confirmed, or our pre-understandings corrected? The hermeneutic of suspicion has exposed how the interpretation of texts answers to the demands of power.[8] Besides, the sociology of knowledge has demonstrated how truth depends on the social canopy that shelters it.[9]

Adapted from M. C. Escher's "System I^{C}-I^{C} Varient of Nos. 29 and 84"



Adventism cannot hope to have a message for the world if it retains an unbending confrontational stance buttressed by an either/or mentality.[10] Its message will be taken for an ideology whose time is past. The future belongs to those willing to enter the dialogue that is, at this crucial moment in history, shaping a rapidly changing world. The events of the past several years, which have transformed the world before our very eyes, were guided by forces that no one saw coming, and on which no one seemed to have a handle. This experience should make us all believers in a God with the ability to be incarnated in a thousand and one ways. If we wish to be instruments of the divine activity, we must be open to it. A dialogical stance sees intrinsic value in dialogue itself. It cannot see dialogue as instrumental to conversions.

The future of Adventism cannot be found in the winning of theological battles whose only purpose is to defend ideological turf. Claiming to control "higher ground" is a military metaphor that may have been meaningful at the time of the battle of Gettysburg, but is totally anachronistic in today's world. Trying to compete with Hal Lindsay for the most revealing apocalyptic scenario while the struggle for non-militancy and peace on earth is being won by other Christians of the anabaptist tradition is to misspend our energies. The end of the Cold War does not mean just the end of atomic confrontation between two superpowers. As significant as this may be, more significantly the collapse of the Soviet Union marks the end of ideologies as ways of salvation.[11]

Ideological isolationism is no more productive among Christians than it is among nations. Whether it be China, Albania, or Adventism, trying to do it alone is an exercise in futility. To pretend otherwise is to fail to see "the signs of the times."

Unexamined ideological assumptions prevent the critical examination of traditional positions. This facilitates the making of universal claims for truths that happen to occupy a position of prominence at a given time. If it is true that we must be wary of ethnocentrism,[12] we must also be wary of chronocentrism.[13] It would seem to be the height of folly to absolutize ourselves into the present when the incarnation of Christ teaches us of the relativizing of God's very self in history, and the Trinity teaches us that diversity is at the very heart of the Being of God.

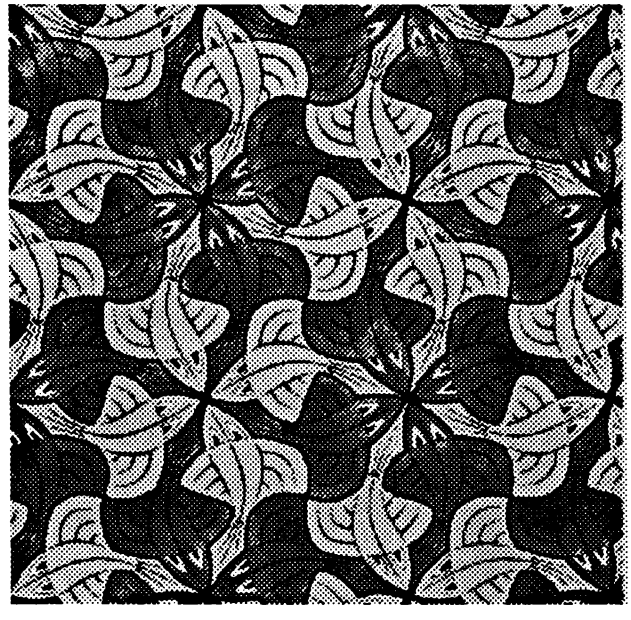
The incommensurability of God is the Mystery of Being. To affirm this mystery is not a retreat from the demands of our calling and our identity, a "failure of nerve," to use Gilbert Murray's phrase to describe the Greeks of the Hellenistic Age.[14] To recognize the limits of rational inquiry is not necessarily an escape into mysticism. Rather, to accept that Reason is not coterminus with Being is to affirm that God is not an epistemological problem but an ontological status. Exclusivist claims on God convert a mystery into a problem in order to offer a solution.[15] To reduce God and salvation to propositional truths presented in an either/or framework is to make a caricature of God.

Christians must live the dialogical life-style because they recognize that even in the revelation of Truth in Jesus Christ, God did not cease being the ultimate Mystery. No Adventist, no matter how much of an Arminian he or she might be, would wish to deny that salvation comes from God. That being the case, the possibility for other valid experiences of salvation must remain open. Exclusivism builds fences and locks in God's caricature. But can those who live within the fence expect the rest of humanity not to recognize who is inside?[16]

If what has been said so far is an argument against exclusivism, it should be clear that I am not arguing for inclusivism. If exclusivism claims universality for its particularisms and seeks to conquer those outside by means of crusades, inclusivism patronizingly extends its vision to absorb others without bothering to ask for their consent. It is a more subtle form of Christian imperialism. Its most famous example was given by Karl Rahner who, wishing to defend God's boundless grace and unwilling to claim that only church members are saved, postulated the existence of "anonymous Christians."[17]

Pluralism moves beyond exclusivism and inclusivism and offers the opportunity for genuine dialogue—dialogue which is not just looking for similarities helpful for public relations and salesmanship, but which is willing to recognize differences as grounded in the incommensurability of God. As Christians engaged in discovering the meaning of Jesus Christ in our lives we should be eager to receive help from our neighbors, even the non-Christian ones, with whom we share the human predicament.

Adapted from M. C. Escher's "System X^{E*}"



Theological sectarianism is something that Adventism tried to get rid of with the famous production of *Questions on Doctrine.*[18] This work resulted from an attempt to dialogue with other evangelicals and in the process shed our sectarian past. The results of that initiative, however, have been the opposite of those desired by the participants. Rather than entering into dialogue with evangelicals as an ecclesiastical community, we have retreated even further into isolationism. Thus, while sociologically we are losing our sectarianism, theologically we have become, officially, reactionary. Would that the reverse were true.

In the time of Christ, Jews debated whether the Sabbath was their exclusive possession or if it belonged also to the rest of humanity. Some argued that it was impossible for a non-Jew to observe the Sabbath, since the Sabbath was God's special gift to the Jews, marking them as God's peculiar people. Others, like Philo of Alexandria, argued that people from many nations observed the Sabbath and in this way recognized the superiority of the God of Israel and his prophet Moses.[19] The Christian community behind the Gospel of Mark seems to take sides in this debate when it remembers that Jesus said "the Sabbath was made for humankind" (Mark 2:28, NRSV). One can only wonder if the reason this saying of Jesus is omitted by the authors of Matthew and Luke, who undoubtedly copied the rest of this story from Mark, is in any way due to their having taken a position on the opposite side of this debate.

The debate itself illustrates the exclusivistic vs. the inclusivistic alternatives. It would seem that Paul transcended this debate when he relativized all days (Romans 14:5; Galatians 4:10), clearly condemned all human pre-judgments (Romans 14:4, 10), and in an exultant praise affirmed the mystery of God and the incomprehensibility of his ways (Romans 11:33-35). Paul's pastoral project in his letter to the Romans is to make his readers come to terms with God as the one who had already accepted those who thought differently on matters that they considered essential (Romans 14:1-15:7). I find Paul's concern most timely. I would not wish, however, to claim that affirming that the Sabbath is a special day, either for a peculiar people or for humanity, is not biblical.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. I am aware that the charges against these officials are related to the cover-up of their actions when they lied to Congress, and as such merit careful attention.

2. See H. Weiss, "How Can Jeremiah Compare the Migration of Birds to Knowledge of God's Justice?" *Bible Review* 2 (1986) pp. 42-45.

3. "The Jordan, The Tiber and the Ganges: Three Kairological Moments of Christic Self-Consciousness," in J. Hick and P. Knitter (eds.) *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 109, 110.

4. *Spectrum*, 22:4 (October 1992).

5. This reminds me of the very defensive opening toward Protestant biblical scholarship on the part of Pope Leo XIII in 1893. He conceded that maybe some Catholic scholars should learn something about it to combat more effectively its advances. See his encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*, which, in part, reads, "It is most desirable, therefore, that there should be numerous members of the clergy well prepared . . . to repulse hostile assaults, chiefly thrusting in that armor of God recommended by the Apostle (Eph. 6:13-17), but also not unaccustomed to modern methods of attack."

6. R. Bultmann, "The Problem of Hermeneutics" (1950) and "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" (1957) in Schubert Ogden (transl. and ed.) *The New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), pp. 69-93, 145-153.

7. *Jesus and Easter: Did God Raise the Historical Jesus From the Dead?* (V.P. Furnish, transl.) (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1990), pp. 45-46.

8. For a rationale, description, and demonstration of what is involved, see Elizabeth Schuessler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her* (New York: Crossroads, 1984).

9. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of*

Knowledge (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966).

10. Kierkegaard's famous Either/Or is not at all ours. He insisted on the need to choose between all the supports for social, economic, cultural, psychological, spiritual life, and the claim of Jesus' divinity on the other. He presented the choice as absurd.

11. Even the Chinese, who insist on maintaining an authoritarian one-party political system, are silently abandoning the economic "truths" of Maoism.

12. The tragedy of the end of the Cold War is that it has meant also the revival of exclusivistic ethnic claims. The gospel, of course, aims directly at their elimination (Galatians 3:28).

13. Panikkar, *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*, p. 97.

14. *Five Stages of Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), chapter 3.

15. See Gabriel Marcel, *The Mystery of Being* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983), (original 1950-1951). Marcel insists that at the core of a mystery is the impossibility of a "solution."

16. In the words of Schubert Ogden, "Whatever else our age may still be willing to accept from us, surely it will no longer hear of a Christianity that is little more than a tribal religion with universal pretensions." "The Reformation That We Want," *Anglican Theological Review* 54 (1972), p. 268.

17. "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions," *Theological Investigations* (New York: Crossroads), IV, pp. 115-135. For a critique, see Eugene TeSelle, *Christ in Context: Divine Purpose and Human Possibility* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), pp. 163-169.

18. *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine: An Explanation of Certain Major Aspects of Seventh-day Adventist Belief, Prepared by a Representative Group of Seventh-day Adventist Leaders, Bible Teachers, and Editors* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1957).

19. See H. Weiss, "Philo on the Sabbath," in David T. Runia, David M. Hay, and David Winston (eds.), *Heirs of the Septuagint: Philo, Hellenistic Judaism, and Early Christianity* (Earle Hilgert *Festschrift*, Studia Philonica Annual, III, 1991), p. 99.

Hypnosis—Yes; SDAs Should Use It

An Adventist psychologist believes Ellen White would prefer that members use hypnosis rather than tranquilizers.

by John Berecz

I GREW UP ADVENTIST. CHURCH POTLUCKS, door-to-door Ingathering, and boarding academy were as much a part of my boyhood as the Milwaukee Braves and Green Bay Packers. Daily study of the Sabbath school lesson and twice-daily family worship were simply givens, like washing hands before meals. My devout parents taught us not only to seek God, but also to avoid Satan. Ouija boards, tarot cards, or anything even remotely smacking of Satan has always received a wide berth from me.

In more than 20 years of practicing psychotherapy, I had never utilized hypnosis in therapy because, like many fellow Adventists, I felt it was a form of mind control having more in common with spiritualistic seances than with science.

Imagine my surprise when early on I came across the following opinion regarding mesmerism (the forerunner of modern hypnosis):

> Phrenology and mesmerism are very much exalted. *They are good in their place*, but are seized upon by Satan as his most powerful agents to deceive and destroy souls.[1]

The phrase "They are good in their place," suggested to me that Ellen White saw a legitimate place for such techniques—crude though they were in 1862 when she made the statement. As a clinical psychologist, I seek to use the best treatments available to assist my patients, so I wanted to find out what the legitimate place for hypnosis might be. Consequently, I decided to carefully study the historical development of hypnosis, evaluate Ellen White's counsels, and investigate how modern clinicians employ hypnosis in their work.

Hypnotism, officially approved by the American Medical Association in 1958 as a therapeutic technique, is today used by an increasing number of psychologists as one among other

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therapies. Hypnotism is used to treat a variety of problems such as anxiety, phobias, eating disorders, and the management of chronic pain, to name but a few applications. Children who have been abused, traumatized, or who have difficulty learning often benefit from hypnotherapy. In physical medicine, hypnosis is often used to assist in the control of bleeding, burn therapy, dermatology, and pain management when side effects or potential addiction prevent the use of analgesics or anesthesia. Dentists utilize hypnosis to allay fears of dentistry, in the treatment of bruxism (the grinding of teeth during times of stress or sleep), gagging, and even saliva control.

In many such cases, hypnosis, like relaxation or biofeedback training, consists of learning to gain control over what used to be thought of as "unconscious" processes. Sometimes hypnosis is utilized to maximize athletic performance or other behaviors that have been sabotaged by anxiety.

I have concluded that it is consistent with God's purpose that we utilize hypnosis in developing our own inner resources and in assisting others in their growth or healing—so long as we do not maintain that this is the *only* or most important source of power (thereby eliminating the need for Christ within). It is time to reconsider our avoidance of this valuable technique. I think this is especially the case where hypnosis can be utilized as an alternative to drug therapies.

Historical Roots of Modern Hypnosis

Hypnosis, under various names, has existed for as long as records have been kept. Indeed, suggestive therapy is one of the oldest therapeutic methods. By all accounts, it was the Austrian physician Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815) who is generally considered the "founding father" of modern hypnotism. Little is known of Mesmer until 1766 when he received his doctorate from the University of Vienna.

Mesmer practiced medicine only sporadically, but possessed a genuine interest in keeping abreast of new developments. Magnetism—along with recently discovered electricity, gravitation, and gases—seemed to be a mysterious "fluid" with marvelous powers. Mesmer became embroiled in controversy when he claimed to have restored a girl's sight by magnetism. Her parents charged that Mesmer was a charlatan and were supported by orthodox physicians. Mesmer found it expedient to flee Vienna for France.

There, on the eve of the French Revolution, Parisian society—particularly ripe for fads or "crazes"—provided a favorable climate for the charismatic Mesmer. At the zenith of his popularity with the nonscientific community, Mesmer founded a series of quasi-religious, mystical schools where wealthy students were taught how to "magnetize" patients. Mesmer's use of group dynamics was ingenious, and today we understand much of what occurred in terms of *social contagion* or *group hysteria.* But in 18th-century France, social psychology didn't yet exist, modern understandings of group dynamics were still far in the future, and excitement about magic fluids was fanned into full flame by the flamboyant Mesmer and his suggestible followers. Mesmer's early success was short-lived. He came under the scrutiny of a blue-ribbon scientific commission appointed by the king himself, and chaired by the distinguished investigator of electricity, Benjamin Franklin. Others on the panel included the renowned chemist Antoine Lavoisier, as well as Joseph Guillotin (inventor of the "humane" execution device to which so many would lose their heads during the French Revolution). This panel unanimously concluded that animal magnetism was unproven, without utility, and bogus science.

James Braid resuscitated mesmerism, re-

naming it "hypnosis" (based on the Greek root *hypnos* meaning "sleep") in 1841, and bringing it back into the mainstream of British science. Braid was one of the first to realize that the most important hypnotic factors lay in the subject, not the hypnotist. Today, many major research areas such as persuasion, attitude change, suggestibility, obedience, conformity, and social facilitation are concerned with how one person can influence the thoughts, behaviors, or feelings of another.

Mesmerism began to become acceptable to the medical community through its ability to induce anesthesia. In the late 1840s, James Esdaile (1808-1859), a Scottish physician practicing in India who trained his assistants to hypnotize patients before operations, became the first person to tabulate the results of hypnotism on a large scale. At this time, Esdaile hypnotized over three hundred patients before operating on them. He reported that the mortality rate dropped from 50 percent to five percent! Hypnotism ranks among the first successful anesthetics to be systematically used in Western surgery, and would likely have won wide acceptance had it not been for the independent discovery of *chemical* anesthetics. In 1844, an American dentist, Horace Wells, extracted teeth painlessly from patients put to sleep by nitrous oxide, and within three years chloroform and ether were discovered by physicians.

Ellen White's Attitude

The word *hypnosis* never appears in the writings of Ellen White. However, she frequently referred to mesmerism, phrenology, animal magnetism, psychology, and spiritualism. "Soon it was reported all around that the visions were the result of mesmerism, and many Adventists were ready to believe and circulate the report . . ."[2] Apparently, Ellen White even had fleeting moments when she wondered if mesmerism was influencing her. "While at family prayers one morning, the power of God began to rest upon me, and the thought rushed into my mind that it was mesmerism, and I resisted it."[3] Ellen White had some negative things to say about mesmerism, but she seemed primarily concerned that her visions not be attributed to its influence. She was also concerned that people using such techniques might become inflated with their own self-importance: "They think there is such power in themselves to accomplish great works that they realize no necessity of a higher power."[4] In summary, when studied in historical context, Ellen White's cautions reflect concern (1) that mesmerism might be seen as the "driving force" behind her visions and (2) that practitioners of mesmerism would become so inflated with self importance as to forget Paul's observation that "In him we live and move and have our being." I would like to alert the reader to three common errors when applying Ellen White's counsels to modern hypnosis.

The first danger is guilt by association. Ellen White used terms such as *mesmerism*, *phrenology*, *psychology*, *spiritualism*, and *animal magnetism* in close conjunction—often in the same phrase. Unfortunately, this led many of her readers to lump these diverse phenomena together. An important aid in understanding her writings is to look carefully at each phenomenon, and try to understand what comprised that particular movement at that par-

ticular time in history.

The second danger is judging present techniques by their origins. In order to understand her counsel, we must disentangle each of these diverse movements from one another, and try to understand both their historical beginnings and the changes that have occurred in the intervening 130 years. In general, we ought not to judge modern disciplines on the basis of their origins. We don't reject current chemistry because it began as medieval alchemy—the "science" of changing base metals or stones into gold. Neither do we despise our family physician because a few short years ago blood-letting was a common treatment. We ought to be careful that we don't repudiate modern hypnosis solely on the basis of its origins.

The third mistake is to avoid something because we are told it has been "seized upon by Satan." An appropriate response to the burgeoning drug problem is not to ban the use of all drugs in all circumstances. That would deprive millions of a higher quality of life made possible by antibiotics, insulin, anesthetics, etc. Christians don't seriously propose eliminating telephones because they offer opportunities for "dial-a-porn."

The modern Christian does well to avoid nostalgic yearning for simple times or wishing to turn the clock back on modern technology merely because Satan—as always—uses the most efficient ways to promote his evil kingdom. The challenge for Christians is to use positively what the evil one attempts to monopolize exclusively for evil.

Modern Hypnosis

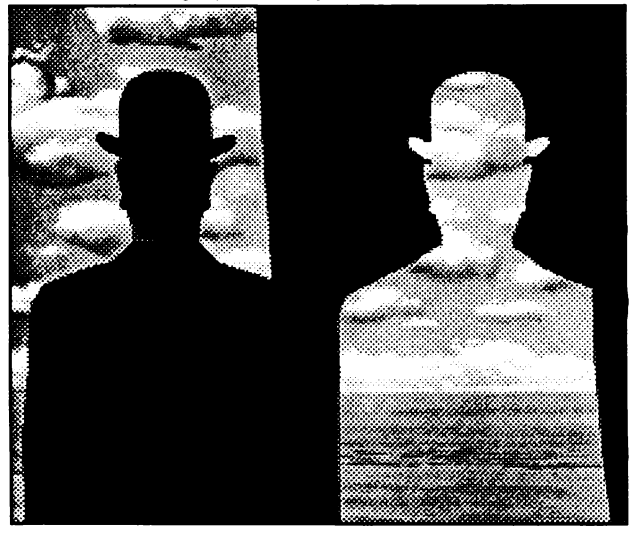
Modern hypnosis, like all contemporary disciplines, emerged from primitive beginnings. Today, however, hypnosis consists of careful procedures designed to create a state of mind that is highly receptive to learning new skills or improving performance.

Simply defined, hypnosis is a state of heightened awareness in which the patient's mind is focused and receptive to therapeutic suggestion. Hypnotized patients do not lose control of their will, nor do they reveal secret information. Today most professionals avoid direct suggestions and seldom tell the patient what to do. Instead, the professional functions much like a coach or teacher, assisting the patient to achieve agreed-upon goals. This is facilitated by a relaxed, focused state of mind.

Many Adventists fear that once you have been hypnotized, it becomes easier and easier to "succumb," and like taking that first snort of cocaine, you begin risking loss of control. While it is true that ease of the ability to relax and focus increases with practice, this is not because of a weakening of the will or a loss of self-determination. Rather it is because hypnosis is a skill that does improve with practice. Much like the experienced tennis player, who easily returns a serve, or the professional golfer who seems to "effortlessly" plop the ball onto the green near the flag, the patient experienced in hypnosis easily achieves a state of relaxed concentration.

Some worry that when hypnotized you become like a limp human puppet, whose psychological "strings" can be manipulated at

Adapted from René Magritte's "Decalcomania"



will by the hypnotist-puppeteer. This is simply not possible. When hypnotized you do *not* lose control of your will, you do not become unconscious, and you do not lose your ability to communicate with others. You can talk at any time, you are completely aware of everything that is being said; however, you actively work to achieve a state of mind where some things are in very sharp focus, while others fade into insignificance.

There is little danger in the use of hypnosis because all hypnosis is self-hypnosis. The professional only assists you, he or she does not dominate or manipulate you against your will. It's a bit like being the pilot in a plane with dual controls; you may allow the copilot-pilot to "steer" as much or as little as you wish, but ultimately you are in control, you "call the shots," and the flight proceeds according to your flight plan.

This is very much like what happens when you become "lost" in a good book, "carried away" by a great piece of music, "immersed" in a good movie, or "caught up" in a moving sermon. In all such cases—as in hypnosis—you could at any time decide to "get up and walk out," but usually you don't. Because at such times of intense concentration your conscious and unconscious mind resonates in harmony, you are likely to learn more "deeply." This is how hypnosis works. There is no devilish voodoo, no spiritualistic seance, just quiet, calm focus, which is enhanced by the therapist, much as your learning to play the piano is enhanced when you cooperate with your instructor in the quest for better performance.

Today, Ellen White would be contemporary in her concern about drug use. Americans require caffeine, Valium, Xanax, or Prozac to wake them in the morning, make it through the day, or fall asleep at night. It is more "Christian" to teach people self-hypnosis than to prescribe tranquilizers.

By restricting our past discussions of hypnosis to caricatures—in the form of the carnival hypnotist who supposedly gets you on stage, and soon, against your will, has you clucking like a chicken and running around naked—we've failed to consider the many hypnotic phenomena with which we are confronted on a daily basis. We're reminded periodically of the power of the media in influencing us, but we fail to realize that some of the most skilled hypnotists in society are the clergy. When creating a heightened state of suggestibility in the form of the traditional altar call, they creatively utilize music, emotions and imagination to help the parishioner focus on a particular scene such as the day of judgment or Christ's second coming. This is not to say that the Spirit cannot work through clerical endeavors or clinical efforts that utilize hypnosis, but merely to point out how pervasive are the efforts to influence people by suggestion.

One of my favorite pastors typically begins sermons with the following prayer: "Oh Lord, now as your people wait, let them hear only *your* voice. Let all other voices be silent as *you* speak to us this morning." Then the pastor speaks for the next half hour. Unwittingly, I think both pastor and parishioners have entered into a "hypnotic contract" of sorts, that minimizes critical thinking and blurs the boundaries between the very human voice of the pastor and the divine voice of the Almighty God. A less "hypnotizing" prayer might be a paraphrase of David's: "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my

Rock and my Redeemer" (Psalm 19:14, NIV). This invites God's presence without suggesting to the listener that what follows is a direct message from the throne.

Obviously, whenever one chooses to become less censoring and more assimilating, it is important to consider ahead of time what ideas one will be ingesting, what goals one will seek to achieve. Thus, it makes sense to carefully choose a hypnotherapist from among the ranks of well-trained, respected professionals. This same sort of careful judgment is also important when choosing books, movies, teachers, daycare centers, a family physician, and even clergy.

Instead of acting like gurus, or "sources" from which patients draw wisdom, healing, or magical powers, most hypnotherapists work to help the hypnotized person get in touch with his or her own deepest resources. Willpower, courage, and motivation are seen within the patient, not as flowing from the hypnotist. Acting as "coach" or "midwife," the hypnotherapist *assists* the patient in recruiting or releasing inner potential and learning new coping strategies. Well-trained clinicians use hypnosis as a adjunct to other methods of treatment. It is only one "instrument," not the entire orchestra; but in the hands of a professional, it is a very useful instrument.

Beware of clinicians who advertise themselves as "ethical" hypnotists; they usually aren't! Also be wary of professionals who only do hypnosis. Hypnosis is best used in conjunction with other well-recognized methods, and when someone promises to "cure depression, smoking, or obesity" in one 45-minute session, you should treat it the way you treat a flyer in the mail announcing that you have won a totally free Caribbean cruise for two (with just a few service charges for booking, etc.).

Although some hypnotists make extravagant claims—most states do not regulate them by law—there are two reputable professional societies which can provide membership lists: The American Society of Clinical Hypnosis (Des Plaines, Illinois) and The Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis (Liverpool, New York).

Conclusion

Ellen White had the same concerns expressed by the 18th century French king's commission, chaired by Benjamin Franklin. She was also in essential agreement with 20th century social psychology in pointing out that the power in hypnotism does not exist in the person of the therapist. Ellen White would also be a genuine contemporary in her concern about the use of drugs. Today, millions of Americans require caffeine, Valium, Xanax, Prozac, or some other mind-altering drug to awaken them in the morning, make it through their work day, or fall asleep at night. I personally think it is more "Christian" to teach people self-hypnosis to facilitate relaxation than to prescribe tranquilizers. It is time that our medical and dental schools give serious thought to training physicians, dentists, and other professionals to deal with pain, anxiety, and depression with something besides prescriptions for drugs. It's time to reconsider the technique of hypnosis.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1948), Vol. 1, p. 296. (Italics mine.)

2. _____, *Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1882), p. 21

3. Ibid., p. 22

4. *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, p. 297.

Hypnosis—No; It May Be A Sin

The founder of Loma Linda's Ethics Center believes hypnotism overwhelms humanity's God-given freedom.

by Jack Provonsha

THE ESSENCE OF MORALITY LIES IN HUMANITY'S capacity for self-determination—exercising conscious discrimination and choice. Hypnosis, or any other modality in which increased suggestibility renders persons vulnerable to manipulation, presents profound ethical threats to personal integrity. No human being has the right to exercise such authority over the mind and will of another. To do so is to "sin" against the very image of God in humans.

Such judgment presupposes, of course, a definition of what it means to be human. Certainly, the nature of humanness is crucial to any ethical analysis of hypnosis or the many other questions that medical technology thrusts upon us.

Image of God

A biblically based Christian ethic is likely to derive its definition of what it is to be human from the Genesis account of creation. There, at the end of a series of creations involving an ascending scale of biologic complexity, the ultimate creation was achieved in humanity. In humans God placed His own image, and it was this feature that separated them from all of the lesser creation.

The "image of God" is not easy to define fully, even as that which it reflects ultimately transcends human understanding. But the "image of God" is not, therefore, an empty expression. It means above all that humanity was given attributes, in limited measure to be sure, that are also characteristic of God. Among these was that area in which humans still most resemble God—creativity. Even though they also share a great deal in other respects, creativity is a power in humans that sets them apart from all other objects and biologic forms in God's vast creation. In that creation, objects, mere inanimate things, could be *acted upon.* Living, organic creatures shared that quality with objects. They could also be acted upon. But living creatures could also *react* in various ways. Humans shared with inanimate objects the ability to be *acted upon* and with other living creatures the ability to *react.* Humans

Jack Provonsha is the author of A Remnant in Crisis *(Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1993). This article is an abridged version of a longer, unpublished paper by Provonsha.*

transcended both in their ability to *act*, to do something that was not merely the effect of some prior cause. Humans could do something they did not have to do. Ellen White refers to this potential in connection with the origin of sin when she states that sin was uncaused.[1] But it is also the basis for *agape* or responsible love—the moral love of the commandment whose essence is volition rather than sentiment.[2]

It is difficult even to conceive of so mysterious and unaccountable a quality in a universe where everything else, at least at the macroscopic level (versus Heisenberg's principle of submicroscopic indeterminacy), is locked into the principle of causal determination. Current reductions of thought and memory to psychochemical processes, themselves causal in nature, make it tempting to revive platonic dualism—a doctrine in which the soul uses the body. But this will not do, for we are aware that such "soul" activities are very much at the mercy of body structures and processes. This is the meaning of "psychosomatic." The creative act may be the only essential mystery in the universe, and perhaps can never be defined by or reduced to anything else. It is essentially unique—*Suis Generis*.

An orderly universe is one in which causes produce their effects generally. To introduce the ability to act, to be genuinely creative, has seemed irrational and "unscientific" to every determinist, including Sigmund Freud. Freud once wrote:

> What does the man mean by this? Does he mean that there are any occurrences so small that they may fail to come within the causal sequence of things, that they might well be other than they are? Anyone thus breaking away from the determination of natural phenomena, at any single point, has thrown over the whole scientific outlook on the world.[3]

A century before, this rigorous application of Newtonian physics to human behavior had been outlined by determinists like Voltaire.

> Everything happens through immutable laws . . . everything is necessary . . . "There are," some persons say, "some events which are necessary and others which are not." It would be very comic that one part of what happens did not have to happen. If one looks closely at it, one sees that the doctrine contrary to destiny [determinism] is absurd.

Schopenhauer expressed the same sentiment in less picturesque language: "The whole cause of a man's life, in all its incidents great and small, is as necessarily predetermined as the course of a clock."[4]

A major reason for rejecting so inclusive a notion of determinism is that it makes God responsible for everything that has happened in the universe. Ellen White, on the other hand, has written, "In the final execution of the judgment it will be seen that no cause for sin exists."[5] This is a major element in the final vindication of God. If there is no such ability as self-determination, that is, a self that can determine its own destiny by an exercise of its own volition, a flawed universe is the creation of a flawed God. Moreover, in a moral universe in which volitional, responsible *agape* love, is the ultimate principle of right, freedom of the will is a *sine qua non*. There can be no such love unless humans are granted something of the image of God—creative freedom. Such love is an act of freedom.

It is possible on these terms to set forth the essential truth of a Christian ethic. Whatever lessens the ability of humans to think and do, whatever reduces humans to mere reflectors of others' thoughts is a violation of the Creator's intention expressed in his having made humans in his image. In simple summary: On biblical grounds, whatever enhances the image of God (freedom, self-determination) in humanity is *right*. Whatever diminishes that image is *wrong*.

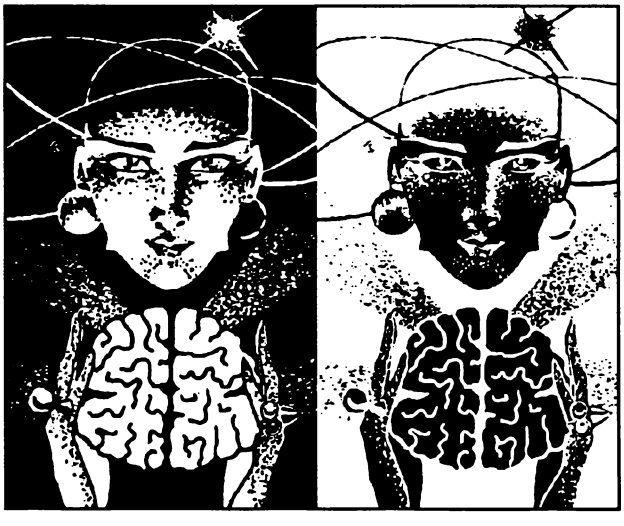
LSD, Brainwashing, and Charismatic Experiences

Apropos to our present consideration, there are several situations that come under the judgment of an ethic so conceived. Humanness, defined by creative freedom, can be diminished or destroyed by subtle things, such as natural aging processes, illness, and various kinds of organic brain syndromes.

Humanness can be diminished by certain treatment modalities. Hypnotism is certainly one. The "image of God" is also very much at the mercy of psychosurgical and psychochemical techniques. The after-results of a prefrontal lobotomy are an obvious and clear example.

Humanity can be diminished by agents, such as the familiar alcohol, marijuana, and lysergic acid (LSD). In one out of 10 persons with only one LSD session, radical value-system changes, lasting for prolonged periods, may occur.

It may be of some interest that at one time LSD was used in association with hypnosis where it was noted that it greatly facilitated the induction rate.[6] There are numerous other psychotrophic substances, of course, although perhaps none as thoroughly studied or that produce such dramatic effects as this potent chemical. One of Walter Pahnke's Harvard



subjects, while on psilocybin, cried out in panic, "I don't know who I am. When will this be over?" Subjects on LSD often expressed confusion about body limits, which along with other perceptual distortions created a sense of bewilderment about the self.

The psychochemicals have been investigated by governments as possible means of modifying the behavior and belief systems of subjugated aliens, as well as dissident citizens of their own countries. However, governments have generally taken recourse to the radical form of behavior modification that has come to be known as brainwashing.

Brainwashing has been called "chronic hypnosis." In a discussion primarily dedicated to a consideration of this subject, it should receive at least some attention, for the same ethical issues are present. (Moreover, brainwashing is a serious element in many dimensions of modern life, some of them extremely subtle—in advertising, education, politics, religion, etc.)[7]

Brainwashing (or chronic hypnosis) takes its theoretical point of departure from the work of the Russian physiologist, Pavlov, who discovered in his work on conditioning that the replacement of one conditioned response with another could be greatly facilitated by the presence of anxiety or other strong emotions. Brainwashing is one example of mind manipulation. The common denominator to practically all such states is vulnerability to suggestion—*disinhibition derived from ego uncertainty.*

Another dissociative state contrasts with an ethic that places highest value on self-determination. It is the so-called charismatic experience. A charismatic psychologist, Harry Goldsmith, a clinical psychologist in Springfield, Missouri, with a doctorate from Columbia University, says

> Man is a free moral agent, but in choosing to be filled and refilled by the Spirit of God he has to "pour himself out first." In other words he has to

> renounce voluntarily the exercise of his wishes in order that the Holy Spirit might take over—his will, his voice, and his thoughts, so that these might become His will, His voice, and His thoughts. . . . The ego, or self, is denied by allowing it no rational understanding of the experience.[8]

A non-charismatic, Alexander Allans, in a careful analysis of a charismatic meeting, noted all the factors that appeared to enter into the production of the charismatic trance state, and called it hypnotic. Summing up his investigation he says:

> Trance, then, within the context of religious ceremony, may be defined as a cultural response to a series of internal and external cues which operate in a particular kind of motivational state. The behavior which we have called trance is most likely a form of hypnosis which will later become auto-hypnosis through a continuation of the learning process.[9]

A neutral investigator (neither in favor of nor against the charismatic experience), anthropologist Dr. Felicitas Goodman,[10] refers to the state as one of "dissociation." In describing it, she uses language similar to that often employed in reference to the hypnotic state, including "the lowering of inhibitions,"[11] the "switching off of cortical control,"[12] and the loss of voluntary control during the state, although it can be voluntarily induced.[13] She notes that similar mechanisms may be involved as in hypnosis,[14] and that perceptions regarding the body may be altered as in the drug dissociation state.[15]

The lowering of inhibitions (another way of speaking of hypersuggestibility), a prominent feature of the charismatic state, is also noted by British psychiatrist William Sargent. He writes of his experiences at a Pentecostal snake-handling sect's meetings in North Carolina in 1947, while he was visiting Professor of Neuropsychiatry at Duke University:

> The descent of the Holy Ghost on these meetings, which was reserved for whites, was supposedly shown by the occurrence of wild excitement, bodily jerkings, and the final exhaustion and collapse, in the more susceptible participants. Such hysterical states were induced by means of rhythmic singing and hand clapping, and the handling of genuinely poisonous snakes . . . [and] brought several visitors unexpectedly to the point of collapse and sudden conversion.[16]

Dr. Sargent refers to a number of other manipulative modalities, including rhythmic music, e.g. rock music, electroshock, and lobotomy.[17] In harmony with Dr. Sargent's observations is a statement by Robert J. Lifton:

> Especially relevant is Janet Mackenzie Rioch's concern that the psychotherapist . . . take cognizance of the "symbolically submissive position" inherent in the psychoanalytic treatment situation. Her warning to the analyst to avoid the role of the "chronic hypnotist" amounts to a warning against totalism—since hypnosis is in effect a situation of interpersonal totalism in which the subject's perceptual world is reduced to the highly focused influence of the omnipotent hypnotist.[18]

The above illustrate the concerns created by a definition of humanness that places great value on self-determination.[19]

Mrs. White referred many times to the demonic implications of mind control. Following are but a few typical examples:

> The theory of mind controlling mind is originated by Satan. . . . No man or woman should exercise his or her will to control the senses or reason of another, so that the mind of the person is rendered passively subject to the will of the one who is exercising the control.[20]

> God has not given one ray of light or encouragement for our physicians to take up the work of having one mind completely control the mind of another, so that one acts out the will of another. Let us learn the ways and purposes of God. Let not the enemy gain the least advantage over you. Let him not lead you to dare to endeavor to control another mind until it becomes a machine in your hands. This is the science of Satan's working.[21]

> The theory of mind controlling mind was originated by Satan. . . . Of all the errors that are finding acceptance among professedly Christian people, none is a more dangerous deception, none more certain to separate man from God, than is this. Innocent though it may appear, if exercised upon patients, it will tend to their destruction, not to their restoration. It opens a door through which Satan will enter to take possession both of the mind that is given up to be controlled by another and of the mind that controls.[22]

Any practice or technique that increases vulnerability to suggestion hastens the day when human beings are reduced to the status of mere "things" to be manipulated by scheming men and devils. Hypnosis could be another way in which human beings "sin" against themselves and against each other.

Hypnotism

Ellen White forcefully rejected hypnosis. Typical is her "cut away from yourselves anything that savors of hypnotism, the science by which satanic agencies work."[23]

Most descriptions of the hypnotic state include words like *suggestion* and *suggestibility*. Lecron and Bordeaux broadly define hypnosis as "the control of thought and action through suggestions."[24] Defined again as "a state of increased suggestibility,"[25] Weitzenhoffer sees as one of the conditions required for the efficacy of suggestion that the subject

> does not use his critical faculties, or is rendered unable to use them with respect to the suggestions, at least at the time the suggestion takes its initial effect. This is probably one reason why it is not uncommon to prepare the subject for this beforehand, by instructing him to make his mind blank, to be completely passive, not to think or to analyze what he is being told, what he feels or what he does. . . . One must ask whether inhibition or abolition of the critical faculties may not be the main character and condition for suggestibility and hypnosis.[26]

Sigmund Freud once remarked that hypnosis endows the hypnotist with an authority that was probably never possessed by even priest or miracle man. Referring to this statement, Weitzenhoffer observes,

> Such authority carries a proportionate amount of responsibility. Freud was referring here to the ability he believed hypnosis gave to the hypnotist to alter the mental and psychological status of the individual. This alone makes hypnosis a great responsibility, but the question goes much deeper.
>
> First there is the matter of trust that the subject places in the hypnotist. Hypnosis requires cooperation to an unusual degree. The subject who submits to hypnosis is seemingly being asked to relinquish his capacities for reality testing, his ability to control the real and mental world and, in essence, much of his adult individuality [the image of God?] . . . the hypnotist must go a long way, indeed, to justify such implied faith.[27]

Rhodes says that the continued control the

hypnotist is given over the subjective mind of the subject

> leads to a gradually increasing influence over the subject's objective process as well, and thus to a remolding of his entire thought pattern. This is the basis of therapeutic hypnosis based upon implantation of suggestions in the subject's subjective mind with continuing (post hypnotic) effects.[28]

The development of dependency on the part of the subjects undergoing repeated hypnosis is fairly well recognized. Weitzenhoffer points out that,

> There is inherent in the hypnotic situation great potential for the rapid development, by the subject, of strong positive feelings toward the hypnotist which further complicates the situation. It is this mechanism which seems to bring about and intensify the subject's extreme cooperation. These feelings not only render the subject extremely receptive to suggestions but often give him an extraordinarily forceful, even overpowering, affectively-toned motivation to carry them out. Furthermore, these sentiments have a tendency to perserverate into the subsequent waking (non-hypnotic) state, extending the hypnotist's influence.[29]

> Hypnosis, as a two-person interaction, is anything but a casual relationship. It places the subject in an especially vulnerable position. This fact puts hypnosis in a special category, and puts the hypnotist in a position of great responsibility during and following hypnosis.[30]

All of which serves to make the point of this article. Whether one objects on ethical grounds to the use of hypnosis, or any other modality in which increased suggestibility renders persons vulnerable to manipulation, depends upon one's presuppositions. From the standpoint of any of the determinisms, manipulative techniques are simply amoral methods for modifying behavior and attitude. But as a concerned, Adventist, Christian ethicist, I must submit that any practice or technique that increases vulnerability to suggestion hastens the day when human beings, created in the image of God, are reduced to the status of mere "things" to be manipulated by scheming men and devils. Hypnosis could be another way in which human beings may conceivably "sin" against themselves and against each other.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1911), pp. 493, 503.

2. 6BC pp. 1100, 1101.

3. S. Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, New York, Liverright, 1935, p. 27.

4. Quoted in Paul Edwards, *Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science.* Sidney Hook, ed. (New York: University Press, 1958), p. 108.

5. *The Great Controversy*, p. 503.

6. According to Peck in R. A. Sandison's, "The Nature of the Psychological Response to LSD":

"Twelve to 18 percent who are not good subjects or cannot experience hypnosis after numerous attempts are then given LSD, and while they are 'up in the air', so to speak, we give them this positive suggestion: 'Now, from this point on, you will be able to experience hypnosis . . .' Eighty-eight to 92 percent, from that point on, could be hypnotized" (Op cit., p. 130).

7. Robert Jay Lifton notes that "any idealogy—that is, any set of emotionally-charged convictions about man and his relationship to the natural or supernatural world—may be carried by its adherents in a totalistic direction. But this is most likely to occur with those idealogies which are most sweeping in their content and most ambitious—or messianic—in their claims, whether religious, political, or scientific. And where totalism exists, a religion, a political movement, or even a scientific organization becomes little more than an exclusive cult" (*Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* [New York: W.W. Norton, 1961], p. 419).

This can even happen in education. Lifton defines true education versus totalism brainwashing in terms not totally unlike those of Ellen White:

"Any educational experience is a three-way interplay among student, mentor, and the ideas being taught—ideally it is an interplay of stimulating tension. Such tension includes the mentor's forceful presentation of ideas within the context of the cultural tradition in which they arose; his demand that each student permit himself to be challenged by these ideas; his *allowance for each student's individual relationship to the ideas*" (Ibid., p. 444. Italics supplied.)

8. *View*, 2 (1965), pp. 31, 31.

9. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 1:2 (Spring 1962), p. 213.

10. Felicitas Goodman, *Speaking in Tongues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972).

11. Ibid., p. 65.

12. Ibid., pp. 76, 124.

13. Ibid., p. 73

14. Ibid., p. 70.

15. Ibid., p. 66.

16. William Sargent, *Battle for the Mind* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1961), pp. 222, 223.

17. Ibid., 55ff.

18. Op cit., p. 450.

19. Regarding the effects of disease on moral freedom: "Evil angels are striving for the dominion of every human being. Whatever injures the health, not only lessens physical vigor, but tends to weaken the mental and moral powers. Indulgence in any unhealthful practice makes it more difficult for one to discriminate between right and wrong, and hence more difficult to resist evil. It increases the danger of failure and defeat" (*The Ministry of Healing* [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn.,1909], p. 128).

20. Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1911), p. 111.

21. Ibid., p. 114

22. *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 242, 243.

23. Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1958), Book 2, p. 350.

24. Leslie M. Lecron and Dean Bordeaux, *Hypnotism Today* (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1949), p. 139.

25. Ibid., p. 85.

26. André M. Weitzenhoffer, *General Techniques of Hypnotism* (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1957), p. 32.

27. Ibid., p. 5

28. Raphael H. Rhodes, *Hypnosis, Theory, Practice and Application* (New York: The Citadell Press, 1950), p. 117.

29. Weitzenhoffer, op cit., p. 5.

30. Ibid., p. 6.

Adapted from René Magritte's "The Large Family"

Hypnosis—Maybe; If It's Like Prayer

Hypnosis can be abusive, or a form of genuine meditation.

by Selma Chaij Mastrapa

The Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man.

—Genesis 2:21, 22 (NIV)

ADAM IN THE GARDEN WAS THE EARLIEST incident of hypnosis. Since then, hypnosis has not always remained as positive as its beginnings. The best gifts and the best qualities given to humanity, such as the capacity to work and to love, sexuality and intimacy, worship and ecstasy, have all been abused and distorted with resulting isolation and distress. Similar abuses of hypnosis have occurred.

For more than 100 years, the scientific community has studied at a desultory pace the validity and usefulness of hypnosis. In the Paris Hospital of La Salpetrière, chief neurologist Jean Martin Charcot (1825-1893) observed how a peasant girl, during hypnotic experiments, would experience whatever symptoms were suggested to her. He concluded that hypnosis was a pathology of the nervous system.

In 1882, at the Nancy Medical School, Dr. Bernheim heard that an unknown physician by the name of Liebeault claimed to have cured a patient of sciatica through hypnosis. Bernheim was incensed, because it was one of his patients whom he had unsuccessfully treated for six years. He went to Liebeault's clinic to expose him as a quack, but instead stayed to study the hypnotic process. His continued experiments with hypnosis at the Nancy Medical School led to a quarrel between Bernheim and Charcot in Paris. Bernheim saw hypnosis as a curative tool, whereas Charcot saw it as a form of mental illness. Eventually the quarrel was settled in favor of Bernheim, partly due to the latter's larger experience (1,000 patients of Bernheim to a

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handful of Charcot). Later, Pierre Janet, also of the La Salpetrière hospital in Paris, explained the errors of his chief, Charcot. Many physicians from other countries came to France to learn more about hypnosis. Among these were Sigmund Freud from Vienna, and Morton Prince from the United States. These physicians continued to study the uses of hypnosis and wrote about their findings.

Nevertheless, the majority of hypnotic events have not been conducted within the objective and ethical boundaries of science, but have often been misused and abused by entertainers, charlatans, and manipulators. Religions have also often used hypnotic trances and hypnotic suggestions in their practices. This has been true in pagan as well as such Christian religions as Christian Science, the Ephrata Seventh-day Baptists, the Shakers, and many others, including some present-day evangelicals.

Hypnosis is a unique ability of the mind to focus and concentrate while in a relaxed state. It is part of a dissociative continuum from light daydreaming, through dissociating feeling, vivid imagery, and finally deep trance. It is not a treatment in itself, but is the means by which a treatment may be delivered or mediated. Thus, it has a dual potential, to bring about positive results, or to be misapplied or mismanaged.

How can we distinguish when hypnosis is appropriate and when it is misused or abused? Rather than answering unequivocally, it would be better to evaluate each event through a series of questions:

1. Is hypnosis a way of avoiding a lengthy or difficult but necessary process?

2. Is it a way to give up responsibility and let someone else do the work?

3. Is it expected to result in an instant, magical cure?

4. Is it for "kicks" or for entertainment?

Any Yes answer to the above questions is a warning that hypnosis may not be appropriate. Other important questions are:

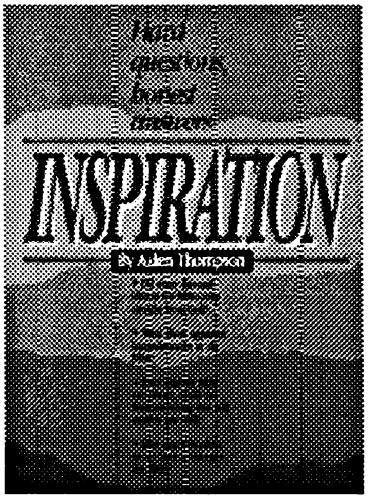
5. Is the hypnotherapist licensed and trained to treat your specific complaint?

6. Is hypnosis the main form of treatment, or is it simply an adjunctive tool with no greater or lesser power?

Whenever there is an over-reliance on hypnosis as a coping or defense mechanism there is danger of prolonged dissociation, such as amnesia, lessened self-control through avoidance or escape, and isolation of negative and positive feelings. Any of these could result in poor judgment and sometimes devastatingly impulsive decision-making.

Perhaps one of the most useful forms of hypnosis is self-hypnosis, whereby a person consciously relaxes and focuses on his or her own thoughts, values, memories, and beliefs about life. This is a process akin to genuine prayer and meditation. It can enhance our spiritual insights, our faith, and our trust in God.

By beholding we become changed. When we relax and concentrate on what we hope to do and to be, we gain self-mastery. Similarly, athletes review each movement while in a relaxed state in order to enhance their performance. Spiritually, we can also gain a deeper experience. We are counseled to spend time each day meditating on the life of Jesus, imagining we are with Jesus, and experiencing his presence in our concerns and in our joys. How much clearer and fulfilling could be our spiritual growth when done in such a vivid relationship with him.



Alden Thompson's *Inspiration*: Why Is It A Cause Célèbre?

Reviewed by Clark H. Pinnock

Alden Thompson, *Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers*. Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1991. $19.95 hardcover. 332 pages.

Though I have not met Professor Thompson, certain facts about him are apparent from reading the book. Vivid allusions to incidents tell me that he is a well-known Adventist speaker, an energetic college Bible teacher, and an involved Old Testament scholar. Most importantly, I detect Thompson as a man of vision with an urgent message. He longs for God's people, especially his Adventist community, to derive full value from the Bible without being distracted unnecessarily. As a pastor, he wants to prevent believers giving up their faith because of certain mistaken expectations they have picked up about the Bible. The dialogical and autobiographical character of the book make it absorbing to read, even for a Baptist.

Thompson has a perspective on biblical inspiration that he believes will make it possible for people to study the Bible without fear. His first sentence captures the paradigm: "The discovery that the Bible is more like a family letter and less like a theoretical treatise has made a profound impact on my life." He points out that we would not quibble if in a family letter we came across a misspelling, an unusual chronology, or an unorthodox turn of phrase. As readers, we would be able to handle such features without difficulty and get the message loud and clear. Such difficulties in a letter would not disturb us because we would take them in stride. The same can be true of Bible difficulties, if we break free of the bondage of the theoretical paradigm and adopt a practical standpoint that listens to the Father and lets the text transform us. The Bible does not need to be perfect in a logical and scientific sense for us to hear its message of salvation. It was given to meet the needs of ordinary people, not to satisfy the demands of experts. Thompson wants us to think of the Bible as God's love letter to his family. Referring to 1 John 3:11, he writes: "This is not the language of science or philosophy, but the language of relationship and experience, the language of the family" (p. 140).

Thompson thus calls us to focus on the practical emphasis of a text like 2 Timothy 3:15-17 which, saying nothing about inerrancy, highlights instead the plenary profitability of the Scriptures in conveying a saving and equipping knowledge of God. It does not take a theoretical posture, and we should not. If we would look at the Bible this way, we would be liberated from all sorts of anxieties that we so unwisely and unnecessarily suffer from.

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Thompson's proposal is really about hermeneutics more than inspiration. One does not find him spending time proving that the Bible is divinely inspired. Why should he do so? Theology from the beginning has implicitly or explicitly acknowledged the inspiration and authority of the Bible. This is true not only of Adventists but also of practically every other tradition as well. The real question is seldom *whether* the Bible has authority but what *kind* of authority it has. Thompson knows that the urgent issue is hermeneutics, not inerrancy.

The key question to be asking is this: Does the Bible convey a message of liberating good news or is it a burden full of difficulty? Is the Bible a source of renewal or a worry to us? Alden Thompson wants to free the Bible for Adventists and others, so it can transform lives as it was meant to. He is critical of the kind of theology which, in "defending" the Bible, makes it a burden and something unbelievable. In contending that the real issue is hermeneutics, not inerrancy, Thompson is speaking not only to Adventists but to the larger evangelical world in North America, of which (I believe) Adventism is a part. I welcome his voice in this broader evangelicalism. He has the role played earlier by such as James Orr, Dewey Beegle, and Jack Rogers, who also urged us to read the Bible without fear.

The central feature of Thompson's doctrine of Scripture is the divine and human character of the Bible. As Paul says in a favorite verse of mine: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Corinthians 4:7, KJV). Chapter six of the book is crucial: "Heavenly Message, Earthen Vessel." Thompson views the Bible in an incarnational manner, as a blending of human and divine. He believes that God adapts his word to us in a human form so that it might be understood. Because of this, we must give as much attention to the human form of the texts as we do to its divine inspiration, because only by attending to God's word in human language can we hope to discover the divine teaching. The miracle of Scripture is that, despite all human fragility and all limitations of human authors, God's word is effectively heard and realized. As an Adventist, Thompson is able to appeal effectively to Ellen White on this point. I almost envy him the prophet because it is harder for me to appeal to any comparable figure to secure the point with the likes of Harold Lindsell about!

Thompson holds that inspiration does not entail a perfectly inerrant Bible, but does not do much to answer those who think otherwise. This is an omission for the non-Adventist evangelical because in his or her world there are many illegitimate arguments along these lines that need to be exposed. I was forced to expose them for example in *The Scriptural Principle* (1985). The fact is that the Bible does not claim to be inerrant in the autographs, that texts are regularly cited to prove what they do not actually say, and that a lot of circular argument is practiced defending a perfect Bible. Biblical inspiration, according to the Bible, is different from biblical inspiration according to Warfield, as James Dunn and Paul Achtemeier among others have shown. I judge that a fair reading of those biblical claims for inspiration are in close agreement with the general perspective of Alden Thompson.

Thompson longs for God's people, especially his Adventist community, to derive full value from the Bible. . . . His book makes absorbing reading even for a Baptist.

Being Adventist, he applies the incarnational principle especially to biblical law. Like Charles Kraft, he calls the Bible a casebook, not a codebook. Just as the gospel writers adapt the sayings of Jesus to different situations, so God's laws are situationally directed and need to be thought out when applied today.

As a biblical scholar, Thompson naturally concentrates on areas of the Bible's humanity. He knows about many difficulties in the text and their possible effects on people who do not understand the point about incarnational revelation. He is concerned that people may lose their faith, not recognizing this principle. Part three is chock full of illustrations from the Bible that can cause believers (who are not alert to the divine/human nature of Scripture) to panic. He tries to help readers cope with these passages.

There will surely be objections to his strategy. Some will say that if we allow details like the numbers leaving Egypt to be discounted, we may undermine confidence in the Bible as a whole. Unscrupulous people will list his alleged concessions to unbelief and make him appear a dangerous fellow. (This happened to me.) Not everyone wants to know what the text actually contains, if it contradicts their ideal picture of the Scriptures. More reasonably, others will urge him not to give up so easily on the Bible difficulties but put greater effort into solving them. My sense is that Thompson will agree that any difficulties that can be solved should be solved, but he will not endure dishonesty in the defense of orthodoxy. To that I say, Amen.

Bradford on Thompson's *Inspiration*

Reviewed by Charles Bradford

Much serious writing turns out to be autobiographical—at least in a sense. In his recent volume, *Inspiration*, Alden Thompson admits to the "autobiographical element in the body of this book." The book is not only autobiographical for Thompson but also for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. To Adventists the Bible is the book, *sine qua non*. Scripture is taken very seriously, and any assumption that appears to threaten biblical authority is looked on askance. Professor Thompson's book raises questions that are not usually discussed in denominational publications and will no doubt raise a few eyebrows. This is why he has gone to great lengths to lower the theological threshold and to expunge all threatening, flag-raising words and expressions. He has even run his manuscript through the computer in order to expunge jargon that could come across as inflammatory. Thompson wants to be read dispassionately, but I am not sure that this is possible.

Thompson (a fourth generation Adventist) writes out of an Adventist background and tradition to an Adventist audience. The book is about inspiration, but is largely an examination of Ellen White's view of inspiration/revelation, which Thompson enlarges upon and seems to support quite fully. Some would probably say that he uses Ellen White to buttress his own theory of inspiration, but we must grant our brother good faith and hear him out. After all (through the publishing house reading committee), he has submitted his findings to "brethren of experience."

Thompson uses two basic documents to set forth the Adventist position on inspiration: "The Inspiration of the Prophetic Writers," *Selected Messages*, Book 1, chap. 1, pp. 15-23, and Introduction to *The Great Controversy*, pp. v-xii. He believes that Ellen White's view of inspiration is the most advanced and enlightened to be found anywhere. All that follows is Thompson's interpretation and application of these chapters in the development of a model of interpretation that "is capable of encompassing all Scripture" (p. 316). In Part II, Thompson develops a theory of inspiration that he hopes will add to the ongoing discussion of the subject in Adventism. He talks about a "Practical Approach to Inspiration," then proceeds to take up some of the perennial problems, e.g. the formation of the canon, the relative merits of the various manuscripts, and how to judge and use modern translations. Then he introduces what is the core of his argument: "Casebook or Codebook," an organizing principle that he has been working out in the classroom and in the pulpit for years. Thompson warms to his task.

In Thompson's view, there are two ways to approach Scripture: as codebook or casebook. "In our culture today a codebook is an instrument of precision. When a contractor builds to code, he goes by the book. The minimums are clear; the specifications exact. . . . he may install more insulation or provide more access than the code prescribes, but not less" (p. 99). On the other hand, a "casebook" requires more interpretation, more thoughtful reflection, and "*describes* a series of examples that reflect a variety of responses under varied circumstances. None of the cases may be fully definitive or prescriptive in other settings, but each is described in a manner that could be helpful in someone facing similar circumstances" (p. 100).

Even before Thompson, our understanding of how inspiration and revelation works—how Scripture functions—has been constantly expanding. If, for no other reason, this growth process means that we will always be confronted with "problems." Further, coming out of a 19th-century conservative religious tradition, we have tended, willy-nilly, toward the inerrancy position. I do not view this as the kind of fatal flaw that some have felt it to be, nor am I critical of the founders of Adventism, the majority of whom, as Thompson points out, leaned toward this position. The men and women who founded a church in 19th-century America had to fight hard to establish their position in their world. They had little time for discussion of the various views on inspiration. "God said it, I believe it, and that settles it," was their approach—and it worked. They convinced men and women that they had a message from God by reading it from their Bibles. It does, however, make for a painful experience when church members are suddenly exposed to arguments that they never heard discussed among us. The pain is intensified because the Bible is of such great importance to Seventh-day Adventists.

Charles Bradford retired in 1991 from the presidency of the North American Division and vice-presidency of the General Conference to carry on pastoral work in Florida. He received a B.A. from Oakwood College and an honorary doctorate from Andrews University.

Whether "liberal" or "conservative," there is no disagreement on the importance of scripture among Adventists. What divides us is not the authority of Scripture, but the nature of Scripture (as in the nature of Christ), and how Scripture functions in the community of faith and in the experience of the individual believer. The burning issue before Adventism is, How shall we do Scripture? Is it ever right to tell the people about the "problems"? What is the right setting in which to do it? Could it be that we are independent Bible students? Shall we develop Adventist answers rather than depending on worn-out conservative Protestant positions that are incompatible with the Adventist (Ellen White) view of inspiration? On the other hand, shall we move closer to liberal views? But everyone knows that liberalism is bankrupt.

Thompson believes the time has come to seize the initiative by formulating a thoroughly Adventist approach to Scripture. "The traditional view of inspiration with its inclination toward inerrancy has meant that the evidence against inerrancy *from within Scripture* is cited primarily by the 'liberals.' In this book I have sought to show how Ellen White carefully occupies that dangerously middle ground. She saw the human in Scripture, but still believed and still experienced its power the Word of God. Because of my trust in Ellen White and because of the role she plays in Adventism, my argument has been: If she can see the evidence and still believe, so can I. And so can you" (p. 312).

My assignment is to resonate to Thompson's book. What shall we do with it? Is it a threat to faith? Are there dangers here that "must be exposed"? What are its strengths and weaknesses? One thing is certain: Thompson makes us think, and that's good. He may even scare us a bit. That is not necessarily bad. Thompson may even be tempted to think for a moment that his is the last word, the model that we all should rush to adopt. But he knows that is not going to happen. He could be making too much of his forays into the "real world" of the churches with these bright new insights. How much can be accomplished in a weekend seminar by a team of visiting college professors? But in spite of any chinks in the armor, *Inspiration* does add to the discussion in helpful ways.

Adventists have no index of forbidden reading. One pilgrim cannot dictate to another. Ellen White's counsel is still good: "Give them strengthening Bible diet and Bible duty to strengthen and brace the soul for the coming conflict" (*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 478). It is the business of the servants of God to give the people food in due season. We are sorry for those who will be completely twisted out of joint by the book, but they just may have superior insights denied us common folk. Making Thompson's work a political issue and making him a whipping boy will not enrich the discussion. In fact, we must not make too much of the product of any human mind when we are responsible for our own soul's salvation.

Thompson's treatment of law is helpful and he is "tempted to argue that one of the unique Adventist contributions to the Christian world may be our understanding of law" (p. 112). We need all the help we can get in making the case for the enduring nature of God's law in an age of relativism. His statement that "A commitment to the one great law of love brings a wholistic perspective to life that makes religion all-encompassing" (p. 111) will go down well in the Adventist community and appeal to all thinking Christians. When he says that biblical law is an enduring casebook, he is really speaking to its codebook aspect. If there is any criticism of Thompson it could be that he leaves himself open to the charge of pitting "casebook" against "codebook" to the denigration of "codebook." But this is not a fatal flaw either. Appendix A, "The Inspiration Issue in Adventist History," helps to put the issue in historical perspective.

As responsible human beings and members of the household of faith, we should not read anyone uncritically. Thompson deserves to be read in this manner, with charity. He should not be rejected out of hand nor swallowed hook, line, and sinker. He will be threatening to some. There are others who will welcome this book as a new opportunity to do a little "brethren bashing"—for not bringing these matters to our attention before. Whatever we bring to the reading of this book, it should be with the question in mind, Does this help me to get a better handle on the Word? Does it enhance my Bible study time and maximize the benefit that I receive from the Word?

Thompson realizes that all of this will be disquieting to many Seventh-day Adventists. *Inspiration* may not be *must* reading for every church member. This is in no way to be taken as condescending, but each of us needs different emphases at various times and stages of our growth in Christ. Some very deeply spiritual Christians don't need a course in apologetics. Long years of reading, study, listening to the Word and feeding on it have done the job quite adequately. But *Inspiration* will not harm any intelligent, committed Christian, whether or not this is his or her time of greatest need for this kind of reading.

The Divine Design— The Human Distortion

Reviewed by Karla Krampert Walters

V. Norskov Olsen, *Man, the Image of God: The Divine Design—The Human Distortion.* Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1988. P4.99 paperback. 192 pages.

A former president of Loma Linda University who holds several doctorates from American and European universities, V. Norskov Olsen has written an eminently readable yet scholarly book. In *Man, the Image of God,* Olsen explores human potential and salvation in the context of a long-standing Christian tradition that regards the separation between God and humanity as an unnatural consequence of sin. This book is unusual for its focus on human potential while discussing theological issues. It would be easy to deal with the subject of man in the image of God by dwelling on the shortcomings of human beings in comparison to the excellencies of God. By refusing to focus simply on human decrepitude, and by grounding his analysis in the divine ideal, Olsen avoids trivializing his subject or humiliating his audience.

In addition to citing many relevant passages of Scripture, Olsen conveys a strong sense of a continuum of Christian thinkers and scholars who have wrestled with defining humanity in the image of God: St. Paul, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, Reinhold Niebuhr, Emil Brunner, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In addition, he quotes Paul Tillich, John Stuart Mill, and even William Shakespeare and Thomas Paine, whose cogitations on human limitation and potential add considerable color to Olsen's analysis. The quotation Olsen uses from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* sets his tone: "What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!" Olsen rarely shifts from the Renaissance view, which is actually the Reformation view, that human beings can act both "divinely" and "beastly," and that salvation is needed to remedy this dichotomy.

Olsen employs interesting similes and analogies. For example, when he presents the idea of "man in God's image," the *imago Dei,* he compares the *imago* to a reflection in a mirror: "A mirror can reflect an image only if the object is in front of it. In this analogy, emphasis is placed on the *imago* as existing in relationship with God, without which the *imago* is lost. As the moon has no light in itself but can reflect the light of the sun, so man, when face to face with God in Jesus Christ, gives back an image of God" (p. 28). Similarly, in discussing individuality, Olsen writes, "A person is not a thing to be bought and sold, exploited and tossed aside like a squeezed orange. The central teaching of the divine preciousness of individuality is a fundamental test of any civilization" (p. 52).

My favorite simile was the mathematical one Olsen used to describe the relationship of the Christian to the first and second advents: "The biblical hope with its many facets does not move around the first advent or the second advent of Christ as two circles, each with its own center. Rather, it moves around both Advents inseparably as an ellipse with two foci. Unfortunately, church history tells us that to a large degree Christian doctrines and practices have been focused either upon the First Advent or the Second Advent. The former has been the inclination of established churches, the latter, of apocalyptic movements. Each Advent is distinct, but the message or truths of each should be seen in totality both in the doctrinal teaching and in the pragmatic life of the individual and the church" (p. 137).

Olsen structures his chapters around nine central human qualities: dignity, freedom, individuality, creativity, moral sense, religious sense, relationships, history, and wholeness. The chapter on freedom is noteworthy for its emphasis on responsibility as an element of freedom. The chapter on creativity describes human overreaching as a type of Babylonian egotism, and he links this to the three angels' messages of Revelation. This was, I felt, a creative and meaningful approach to a familiar scripture. The chapter, "Man, a Relational Being" includes human control of natural resources and ecology, as well as family, church, and community. Here, I felt the discussion suffered from the absence of topical examples, which might otherwise date the book, but which surely would be appropriate in discussing family and community relationships.

The most scholarly discussion in the book is the chapter on history. Olsen neatly contrasts the cyclical view of human existence that pre-

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vailed in ancient Greece to the goal-centered teleological view of history that Christianity offers. He then concisely describes various "progressivist" movements since the Renaissance—Deism, Darwinism, Freudianism, Marxism, and Existentialism—and clearly argues that people should not be naively optimistic. This chapter makes the book potentially useful as a text in college courses dealing with the ideas that have shaped Western civilization.

Although Olsen quotes on occasion from Ellen G. White, he exercises judicious restraint, primarily using her *Ministry of Healing* to emphasize disease prevention as part of human wholeness. My chief complaint about the book is that it has altogether too many quotes. It is, indeed, an example of old-fashioned scholarship in this respect. One wishes that Olsen had employed more summary and paraphrase, and that he had used more of his own arguments, particularly his insightful similes and analogies.

The biggest drawback is the continual reference to human beings as "man." As a woman, I was annoyed by this terribly old-fashioned insistence that *man* was supposed to refer to human beings of either sex. References to people, to men and women, and to the human race could easily have substituted for the masculine man and would have given the book a more inclusive tone.

DAILY TIMES

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Adventists Excel

Two nights before Christmas, in the Kennedy Center Concert Hall, Paul Hill, a member of the Sligo Church, directed the last sing-along Messiah concert of his career. Since he is suffering from a degenerative muscle disorder, Hill could not stand on a podium to lead the sold out Concert Hall. He insists that he will continue to conduct, but he directed his 20th consecutive, and final, Messiah sing-along sitting on a tall stool.

Music, Medicine, and More . . .

John Hoyt, associate professor of art at Canadian Union College, received the top prize of $1,500 in an art competition organized by the Medici Art Foundation of Edmonton, Canada in the fall of 1993. The judges unanimously chose his religious painting, *Book of the Dead*, from submissions from 80 contestants.

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Adventists in The News

by Roy Branson

From Christmas at the Kennedy Center to the pages of Christian Century *to the first hospital-based proton accelerator.*

Paul Hill

Two nights before Christmas, in the Kennedy Center Concert Hall, Paul Hill, a member of Sligo church, directed the last sing-along *Messiah* concert of his career. Since he is suffering from a degenerative muscle disorder, Hill could not stand on a podium to lead the sold out Concert Hall. He insists that he will continue to conduct, but he directed his 20th consecutive, and final, *Messiah* sing-along sitting on a tall stool.

Paul Hill moved from being choral director at Columbia Union College to leading the 160-voice Paul Hill Chorale in 1967. He appeared at the opening concert of the Kennedy Center, where he has since conducted more than 200 concerts. In addition to the *Messiah* sing-along, Hill transferred the Christmas Candlelight Concert from Sligo church to the Kennedy Center, where it also became a tradition. It always concludes with choir members, holding candles, surrounding the audience. The Paul Hill Chorale became noted for concerts with singers and brass choirs sounding antiphonally throughout the concert hall. *The Washington Post* recently cited the Paul Hill Chorale as one of the three top choral groups in Washington, D.C., a city it modestly called the choral capital of America.

Hill's Chorale has sung at the cathedrals of Chartres and Notre Dame de Paris, with the American Ballet Theatre, the Joffrey Ballet, the Royal Ballet, and the Dance Theatre of Harlem, and won an Emmy award for its televised performance of Menotti's *The Unicorn, the Gorgon, and the Manticore.* During the 1992-1993 school year, Hill agreed to once again conduct the Columbia Union College concert choir.

At the December 1993 Kennedy Center concert, Hill invited those in the audience who had brought along scores of the *Messiah* to rise. When Hill asked the tenors to stand, a tall figure in the central box rose, his score in hand. It took a minute for the sold-out audience to realize that the President of the United States had joined the chorus of Paul

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Hill's last *Messiah* sing-along. They applauded appreciatively. By the time the altos and sopranos had been invited to stand, Hillary and Chelsea, each with their own scores, had joined the President.

Paul Hill climaxed his career leading 2,700 voices in the "Hallelujah Chorus," with the First Family singing their hearts out.

John Hoyt

John Hoyt, associate professor of art at Canadian Union College, received the top prize of $1,500 in an art competition organized by the Medici Art Foundation of Edmonton, Canada in the fall of 1993. The judges unanimously chose his religious painting, *Book of the Dead*, from submissions from 80 contestants. The judges said that it demonstrated a sophisticated command of craft, form and color. The painting, a triptych, takes its name from an ancient Egyptian book. Interestingly, another work by Hoyt, *Freudian Self Portrait*, was earlier removed from the exhibition because of objections to a male figure glaring in a purple rage at a departing woman.

Hoyt told the *Alberta Report* magazine that he believes "in a benevolent force encompassing the universe, . . ." and the "internal image of God" is important to him. "I feel the kingdom of God is within," he said. Hoyt's article, "Cracking Nuts or Peeling Onions?" appeared in the October 1993 issue of *Spectrum* (Vol. 23, No. 3).

Rochelle Philmon Kilgore

The best-known centenarian in North American Adventism died February 23, 1993, at the age of 106. Rochelle Philmon Kilgore passed away in her own home in the middle of the campus of Atlantic Union College, where she was a professor emeritus of English. She had been head of the English department, where she taught full-time to the age of 74. She was also the school's liaison to Adventist service personnel and students in Europe, attending 25 consecutive servicemen's retreats from 1957 to 1981, when she was 96. She remained actively working with the alumni association until she was 100.

According to Jocelyn Fay, alumni director at AUC, Kilgore was born on July 25, 1887. She graduated from Graysville Academy, the forerunner of Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists, in 1904. After 12 years of teaching church school, she received her B.A. from Union College—at the age of 33—then completed her master's degree back home, at the University of Georgia. She never quite lost the air of a Southern lady, but a lady with a sense of humor. When she called on one of her students to repeat by heart an assigned poem, three students, including a future president of Atlantic Union and Walla Walla Colleges, Robert Reynolds, marched to the front of the class and together recited a parody. Kilgore laughed until the tears ran down her cheeks—then demanded the students repeat the assigned poem.

Rochelle Philmon Kilgore, born only 22 years after the Civil War on a cotton plantation in Reynolds, Georgia, now rests in abolitionist Massachusetts, survived by the memories of generations of her students.

James Londis

James Londis became president of Atlantic Union College in January 1994. Londis most recently was vice president for community services at New England Memorial Hospital, where he had worked since 1989. Prior to that, he had served for several years as director of the Washington Institute, and for 10 years as senior pastor of the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church in Takoma Park, Maryland. (Three of the past four senior pastors of Sligo—Drs. Loveless, Scriven, and Londis—have become presidents of Adventist colleges.) Londis came to Sligo from the campus of Atlantic Union College, where he taught for 10 years (1965-1975) in the religion department of his alma mater. During that time he received his Ph.D. in philosophy of religion from Boston University.

It is striking that, for whatever reason, Londis is the seventh of 11 presidents of Adventist senior colleges in North America who received their doctorates in some area of theology: Richard Lesher (religious education, New York University)—Andrews University; Charles Scriven (theology, Graduate Theological Union)—Columbia Union College; Larry Geraty (Old Testament, Harvard University)—La Sierra University; Benjamin Reaves (Ministry, Andrews University)—Oakwood College; Malcolm Maxwell (New Testament, Princeton Theological Seminary)—Pacific Union College; and Niels-Erik Andreasen (Old Testament, Vanderbilt University)—Walla Walla College.

If you enjoy this feature, please send us fresh information about people whose activities and accomplishments might interest other readers. Mail to Spectrum, *P.O. Box 5330, Takoma Park, Maryland 20913.*

A. Gregory Schneider

A Gregory Schneider, professor of behavioral science at Pacific Union College, has received reviews of a newly published book that any college professor would gladly kill for. His work will also inevitably contribute to a growing sense among Adventists that to understand themselves they must know more about their Wesleyan Methodist roots.

Donald G. Mathews, a professor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, was asked to review the manuscript of *The Way of the Cross Leads Home: The Domestication of American Methodism*, when it was submitted for publication. Mathews wrote back a critique that, not surprisingly, helped convince the Indiana University Press (Bloomington, Ind.) to publish the volume in 1993:

"In this imaginative, brilliant, and profound case study of American Methodism lies a new model for understanding the history of American religion and society. Schneider's reading of Methodist discourse provides a truly innovative way of thinking about 19th-century American faith, gender, family, and culture. His study should become one of the landmarks of American religious history."

Catherine L. Albanese and Stephen J. Stein, highly respected historians of American religious history and the editors of the series in which Schneider's volume appears, say in their foreword that "Schneider's story is part of a new wave of scholarship on the Methodists that is effectively marking the differences between Methodist and Calvinist piety. . . . Schneider's interdisciplinary approach, with its combinations of rhetorical analysis, psychological insight, phenomenological epoche, and historical narrative, is masterfully integrated into the tale he tells."

Paul Merritt Bassett, professor of the history of Christianity at Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri, leads off his review in *The Christian Century* (October 20, 1993) by declaring that "this book merits Donald Mathews's enthusiastic blurb on the jacket and the praise heaped upon it by Catherine Albanese and Stephen Stein in the foreword." He goes on to say that Schneider has produced "a seminal study of early 19th-century American Methodist theology and piety. It also presents an innovative and supple model for analyzing 19th-century religion in general."

After graduating from Columbia Union College, Schneider received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, studying under Martin Marty, America's best-known historian of American religion, and won a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to write his book.

James Slater

On December 15, the board of the Loma Linda University Medical Center created a new position, Executive Vice-president. James Slater, M.D., chairman of the Department of Radiation Medicine, accepted the board's invitation to fill the position. The new position and title gives Slater wide-ranging responsibilities.

Slater shares a commitment to state-of-the-art medicine with Dr. David Hinshaw, president of the Medical Center. Slater, more than any other single person, is responsible for Loma Linda securing the first hospital-based proton accelerator applied to medical therapies. As chairman of the department of radiation science, Slater had a key role in convincing the university to launch a venture that continues to expand. Along with that of Hinshaw, Slater's testimony before the U.S. Congress helped secure tens of millions of dollars in federal funding for the proton accelerator. Indeed, Slater continues to be a member of the Science Policy Advisory Committee to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Slater received his M.D. from Loma Linda University, and won a National Institutes of Health fellowship to spend a year at the M.D. Anderson Hospital and Tumor Institute in Houston, Texas. He has been invited to consult with many institutions, including the U.S. Department of Energy, the Harvard Joint Center for Radiation Therapy, the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, and the Los Alamos Cancer Research and Treatment Center. He is also a member of the European Community's "Europe Against Cancer" initiative.

An exchange between readers and Gary Gilbert on genes and Genesis; and from Australia, more on Waco.

Common Pseudogenes Might Only Reflect the Genesis Curse

First, Dr. Gilbert assumes that the "silent majority" of human DNA ("98 percent . . . apparently silent") is indeed functionless (*Spectrum*, Vol. 22, No. 4). An argument from our ignorance about the purpose of 98 percent of the DNA molecule reminds one of early Darwinian arguments based on the so-called "vestigial organs" like the thymus, tonsils, or appendix, which were considered "useless" in the days of our immunologic naïveté. No ethical physician would today advise excision of these important tissues except in the case of disease. They are best seen as functional evidences of design, not "vestiges" of anything.

Second, even if this large pool of cellular code is truly inactivated, must we assume this is due to random decay or "genetic mistakes"? If man and lesser creatures were originally designed with common genetic molecules, then at the theological fall (which had obvious genetic consequences[1]), does not the biblical narrative suggest a catastrophic genetic alteration of life? Does it upset our cosmology to find humans and apes with common genetic malfunction as well as common function, without implication of descent?

Could not shared "pseudogenes" be simply a physical record of what the Bible calls "the curse"[2] imposed on humans and other life forms alike? The protective or self-healing capacity of DNA seems to have been impaired, allowing the presently observed random or episodic mutations to occur. But this should be confirmatory to and not contradictory of the biblical cosmology.

The Creator seems to have also allowed[3] a pan-species genetic alteration in the creation as a physical consequence of the moral decision to "know evil."

Along with Darwin I am free to speculate that a DNA created to be "very good" would have to be genetically altered, perhaps with large amounts "disabled." Dr. Gilbert's normal hemoglobin molecule (which unselfishly carries oxygen without using any for its own anaerobic metabolism), now has a dark shadow in sickle-hemoglobin that with a single genetic sin (one wrong nucleic acid in the DNA code of thousands for hemoglobin) deforms and painfully cripples its unhappy host under slight hypoxic provocation. (Perhaps the "inactive DNA" and "pseudogenes" of primates contain mechanisms that would have prevented this from happening in a sinless world?)

Jack Hoehn
Walla Walla, WA.

1. See Genesis 3: "you will crawl on your belly" NIV (i.e., genetic alterations of means of reptilian locomotion); "greatly increase

your pains in childbearing" (i.e., genetic alteration of pelvis, uterus, or its hormonal control); "produce thorns" (i.e., genetically altered branches); "and thistles" (i.e., genetically altered leaves); and so forth.

2. See Romans 8:19-22: "The creation waits . . . the creation was subjected to frustration (i.e., 98 percent of its genetic potential was put on hold?); "its bondage to decay" (i.e., it is now subject to random mutations and genetic mistakes not seen before the Fall?); "the whole creation has been groaning." . . . "waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed."

3. It can be debated if the Creator himself imposed "the curse," or allowed his fallen adversary (Satan) to inflict it on his creation. Scripture seems to present a Creator who takes responsibility for evil, although not himself evil.

If the Pseudogenes Are Neutral, Why Do All Chimps Have Them?

I am a physician, not a molecular geneticist. My question is this: If a pseudogene is perfectly evolutionarily neutral, why is it found in all the chimpanzees? Ignoring the random mutations present in the β hemoglobin pseudogene in both species, why should we not find some chimps with and some chimps without the pseudogene? The only explanation I have is that this pseudogene must have some advantage to the species, or it is, as Gary Gilbert said, "that chimps and humans share a common ancestor." If the common ancestor is part of the recent evolutionary tree we should be able to locate a "lower" species in which some have and some have not the pseudogene present. Another explanation is that this may actually support creation by a common author as as might be suggested by the example you gave of the *National Geographic* article about Columbus and his imperfect Latin.

I admire *Spectrum* and Gary Gilbert for having the courage to allow full investigation, as we as Seventh-day Adventists press on to a better understanding of truth in nature.

David Foote
Fort Ann, New York

Teleological Thought Isn't Enough

I read with interest Dr. Gary Gilbert's article, "In Search of Genesis and the Pseudogene" (*Spectrum*, Vol. 22, No. 4). Clearly, Dr. Gilbert's understanding of molecular biology is broad and impressive. He does a good job in explaining this complex field in terms a layman can understand.

In spite of the scientific sound of the article, however, Dr. Gilbert engages in a fair amount of unscientific thinking. He believes that the seeming "purposelessness" of pseudogenes that are nearly identical in chimps, gorillas, and humans argues against a special Genesis-style creation and supports a "common ancestry" of these species. To arrive at this conclusion, he uses a form of teleological thinking. The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979) defines teleology as "the philosophical study of manifestations of design or purpose in natural processes or occurrences, under the belief that natural processes are not determined by mechanism but rather by their utility in an overall natural design." Dr. Gilbert uses a similar philosophical approach when he insists that a genetic design understandable to him must be present in order for a special creation to have occurred. When he doesn't see the design or purpose he thinks should be present, he concludes that macro-evolution provides the only reasonable explanation.

First, he insists that all facets of life on this planet must show design or purpose if creation occurred as in Genesis. Secondly, that design must be understandable to him and other scientists. The first assumption might be defensible in a perfect world; however, the same Genesis record that describes the creation of a perfect world also describes its degeneration with the Fall.

Second, what makes him think that nature ever speaks clearly? Nature offers clues, but often the clues are very subtle. A scientist must carefully observe and interpret these clues to determine their significance, just as a Bible scholar must carefully interpret the Scriptures to determine their meaning. Both disciplines require humility and an open mind.

Thomas W. Young
Stone Mountain, Georgia

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, Maryland 20913 (U.S.A.). The editors reserve the right to condense letters prior to publication.*

Moondust, Jupiter, the Appendix: Where Is Scientific Humility?

In Dr. Gary Gilbert's article "In Search of Genesis and the Pseudogene" (*Spectrum*, Vol. 22, No. 4), we find such expressions as, "If God used the same plan for hemoglobin protein when he made cows and humans, then the hemoglobin proteins should be identical—or any difference between them should serve a purpose. . . ." and "if God, like a good engineer, had used a single genetic design for protein in different animals, then the quality control on his production line was poor." Who is he or anyone else to judge God's work on human terms or criticize his abilities as an "engineer"? Just because Dr. Gilbert and his colleagues do not know the function of what they are pleased to call "pseudogenes" and cannot discover it does not mean that there is none. It was not too long ago that we were informed that the human appendix had no function and was only an infection-prone nuisance. I don't believe that is the conventional scientific wisdom today. I recall reading in my public high school science book that Jupiter was a huge solid body covered with ice and liquid oxygen. I don't believe that is the conventional scientific wisdom today, either.

I still recall, in the run-up to the first moon landing in 1969, the worried discussions of what would happen to the moon lander and its occupants when they settled into that 18-foot layer of space dust that must cover the moon, given its great antiquity and the constant bombardment of dust striking its surface (let's face it; it would take only 0.000000054 inches per year over a period of 4,000,000,000 years to reach 18 feet). Yet to this day I have never seen an explanation of the presence of only an inch or two found by astronauts on that and subsequent landings.

One would have thought that the science community, in the wake of all the discoveries of the past half-century and all the "firm" theories that have been upset by these discoveries, would have learned some lessons in humility. One would think that Christians, those who, through the Gospels, have come to know Christianity's Founder, would at least learn humility from him. And one would think that Adventists especially would be willing to give God the benefit of the doubt.

Rodney H. Mill
Dighton, Kansas

Gary Gilbert Responds . . .

In response to Dr. Hoehn: The arguments Dr. Hoehn presents hinge on whether the pseudogene is really functionless. To prove that something is functionless is, perhaps, the most difficult proof. Imagine an alien from another planet asked you what a discarded soft drink can was for. You would probably tell him that the soft drink can was trash, without productive function in human society or nature. Your argument would be largely dependent upon your knowledge of the can's history. It had once functioned to hold a beverage, the beverage had been removed, and no further function remained. You might offer as further proof that you could remove it and there would be no adverse consequences. The argument about the pseudogene is similar to the argument for the useless soft drink can. It once functioned to code for hemoglobin, that function is gone, no apparent function has superseded the lost function, and humans who lack the pseudogene do not have a corresponding clinical abnormality. But the argument about the soft drink can is not absolute proof and neither is the argument about the pseudogene.

In response to Dr. Foote: Dr. Foote raises an interesting question. If the β hemoglobin pseudogene originated in a primate sector then what happened to the offspring of the brothers and sisters of that primate? Shouldn't they be all around us and lack the pseudogene? I am aware of three possible explanations for the pervasiveness of the pseudogene and many other silent genetic errors in living primates. If the population in which the β hemoglobin pseudogene arose was small—think of the bald eagle or the North American buffalo—a neutral mutation may have spread throughout the population by sheer chance. If the original mutation occurred in a larger population, then a reproductive or survival advantage must have been present within a few hundred thousand DNA units so that the pseudogene was *associated* with an advantageous gene. It would then eventually become prevalent within the population to approximately the same degree as the advantageous gene. This mechanism has been demonstrated in fruit flies. A third mechanism involves a flaw in genetic repair. The DNA repair machinery in each cell tries to make both chromosomes of the same type match. Under some circumstances it may favor duplication of the pseudogene and insertion into

the complimentary chromosome rather than elimination of the pseudogene. Although this would represent a flawed repair mechanism, this particular mistake would be minor, as it would have no negative consequences for the individual.

I believe Dr. Foote is correct in suggesting that the pseudogene could be interpreted as the unintended signature of an imperfect Author. I suspect, however, that most Adventists would object to this interpretation.

In response to Dr. Young: Invocation of a teleological explanation may indeed by cause for criticism in scientific writing, as Dr. Young notes. When talking about God and ultimate causes, however, discussion of teleology (defined as "the fact or the character of being . . . shaped . . . by the design of a divine Providence. . . . opposed to purely mechanical determinism or causation exclusively by what is temporally antecedent" by *Webster's Second International Dictionary*) becomes inescapable. The argument that a complex creation implies a clever designer impressed me as the strongest evidence for the existence of God during my college days. While this is a philosophical belief, not a scientific theory, it nonetheless implies specific predictions that may be compared to scientific data. Dr. Young objects to my stating those predictions as "unscientific," implying that there can be no relationship between religious philosophy and scientific thinking, and further, that religious philosophy lies outside the bounds of normal, careful thought. I disagree strongly; religious philosophy should be examined critically and informed by reality.

Adventists are fond of the term *holistic* and like to see themselves as architects of a philosophy that integrates body, mind, and spirit. But advanced education, which we prize, inevitably introduces ideas that our born-in-the-19th-century world view is unable to comprehend. You and I both have acquaintances who have abandoned Adventism for this reason and others who have developed a rift between intellectual life and spiritual life. My antidote to these outcomes is frequent critical evaluation of both Adventism and new scientific insights. I make the assumption that God is the friend of all truth. The open-endedness of this solution may seem unsatisfactory; if so, may I urge recognition of the limits of your insights as the standards by which mine should be judged.

In response to Mr. Mill: The comparison of God to a (human) designer responsible for engineering extremely complex machines—human beings—has been common in Christian writing for two centuries. My point was that the β hemoglobin pseudogene is a complex structure that is not explained by the common metaphor of God as engineer. It was not my intent to question God's capacity for good engineering, only the metaphor of God as engineer.

Gary Gilbert
West Roxbury, Virginia

Daniel & Revelation Committee Needs New Ideas

I read your issue on Waco (*Spectrum*, Vol. 23, No. 1) with more than normal interest, since Vernon Howell's cult also recruited followers here in Australia. In fact, I was one of Steve Schneider's most vocal failures, despite his charisma, enthusiasm, and superficial familiarity with many a scriptural detail. The soul searching in the section, "How Should SDAs Respond?" is most commendable. It is Ernest Bursey's courageous contribution on which I wish to focus.

In essence, Bursey pleads for dialogue within the church on interpreting the Book of Revelation. No doubt some fellow teachers of the books of Leviticus and Daniel, the Olivet Discourse, and the Epistle to the Hebrews would echo his sentiments in their own spheres of expertise.

On one hand, Bursey laments the standoff among the laity over Revelation Seminars. He might have underscored his point by adding that there are several somewhat disparate versions to choose from!

On the other hand, more importantly, Bursey rues the fact that the Daniel and Revelation Committee (DARCOM) series is less than representative of Adventist academic opinion. This is apparent even from the spread of views within the seven volumes, as well as DARCOM's admission that they included only a selection of submitted material.

The crucial point is that, after a full decade of costly labor, DARCOM has officially yielded virtually no opinion that it held at the outset. Yet these essays range from the sublime to the inadequate—some would say ridiculous. I have often rejoiced to see a competent scholar get right to the heart of the

Word, sometimes refuting the more unbridled assertions of Adventism's critics. At times, I have been driven to the Word to assess some fresh, promising insight. But sadly, all too often I have wept as Adventism's professional apologists reached their familiar goals in rather dubious circumstances—to put it kindly.

Despite DARCOM's invitation to study some issues further, especially in the Book of Revelation, Adventism must decide for itself whether its official journals ever open their pages to genuine dialogue, as Bursey suggests, or sanction some book with like intent. But I, for one, am not holding my breath. The temptation to consider this whole distasteful distraction closed will probably prove irresistible.

The narrow confines of *Spectrum* alone offer an adequate platform for critique. Right now we need a set of books, free of denominational restraints, to offer informed critiques of the more relevant material within the DARCOM series. No one scholar can meet this need. I am well advanced with a manuscript treating one crucial issue. My problem, however, from this rather remote theological outpost, is access to respectable publishers who are willing to accept such specialist projects.

Fred Mazzaferri
Brisbane, Australia

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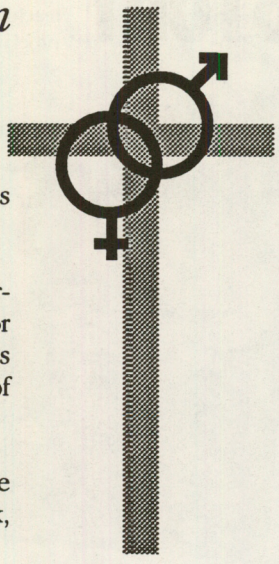

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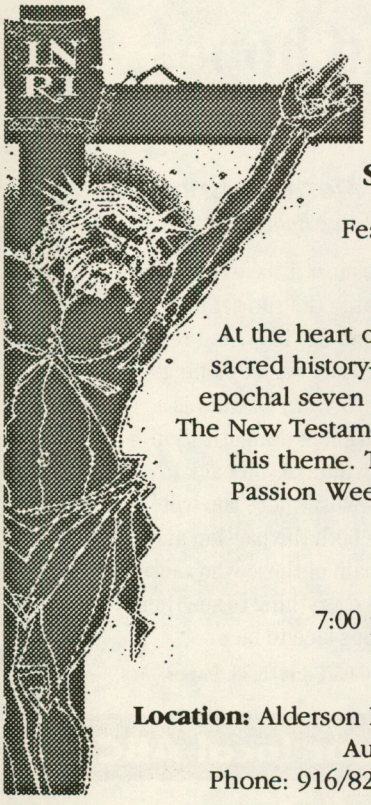

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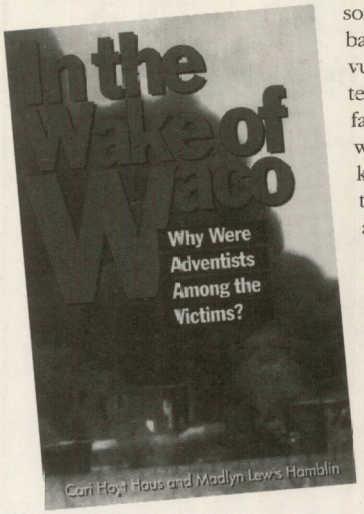

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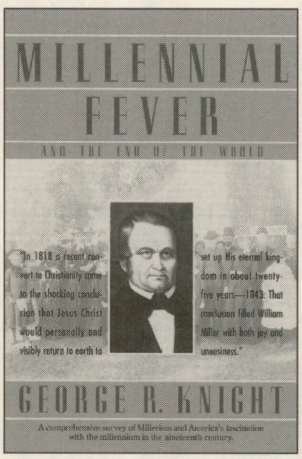

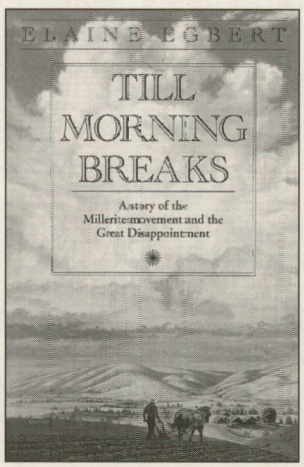

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