

# Spectrum

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The Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

## Laughter

IMMUNOLOGY OF HUMOR

IS A MERRY HEART LIKE A PLACEBO?

THE SACREDNESS OF LAUGHTER

THE YEAR OF ADVENTIST  
CONGREGATIONALISM

SAVING THE CHURCH'S  
PENSION PLAN

THE CASE FOR AN  
ADVENTIST PREP SCHOOL



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# Spectrum

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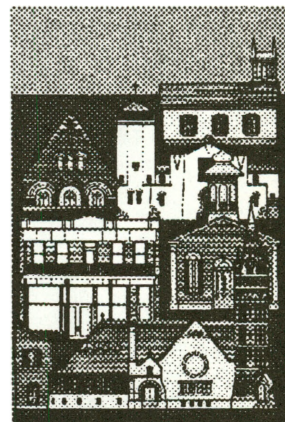
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# Molleurus Couperus' Grand Adventure

**M**olleurus Couperus was an intrepid explorer. While unfailingly cheerful and courteous, affable with the famous and the powerful, Molleurus allowed no one to divert him from the pursuit of truth. As a member of the Loma Linda University medical school faculty and the first editor of *Spectrum* (1968-1974), Molleurus enticed many into sharing his quest.

On January 31, 1998, Molleurus Couperus, at the age of 92, died in Loma Linda, California. For more than 35 years, he served as professor and chair of the department of dermatology at the Loma Linda University Medical Center. His students and readers will remember Molleurus as a gentle teacher capable of being an Adventist Indiana Jones.

Molleurus' adventures were not only intellectual. Born in the Netherlands to a mother who would subsequently hide Jews from the Nazis, Molleurus crossed the ocean to earn a B.A. from Emmanuel Missionary College. He immediately traveled to the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) for a year as a missionary, before returning to the United States to earn an M.D. in 1934 at the College of Medical Evangelists. Over the next few years, Molleurus studied at Edinburgh University, traveled to Palestine and Jordan, and took three years of specialty training at Columbia University in New York City before returning in 1942 as a board-certified dermatologist to the faculty of the medical school from which he had graduated in southern California. Molleurus never stopped crisscrossing the globe, visiting scholars and research sites on the frontiers of science and theology.

On his hundreds of international trips, Molleurus became friends with the famous. During a visit to Jordan, in the Holy Land, Couperus was persuaded by an

Adventist nurse to slip surreptitiously into the royal harem to treat the king's grandson, Hussein. The patient responded well, and Molleurus escaped execution. Years later, Jordan's present King Hussein thanked Molleurus for saving his life.

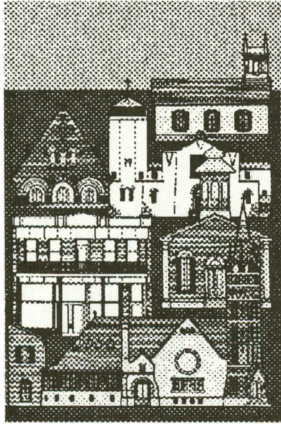
Molleurus' spiritual quest led him in the 1950s to edit a journal studying Creation and evolution. He went on from there to a lifetime exploring physical anthropology, a subject he taught for many years at the University of California at Los Angeles (see Ronald Numbers' definitive study, *The Creationists* [New York: Knopf, 1994]). A recurring visitor to Africa's Olduvai Gorge, Molleurus entertained Louis Leakey in southern California and arranged for him to lecture to Molleurus' UCLA anthropology class.

During its crucial first six years of publication, Molleurus infused *Spectrum* with his own boldness and irenic independence. His editorial flair persisted beyond his six years as editor. He secured for *Spectrum* a long-lost transcript of two 1919 conferences that convened Adventist professors and denominational leaders, including the president of the General Conference, A. G. Daniells. Sixty years after the event, *Spectrum* was the first—and still only—journal to publish two days' candid discussion of Ellen White's mission and authority. Many believe it was *Spectrum's* single most important contribution to Adventist thinking.

Molleurus Couperus, a wonderful and fascinating friend, will be remembered by not only his wife, Dos, his surviving brother and sister, his four daughters and 12 grandchildren, but also by an Adventist community forever drawn to new vistas by the example of his adventure of faith.

—Roy Branson





# The Year of SDA Congregationalism

Five independent Adventist congregations emerged in 1996 and 1997. Is this a trend?

by Alita Byrd

FIVE ADVENTIST PASTORS ACROSS THE UNITED States have established churches independent of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The pastors involved are well-known, some nationally. Organized separately over an 18-month period from May 1996 to November 1997, all these churches now control their own tithe dollars and assets. They say they are pursuing a new, gospel-centered ministry, using contemporary worship methods to reach the unchurched. In 1997, they cooperated in forming the Evangelical Sabbath Association.

The largest congregation has a weekly attendance of about 600 persons; two others have about 400 attending. The first Adventist pastor to start an independent congregational church was Eric Bahme, senior pastor in Woodinville, Washington, near Seattle. Bahme was terminated from employment by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in May 1996. He,

and 98 percent of his congregation, started the New Life Fellowship of Congregational Seventh-day Adventists, a non-denominational, unaffiliated church in Woodinville. Currently, they have an average attendance of 140.

Next, Bob Bretsch, former senior pastor of the 1,450-member Sunnyside Seventh-day Adventist Church in Portland, Oregon, was fired in May 1997 and told he could no longer pastor in the Oregon Conference. Now he pastors the Bridge City Community Church in Portland. Bridge City, which began meeting in June and now attracts more than 600 people in Sabbath worship each week, understands itself to be an independent church with theology rooted in Adventism.

The next to start an independent ministry was Chad McComas. For six years, McComas served as senior pastor of the 600-member church in Medford, Oregon. In December 1996, the conference told him he could no longer pastor the Medford church. On July 5, 1997, the Set Free Christian Fellowship held its first service in Medford, under McComas'

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*Alita Byrd, a graduate of Columbia Union College, in Takoma Park, Maryland, is serving an editorial internship at The Washingtonian magazine in Washington, D.C. She is Spectrum's editorial assistant.*

leadership, with 60 people attending.

When Richard Fredericks, pastor of the 600-member Damascus Seventh-day Adventist Church in Maryland, ceased to be employed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church on October 27, 1997, most of his members followed him to the independent Damascus Road Community Church, worshiping in the local high school. This new, non-denominational congregation, about 30 miles north of Washington, D.C., continues to meet on Sabbaths, offering a "Saturday morning option for the burned, the bored, and the bypassed." Approximately 400 attend each week.

Most recently, Clay Peck had his credentials revoked by the Rocky Mountain Conference on November 5, 1997. He has been pastor of Grace Place, a 400-member congregation meeting at the Berthoud High School in Berthoud, Colorado, about 40 miles north of Denver, since September 14, 1996. The congregation had formed their own non-profit organization even before they began meeting independently. They have retained their assets and meet in the same location, though they are no longer an official Adventist church.

## The Evangelical Sabbath Association

Part of what makes the events of 1996 and 1997 seem like a movement is that these five new, independent churches all participate in the Evangelical Sabbath Association, a loosely organized group of churches providing sup-

port, guidance, and resources for pastors and congregations who have left the denomination. The association formed in late July 1997 under the direction of Don Ashlock, a Portland, Oregon, businessman who had long dreamed of an association dedicated to the congregationalist community. The Evangelical Sabbath Association states that its mission is to equip, serve, and empower grace-based Sabbath celebrating ministries. The pastors and congregations participating in the association emphasize that it is *not* another denomination. Still in its infancy, the Evangelical

Sabbath Association also maintains a World Wide Web page offering information on the churches involved with the association.

Many have remarked on the similarities of the Evangelical Sabbath Association to the Protestant, non-denominational Willow Creek Association, also organized to support congregational ministry. Each year, Willow Creek Association—with more than 2,200

member churches from 70 denominations and 15 countries—holds workshops and conferences, as well as one large annual church leadership conference. Seventh-day Adventist pastors and church members have been attending these conferences for years, and the Evangelical Sabbath Association was founded during the Willow Creek Leadership Conference in 1997. Although Willow Creek gave them a model, Ashlock says, "this is a pre-Willow Creek phenomenon. Willow Creek has just provided oxygen to a flame already burning in Adventism."

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*Each year, Willow Creek Association—with more than 2,200 member churches from 70 denominations—holds a leadership conference, attended for years by Adventist pastors and members. The Evangelical Sabbath Association was founded during the 1997 Willow Creek Leadership Conference.*

## Links Among the Five Churches

In discussing the similar situations of these five pastors and their congregations, several issues regularly arise. The most frequently discussed issue is control. Should local churches be able to control some of their tithe dollars? Similarly, should local churches be able to hire staff paid by the church instead of the conference? Another important issue, though often de-emphasized, is theology. For example, several of these pastors do not believe that the visible Adventist Church should be defined as the "remnant." All claim to be completely gospel-centered. A third issue is worship. All the congregations employ innovative techniques, reaching out to people they feel have been neglected by traditional Adventist worship.

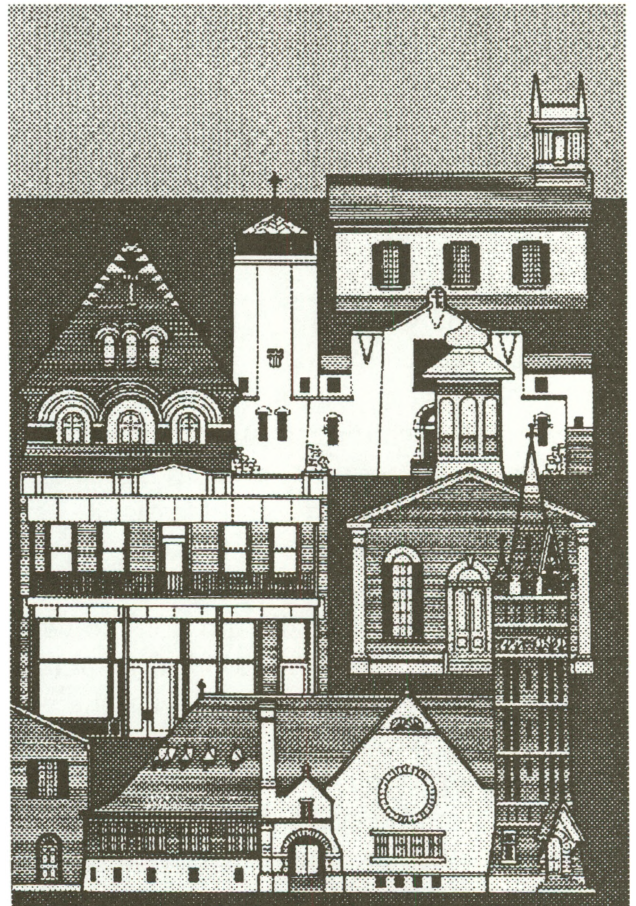
### The New Life Christian Fellowship: Woodinville, Washington

The New Life Christian Fellowship of Congregational Seventh-day Adventists in Woodinville, Washington, is the only church of the five to separate from the denomination and retain the Seventh-day Adventist name. "We are definitely evangelical in theology," says Eric Bahme, the pastor, "but we still fit within the Adventist parameters." According to Bahme, theology was never mentioned as a reason for his termination. Problems with the conference included the style of worship service, led by a non-Adventist worship leader, and the fact that not all tithe dollars were going to the conference.

The New Life Christian Fellowship currently has 60 members, with a total of 180 associated with the ministry. They sponsor many events, such as concerts, and run a Christian resource

and book center. The congregation has also made a commitment to fully subsidize the education of members' children. "We're in it for the long haul," says Bahme. "We are creating a lasting ministry."

According to Bahme, he receives several E-mail messages every day from all over North America and around the world from people wanting to make a similar transition to congregational independence. Bahme says he knows of 15 to 18 senior pastors (in addition to the five discussed in this article) "who will most likely be terminated or quit to start new churches. In the beginning they were mostly fired. Now they are seeing a better option and leaving." Bahme admits that the movement of independent Adventist congregations is still relatively small, but claims that it is also primarily composed of middle- to upper-class Anglo-Saxons—the segment of the population with the most money and resources.



## Bridge City Community Church: Portland, Oregon

Bob Bretsch, after serving as the senior pastor of the Union College church, was senior pastor, from 1992 to 1997, of the 1,450-member Sunnyside church in Portland, Oregon, the largest congregation in the largest conference of the North Pacific Union. On May 29, 1997, the Oregon Conference fired him. A little more than one month later, on July 1, 1997, Bretsch was asked to become the pastor of the newly formed Bridge City Community Church. Duff Gorle and Marc Schelske, associate pastors at Sunnyside with Bretsch, also joined the pastoral team of the new congregation.

When Bretsch came in 1992, Sunnyside was known as a church with a "culturally educated base" and had a formal, traditional church service. According to George Gainer, the associate pastor of Sunnyside who remained, "This was the 'classical music church' of the Northwest." Bretsch brought several innovations, including a strong youth program, a contemporary worship service, a downstairs espresso bar, and Messianic Jewish dancing. According to Bretsch, though many members appreciated the changes, a "Group of 60," who "really did not like what we were doing, used the political resources available to them to undermine what the will of the church was."

The "Group of 60" brought a document of concerns about Bretsch and his ministry to the conference officials. They questioned his tithing practices and philosophy, as well as his

leadership style and attitudes. Bretsch twice diverted his tithe to help needy situations, and once sent his tithe to the Montana Conference. He also revealed to the conference administration that he paid tithe from net, not gross income. The conference declared such a practice unacceptable, whereupon Bretsch apologized and offered to comply with North American Division policy, which states that tithing is a requirement of church employment and is expected of local church officers (NAD Working Policy, D 55 20 and T 05). Though tithing practices were a major concern, Bretsch's defenders emphasize that Sunnyside's tithe went

up every year Bretsch was senior pastor.

According to Bretsch, another concern of the Oregon Conference was that Sunnyside, in order to facilitate its various ministries, was employing the equivalent of four pastors and paying them out of the local church budget. According to Bretsch, this was "portrayed as an open invitation to congregationalism."

The situation at Sunnyside differed from most of the other churches. Instead of only an external split between a congregation and the conference, the congregation split internally. Some members formed a new church, while others remained in the old church facility and returned the worship service to what it was prior to Bretsch's arrival.

Currently, the new Bridge City Community Church is operating successfully. "It is all about reaching lost people," Bretsch says. "Our purpose-driven ministry is so exciting that a Sunday-keeping congregation is coming to worship with us. We have approximately

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*The most frequently discussed issue is control. Another important issue is theology. For example, many of these pastors do not believe that the visible Adventist Church should be defined as the "remnant." A third issue is worship. All the congregations employ innovative worship techniques.*



600 attending." The Sunnyside church, on the other hand, no longer has a contemporary worship service and voted to suspend the Saturday night "seeker service," according to Gainer. "The battle is still raging. It's not over," Gainer says. "This is the saddest thing I've seen in ministry."

## Set Free Christian Fellowship: Medford, Oregon

The independent fellowship began July 5, 1997, although its guiding spirit, Chad McComas, had already been replaced as pastor of the 600-member Medford, Oregon, church in December 1996. According to McComas, the Oregon Conference told him he could no longer pastor because his wife had a prescription drug addiction. Five months later, on May 30, 1997, he officially resigned as a pastor in the conference. "I knew my future [as a pastor in the Oregon Conference] was over. I was labeled," McComas said.

McComas had been hired 20 years before by the Oregon Conference. He had served as senior pastor of the Medford church for six years. He had also served for six years on the conference executive committee.

McComas and his wife were very open about the addiction problem. Although this was an issue, other issues also contributed to his departure as senior pastor. Some members of the congregation were unhappy with his leadership, and, according to McComas, one member allegedly withheld \$180,000 in tithe from the conference until such time as the conference would remove McComas as senior pastor. For McComas, the most important issues were control, money, and power.

Though McComas is still a credentialed, ordained Seventh-day Adventist pastor, he says, "I don't trust the church anymore. . . . There's a witch hunt going on in the Adventist Church. So many of my friends have been

fired across the country. If you don't fit the mold, [the denomination] doesn't have a place for you. . . . Five people in my family, all pastors, have been pushed out of the church."

After resigning his position as pastor in the Oregon Conference, McComas decided to stay in Medford and start a center concerned with addiction and fellowship, since "the Adventist Church doesn't know how to deal with addictive people." July 5, 1997, was the first Sabbath of Set Free Christian Fellowship—as close to Independence Day as possible. More than 60 people attended the first service.

Set Free Christian Fellowship is directed by a board of volunteer consultants and envisions future branches, such as a recovery center for in-house treatment, and a resource center. They organize many Christian 12-step support groups that help people in recovery from all sorts of addictions.

McComas says, "It's more fun working for God than the denomination. We're reaching all kinds of people the [Adventist] Church could never reach. . . . We are not trying to compete, only trying to reach the people they can't."

## Damascus Road Community Church: Damascus, Maryland

Richard Fredericks, senior pastor of the Damascus Road Community Church, and Bob Fournier, associate pastor, together with the majority of their congregation in Damascus, Maryland, became a congregational church independent of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination on October 27, 1997. Those who remained behind continue to meet in the Damascus church building, which is owned by the Potomac Conference. They comprise the Damascus Grace Fellowship Church, a new congregation that is part of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. The pastor is David Newman, a former editor of *Ministry* magazine. He delivered his first ser-

mon at the church November 1, 1997.

In 1992, Fredericks left his position as associate professor of religion at Columbia Union College to become pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Damascus, Maryland, a congregation of about 100 members. Fredericks introduced an innovative worship style, including drama and contemporary live music, and organized a variety of small outreach groups. In five years, the membership grew to 600.

In 1995, with conference committee support, the congregation voted to change the church name to the Damascus Road Community Church. When they outgrew their church building, they began holding Sabbath services in an auditorium at the local high school. They began making plans to build a larger worship center and to purchase land through their newly formed non-profit organization, Damascus Road Community Church, Inc. (DRCC, Inc.).

Throughout this growth in ministry, problems between the Damascus church and the conference escalated. Early in 1997, at a church business meeting, Fredericks announced that it was his intent and practice to give 60 percent of his personal tithe to the local church, while sending 40 percent to the conference. Potomac Conference president Herbert Broeckel, who was in attendance, replied that it was "non-negotiable" that pastors pay 10 percent of their income to the conference, and that property be held by the conference corporation.

Eventually, Fredericks complied with church policy and began giving 10 percent of his income to the conference, while still attempt-

ing to give nearly the same amount locally. According to Fredericks, his congregation wanted him to pay tithe to the conference, because "they didn't want me fired over that. It wasn't worth it."

But the issue of who held title to property was more difficult. In October 1997, Fredericks was asked to speak to the Potomac Conference Executive Committee. Fredericks addressed the issue of a local congregation holding land, as well as the conviction of the pastors that the Seventh-day Adventist denomination should not be simply equated with God's remnant. "The gospel, not our law-

keeping," said Fredericks, "defines all who constitute God's 'remnant' people."

After discussing Fredericks' remarks, the Potomac Conference Executive Committee concluded that Fredericks must dissolve DRCC, Inc., and set October 27 as a deadline. When Fredericks did not comply, his credentials were revoked.

—William Johnsson

During all these proceedings, DRCC, Inc. continued to negotiate the purchase of 225 acres which, in addition to a new worship facility, may someday include a day-care center, school, auditorium, athletic fields, Christian arts center, non-alcoholic bar and lounge, and Christian cemetery. The owner of the land agreed to sell 56 acres to the church for \$620,000 and donate the remaining 169 acres, but asked for half the money by November 5. Fredericks and his wife took out a home equity loan to help reach this goal, and the November 1 Sabbath offering amounted to more than \$65,000. Previous offerings had been comparable. DRCC, Inc. made the payment.

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*"This is definitely a trend.  
There is no turning back."*

—Clay Peck

*"Nor does the church at large  
face an imminent threat of  
fragmentation into independent  
congregations. . . . I see  
no evidence of a trend in this  
direction."*

Fredericks says that he, too, has been inundated with inquiries from pastors and congregations interested in following similar courses of action. Pastors, he says, are deeply discouraged by the stagnation all around them. He says that this new trend of congregationalism is a growing one that Adventist administrators can either recognize and benefit from, or disregard and continue to commit slow suicide by cutting off thriving congregations.

For Broeckel, the issue is a simple one: adherence to policy. While Fredericks' theological views have been questioned, Broeckel said in an interview that Fredericks' style of worship was not being challenged. Indeed, according to Broeckel, the newly formed Damascus Grace Fellowship Church, under Newman's leadership, will continue the innovative outreach ministry that Fredericks started. "I admire [Fredericks'] honesty," Broeckel said in a recent interview. "He is a man of strong convictions." Conference officials, however, agree that he is following a course of action unacceptable within the context of the Adventist denomination. "If Fredericks [should] dissolve his corporation," Broeckel said, "and adhere to the rules and regulations of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I would be happy to hire him tomorrow."

## Grace Place: Berthoud, Colorado

Fredericks has referred to Damascus Road Community Church and Grace Place, in Berthoud, Colorado, pastored by Clay Peck, as "sympiotic twins." Indeed, Peck, before beginning Grace Place, worked with Fredericks as an associate pastor at Damascus. The two pastors talk weekly.

"My time at Damascus left an indelible impact on my life," says Peck. "Grace Place is not a clone of Damascus, but there are many similarities." Peck founded his non-profit or-

ganization to hold assets in case it became necessary for the congregation to act as an independent ministry. He took the step before Damascus Road Community Church became incorporated, and this helped Fredericks to take similar action later. Peck was fired only two weeks after Fredericks' employment was terminated, and Peck believes the developments at Damascus served as a catalyst for his own termination.

Grace Place was the weekend outreach of Christ Advent Fellowship, a ministry conceived by Peck and other like-minded individuals. They began meeting in September 1996. Christ Advent Fellowship began as an organization within the Rocky Mountain Conference. Its special mission was to reach those who had left the Adventist Church, didn't know the gospel, or needed a contemporary worship style.

According to Peck, generally 90 percent of financial giving was local and 10 percent went to the conference. Local giving was greater than they expected, so Grace Place began using some of that money to pay the staff of the Adventist church in Berthoud, instead of their salaries coming from the conference, as is customary.

Although tithe was often mentioned as an issue, the Rocky Mountain Conference president, James Brauer, insists that, "Clay has indicated to me that he was willing to return tithe to the conference. This action is not about tithe, and his personal commitment. . . . This action is not about where the members give their tithe, either."

"Although we were not put out over theology," Peck says, "they have started talking about that *since* they decided to sever ties." At the request of the conference, Peck did go to Andrews University in the spring of 1997 so the theologians there could examine his beliefs. "There were no clear conclusions," Peck said in an interview. "My theological views are largely a matter of emphasis and are shared by

many thought leaders at all levels of this denomination." The biggest concern was simply the non-profit organization giving the congregation ownership and control of its assets. Indeed, on October 30, 1997, in a series on Adventist worship services across the United States, the *Adventist Review* published a very positive story on Grace Place.

Days later, on November 2, 1997, the Rocky Mountain Conference Executive Committee voted to suspend Christ Advent Fellowship as a company and to release Peck from employment as a Rocky Mountain Conference pastor.

Three days after Peck's credentials were withdrawn, on November 8, Grace Place met for the first time as a congregation independent of the denomination. According to Peck, about 400 people attended and gave about \$22,000 in offerings.

The president of the Rocky Mountain Conference feels that Adventism "must have new, creative worshiping congregations," and has come up with several options that he hopes can perhaps help new congregations and experiments like Grace Place in the future: Create a conference fund to hold all of a new congregation's tithe to help with initial expenses and to create a pool of money to help

pay for the next church building; or create a completely new conference to hold new church buildings for five years, after which time they will be turned over to the regular conference.

The five pastors agree that the recent events surrounding the creation of the new, independent congregations will have a definite effect on Adventism.

"This is definitely a trend," says Peck. "There is no turning back."

Bahme concurs. "I believe Adventism is in for its largest split if denominational leadership does not begin to open to specific change. This is the largest threat Adventism faces."

This view of events is challenged by others. In his November 1997 article discussing the Damascus Road split, William Johnsson, editor of the *Adventist Review*, wrote, "Nor does the church at large face an imminent threat of fragmentation into independent congregations. It's true that a couple other congregations [in addition to Damascus] have moved out during the past few years—six months ago the large Sunnyside church in Portland, Oregon, split—but I see no evidence of a trend in this direction."





# Saving the Church's Pension Plan

New and retiring employees may benefit; mid-career denominational workers risk losses.

by C. Torben Thomsen

*If only the brethren could have more faith and use those funds for evangelism, the work would be finished sooner and we wouldn't even need those retirement funds.*

—Young college professor, 1959

*If only our forefathers had been able to find a way to fund retirement benefits as they were earned, just think what we could put into evangelism today, instead of pouring tithe dollars into paying for benefits earned years ago.*

—Retirement steering committee member, 1996

THE NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION HAS ACCUMULATED a \$1.4 billion unfunded liability for its sustentation or pension plan for church workers. This amount means that each member of the North American church would have to pay \$1,600 to eliminate the division's obligations to its church employees.

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As will be shown later, not fully funding the pension plan is not an entirely unreasonable policy, but only if the church in North America grows fast enough.<sup>1</sup>

In light of this nearly billion-and-a-half dollar liability, the North American Division<sup>2</sup> voted in October of 1997 to switch the denominational retirement system from a *defined benefit* plan (in which the church promises a pension of 1.105 percent of an employee's annual pay for each year of service) to a *defined contribution* plan (in which the employer each year contributes about 4 percent of each employee's salary toward a mutual fund controlled by the employee).<sup>3</sup> Even under this new system, the unfunded liability will rise over 30 years to \$3.2 billion.

For denominational employees, the switch to a defined contribution plan will mean:

- no decrease in payments to workers already retired;
- a decrease in expected retirement payments for most present workers, with the biggest decrease for workers about half way

through a 40-year service life;

- a shift in risk from the church to the individual worker.

## Who Benefits, Who Doesn't?

In general, employees are better off with the new *defined contribution* plan than with the old *defined benefit* plan. The reason is that the contributions in the early years of work yield a tremendous pension because the funds are earning interest for the employee's entire working life. Under the old *defined benefit* plan there was an implicit transfer between the young workers and the older workers. The younger workers received a right to a lower pension than they are entitled to, while the older workers received a higher pension for each year served.

However, in switching to a *defined contribution* plan with benefits frozen at a particular date, there is a heavy cost to existing workers. For example, workers with 10 years of service are hurt because the denomination's contributions to their mutual funds will earn interest only for 30 years instead of for 40 years. Also, the pension granted in the early years is not

proportional to the future value of the contributions.<sup>4</sup>

A more equitable approach would be to treat workers as if they had been on the *defined contribution* plan from the beginning of their service to the church. This would assure that no present worker would receive a smaller retirement than with the present plan. I estimate that the cost<sup>5</sup> of such equitable treatment would be about \$144 million, which is a relatively small amount compared to the total unfunded pension liability of \$1.4 billion.

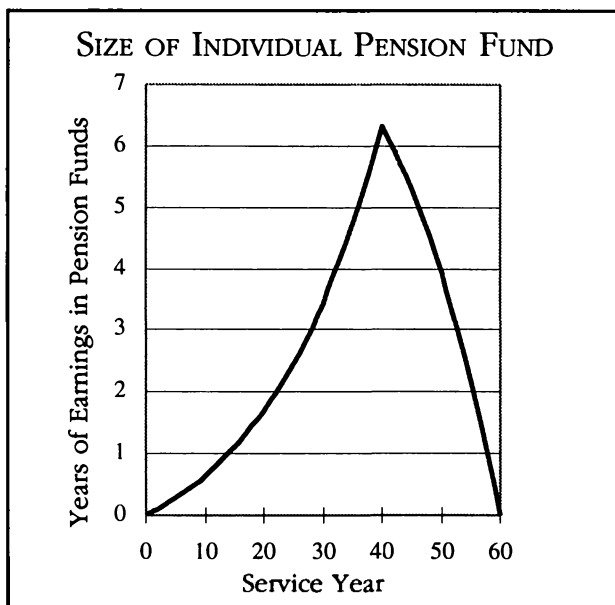
Incidentally, there is historical precedent for this equitable solution. The San Francisco General Conference session of 1930 voted a retirement scheme that granted a worker with 10 years of service a pension of 30 percent of current pay.<sup>6</sup> The present plan grants such a worker only 11 percent of current pay while the proposed equitable plan would grant 20 percent.

## How Do Pensions Work?

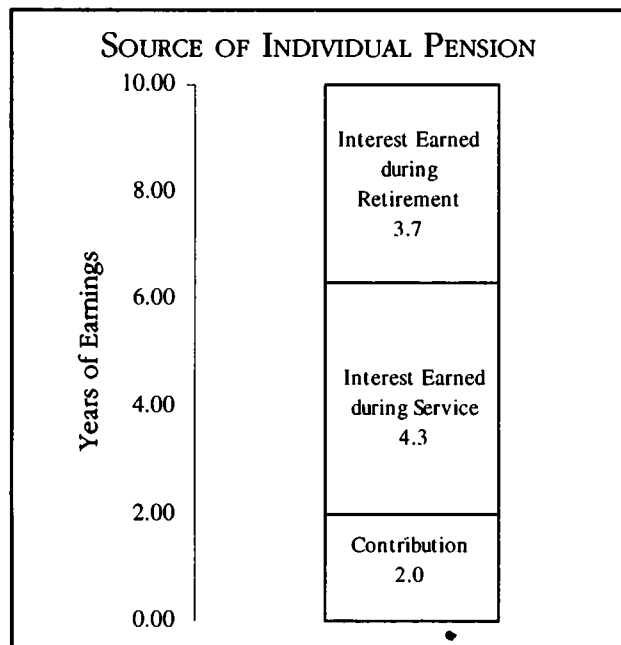
It may be useful to review how pension plans work in general, then explore the impact of the new, *defined contributions* scheme for North America's church employees. The basic principle is: An early sacrifice is rewarded by a later benefit. The modern economy has provided financial markets as a means for channeling small sacrifices into much larger benefits. This is entirely consistent with basic Christianity, where Christ "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross."<sup>7</sup>

If you put aside 5 percent of your salary each month, earning 5 percent interest per year, you will have accumulated 6.3 years of earnings after 40 years of work. And that will be sufficient to sustain you for 20 years of retirement at 50 percent of your normal pay.

In other words, during your working life of 40 years, your sacrifice of two years of your earnings will be rewarded by 4.3 years earn-

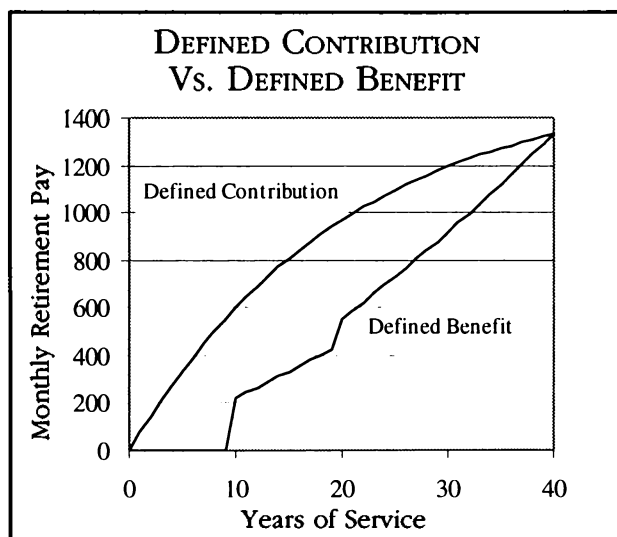


ings in interest (during your working life) and then rewarded by an additional 3.7 years of earnings (during retirement). A sacrifice of two years will yield a total benefit of 10 years (which will be sufficient to sustain you for 20 years at 50 percent of your salary). This means that your two-year contribution multiplied fivefold during the 60 years of your working and retirement life.<sup>8</sup>

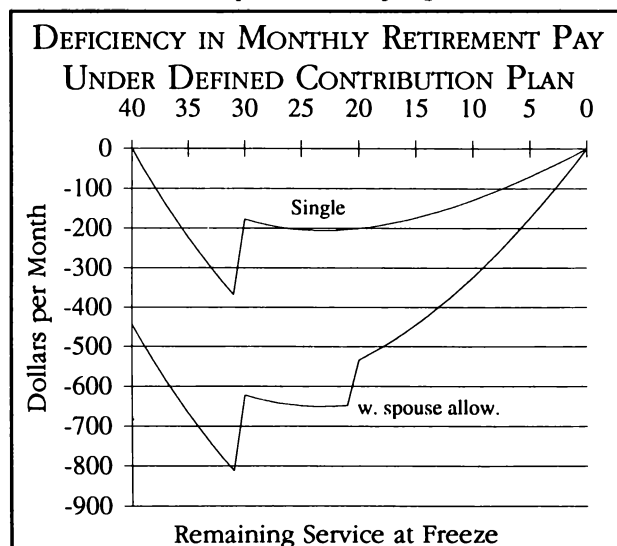


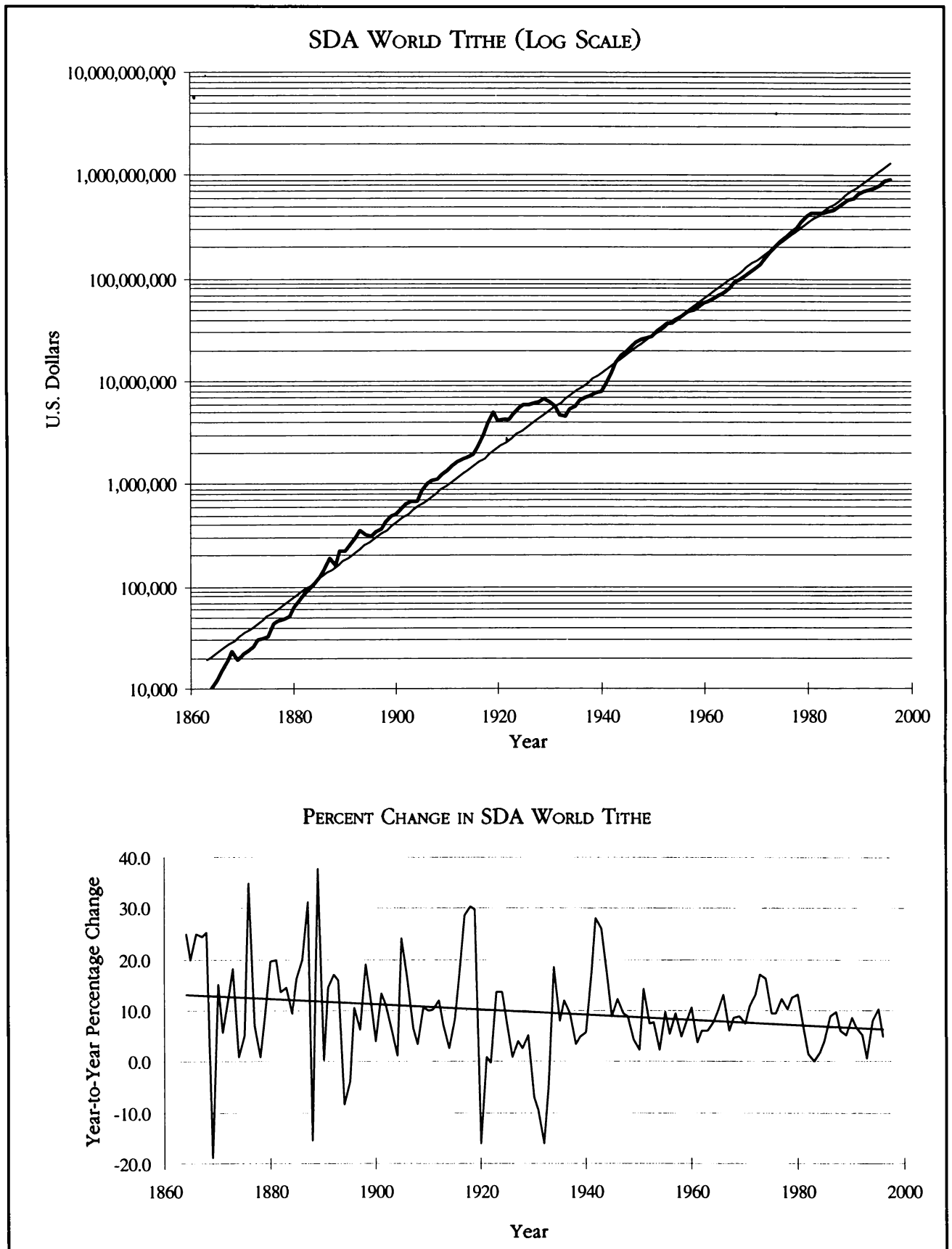
All defined contribution pension funds behave in this manner. If funds are not systematically invested during the working life, the pension will cost 25 percent of payroll instead of only 5 percent.<sup>9</sup> The conferences in North America already pay about 20 percent of payroll for retirement.

What is the effect on workers? It varies. For a worker with 40 years of service, earning the 150 remuneration percentage at the 1998 pay scale, the maximum monthly pension is \$888 for an individual and \$1,333 for an individual with a spousal allowance.<sup>10</sup> To fund pensions of this size for a retirement period of 20 years over a working life of 40 years requires annual contributions of 4.56 percent of current pay for an individual and 6.85 percent for an individual with a spouse allowance.



On the other hand, for a worker with 10 years of service and 30 remaining years of service, the old, *defined benefit* pension would be \$222 per month. The new, *defined contribution* of 4.56 percent of current pay for the remaining 30 years equals \$92 per month. Investing the \$92 per month at 5 percent per year for the remaining 30 years of service will build a pension fund of \$74,900, which will be sufficient to sustain a monthly pension of \$489 for 20 years. The pension earned up to the freeze, plus the pension from the defined contributions, add up to \$711 per month, which falls \$177 per month or 20 percent short of the \$888 that would have been earned under the old *defined benefit* plan.







## Can the Church Grow Fast Enough to Actually Pay Pensions?

If an organization is growing, each year more new workers will be hired and the retirees, which were hired many years ago in small numbers, will be a relatively small group. (For example, if an organization grows at 7 percent per year, there will only be five retirees for every 100 workers and a pay-as-you-go pension system would require only 2.7 percent of payroll.) For a growing organization, it is therefore tempting to take the cheap route and use a pay-as-you-go system. The inevitable consequence of doing that will be the accumulation of a huge unfunded pension liability. Since its inception, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been oriented toward growth.<sup>11</sup> In the spirit of "take no thought for the morrow"<sup>12</sup> and "lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth"<sup>13</sup> the pension plan was not fully funded. It functioned essentially on a pay-as-you-go basis, with a fund containing only the estimated expenditures for the next three years.<sup>14</sup> That is not a problem if the Second Coming is at hand, or the church grows spectacularly.

And Adventism's growth has been remarkable. Starting with tithe income of \$8,000 in 1863, that amount has doubled 16 times since then, amounting to \$929 million in 1996.<sup>15</sup> A logarithmic plot<sup>16</sup> of tithe reveals a steady upward trend of 8.7 percent. (If the numbers lie close to a straight line, there will be a relatively constant percentage increase from year to year.)<sup>17</sup> Over that period of time, inflation has averaged about 2.2 percent per year, so the real growth in tithe over the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been 6.5 percent. Since the 1800s, the U.S. stock market has grown at a remarkably steady 6.6 percent.<sup>18</sup> The stock market and the Adventist Church parallel one another.

When looking at a graph of *Percent Change*

in *SDA World Tithe*, one is struck by the paroxysmal changes prior to World War II, and the more sedate changes since then. One also observes a declining long-run growth rate (note the straight line superimposed on the graph). Indeed, there has not been a decline in tithe for the past 63 years. But the years from 1929 to 1933 saw a total decline of 33 percent in tithe. And a look at the history of change in tithe indicates that the church has not been immune to financial turbulence.

If an organization slows down its growth, or even begins to downsize, the unfunded liability will haunt it. As an extreme example, if an organization declines at a rate of 4.9 percent per year there will be 200 retirees for every 100 workers, which will require that 100 percent of the payroll be turned over to retirees, leaving the current workers with nothing! With a fully funded pension plan, the organization will not be burdened with embarrassingly excessive payments. The *defined contribution* pension system shifts the risks and uncertainties to the workers and thus gives them a powerful lesson in individual responsibility and accountability.

Such a system has been implemented in the secular world on a large scale in several South American countries. In 1980, Chile replaced its pay-as-you-go system with a privately administered national system of Pension Savings Accounts.<sup>19</sup> The success of the system encouraged Argentina, Peru, and Colombia to follow in the steps of Chile.

Starting in 2001, the North American Division will adopt a similar *defined contribution* pension plan. The adoption of the new plan does not solve the problems of paying off the debts of the past. As we have seen, even with the new system, the unfunded liability will rise over the next 30 years from \$1.4 billion to \$3.2 billion. The honorable discharge of that obligation will be a dramatic challenge for the Adventist Church in North America to keep growing.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This unfunded liability means that, besides the funds already on hand, an additional \$1.4 billion is needed plus interest—about \$100 million per year at 7.5 percent (5 percent real return and 2.5 percent allowance for inflation)—to meet the obligations that have already been earned by the workers to date.

2. The specific facts and figures in this article apply to the North American Division only. But the general principles are applicable worldwide.

3. Carlos Medley, "NAD President Calls for New Growth Strategies," *Adventist Review NAD Edition* (November 1997), pp. 21, 22.

4. For example, the contributions for the first year of service for a worker, who will give a total of 40 years of service, would by themselves yield a pension of \$49 per month for 20 years. But the defined benefit plan only grants the young workers a pension of \$22 per month for their first year of service.

5. The average shortfall per worker is about \$8,900, assuming that the workforce is uniformly distributed over number of service years. Since that is probably not the case, the final cost of the equitable distribution would be somewhat higher or lower.

6. *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 107:33 (June 11, 1930), p. 184.

7. Hebrews 12:2 (KJV).

8. This illustration and all subsequent ones assume no inflation. If inflation is present, the 5 percent rate of return that is earned on investments should increase by the amount of inflation.

9. If one worker is hired each year, the organization will have 40 workers and 20 retirees. The 20 retirees get 50 percent pay, which is equivalent to 10 workers and represents 25 percent of the pay of the 40 workers.

10. Each year's service adds 1.3 percent of the monthly U.S.A. Pension Factor of \$1,709. This factor is 85 percent of the 150 remuneration percentage level of \$2,010 (current pay). This works out to be 1.105 percent of current pay for each year of service, up to a maximum

of 44.2 percent for 40 years of service. You will only receive a pension after at least 10 years of service. The spousal allowance is only received after 20 years of service and climbs to a maximum of 50 percent of the regular pension after 40 years of service. The maximum pension for a worker with a spousal allowance is thus 66.3 percent of current pay. The spousal allowance is reduced by any other pension that the spouse may be earning and will therefore not be relevant for most workers in the future.

11. While the pension issues in this article relate strictly to the North American Division, the following statistics relate to the world church, which grew out of the North American church.

12. Matthew 6:34 (KJV).

13. Matthew 6:19 (KJV).

14. By comparison, the Social Security system trust fund in the United States is only roughly equal to the payments for one year. For an excellent reference on the future of the Social Security system, see *Social Security in the 21st Century*, Eric R. Kingson and James H. Schulz, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

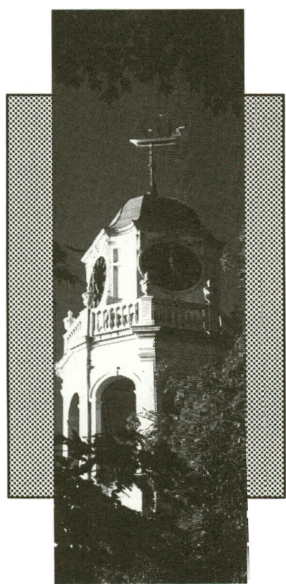
15. The world tithe data are from *The 134th Annual Statistical Report—1996: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists* (Silver Spring, Md., 1997).

16. In a logarithmic chart, each big step represents a tenfold increase over the previous step.

17. A regression of the logarithm of tithe against time from 1863 to 1996 yields a slope of 0.0363, which translates into an annual growth rate of 8.7 percent. The correlation coefficient for the logarithmic regression is 0.99.

18. Peter Brimelow, "Stocks Versus Taxes and Inflation," *Forbes* (July 28, 1997), pp. 46, 47; and Jeremy J. Siegel, *Stocks for the Long Run* (Irwin Professional, 1994).

19. José Piñera, "Empowering Workers: The Privatization of Social Security in Chile," *Cato's Letter #10* (Washington, D.C.: The Cato Institute, 1996).



# The Case for an SDA Prep School

An Adventist educator offers a modest proposal that Adventists regard excellence and spirituality as inseparable.

by Michael Stepniak

IT IS TIME WE ESTABLISHED AN ACADEMICALLY rigorous Adventist high school. The benefits stemming from its creation could be significant. Adventist colleges and universities would react positively to students prepared to pursue theological and other studies at the highest academic level. The church would be blessed with an influx of well-trained scholars ready to provide leadership throughout our church and the academic community. And Adventist youth who currently seek the highest scholastic challenges would be given the opportunity to flourish in a setting which placed as much emphasis on their salvation as it did on their ability to think critically and act responsibly.

The need for the formation of an academically excellent institution is real. And certainly

the time has arrived in our denominational history when the size of our student population, extent of our educational scholarship, and wealth of our members could support its establishment.<sup>1</sup> But what type of school could provide superior training for young Adventists willing and able to reach for the highest levels of scholarship, while simultaneously maintaining a focus on conversion and an atmosphere that was not culturally or socially exclusive? The independent preparatory school is one model for such an institution.

## Qualities Worthy of Imitation

No two prep schools are exactly alike, of course; differences are readily observed, for example, between and among Catholic schools (like Georgetown Preparatory School, in Maryland), "academies" (like Phillips Andover, in Massachusetts), military academies, Western schools (like The Orme School, in Arizona), and so on. Not all qualities found at prep schools would be worthy of adoption

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by individuals interested in the formation of an Adventist prep school. But there are key qualities shared by the best prep schools that would prove very worthy of consideration: (1) rigorous academics, (2) superior facilities and resources, (3) a nurturing environment for boarders, and (4) multiple opportunities for moral growth.

## Communities of Excellence

Leading prep schools, such as those identified by one author as the "Select 16,"<sup>2</sup> place an enormous emphasis on academics.<sup>3</sup> Once enrolled, students at leading prep schools undergo what has been described as a massive

academic assault on indolence. Classes are usually held six days a week (Monday through Saturday), and can provide an hour of homework each per night. Small class sizes (usually with fewer than 12 students) facilitate student-centered discussions and encourage the development of communication and critical thought. Teachers who are well-educated and remain active as scholars (thanks to the focus of the schools, and financial and personal support of the administration) foster a spirit of scholarship both within and outside the classroom. The impact of this academic environment upon the student can be dramatic: better study habits, the ability to manage time effectively, and increased independence are just a few of the possible and probable outcomes.<sup>4</sup>

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## Should "Gifted and Talented" Children Receive Special Treatment?

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In the Gifted and Talented Children's Education Act of 1978, the federal government offered an oft-debated definition of "giftedness":

The term "gifted and talented children" means children and, whenever applicable, youth, who are identified at the preschool, elementary, or secondary level as possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, specific academic or leadership ability or in the performing and visual arts, and who by reason thereof require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school.<sup>1</sup>

Immediately, questions of privilege and exclusivity arise. Won't "ordinary" students suffer if "exceptional" students are provided with special attention, facilities, and so on? The answer, it seems, is No. What follow are common questions raised about programs for gifted

children, and responses to those questions.

*Won't the removal of students with exceptional abilities result in a loss to the overall instruction of the class?*<sup>2</sup>

The reverse may be true for at least three reasons. First, this separation lessens the range of intellectual and reading abilities with which the teacher has to contend. With a smaller range, the teacher can devote more time and effort to various groups within the class. Second, the presence of extremely able pupils is often frustrating, as teachers find they are unable to provide sufficient motivation and flexibility for them to pursue their interests in depth. A program that provides opportunities for the gifted to develop their potential can alleviate this source of teacher frustration. Finally, sometimes when the gifted students are separated, other students begin to play a more active role in the classroom and thereby may also develop more confidence in their own abilities.<sup>3</sup>

*Aren't the gifted already provided for?* The percentage of gifted individuals receiving adequate attention remains small and the federal allocation of funds minimal.<sup>4</sup>

*Won't the gifted succeed anyway?* (After all, "The mind is its own place, and it self Can make a Heav'n of hell, a Hell of Heav'n.") Many gifted students do not succeed within the present academic setting; they drop out of school or fail to continue their education beyond high school. While gifted and talented individuals often suffer in classes where no provisions have been made to accommodate their special abilities, they seem to succeed in special classes. In an extensive California study of 929 gifted students, grades 1 to 12, Simpson and Martinson found that those in special programs made significantly greater gains in academic achievement than those in regular classes. The lack of challenge and realistic goal-setting for



As noted above, prep school faculty play a critical role in creating an academically rigorous environment. As the catalogues from many schools show, most teachers have an admirable scholastic record as made evident by their education at highly selective universities and other past scholastic accomplishments. The majority have graduate degrees and a significant percentage have doctorates. Many remain active as scholars, writing articles, serving on national testing boards, and continuing their own education.<sup>5</sup> Catalogues distributed by leading prep schools sometimes use as much space describing the faculty as they do student life.<sup>6</sup> The most outstanding teachers are often reviewed in multi-paragraph or page-length biographies,<sup>7</sup> which describe

them as intellectually gifted, passionate about their subject, compassionate toward students and student learning, and portray them as the school's most valuable resource.

## Superb Facilities and Resources

The emphasis that leading prep schools place on academics is complemented by a strong emphasis on superior facilities and resources. The reason behind this emphasis is that leading prep schools share an educational philosophy based on the belief that "the final four years of [secondary] schooling are a critical period of transition between child-

the gifted may foster poor academic attitudes and lazy study habits that can further impede full academic achievement.<sup>5</sup>

*Won't the gifted have emotional and social problems if placed in a special program?* Most research has shown this to be false. Rather, emotional problems are usually brought on by the frustration of ability.<sup>6</sup>

*Don't special provisions benefit only participants?* The removal of the gifted and talented individuals from regular classes does not necessarily detract from the total instruction for the other students. Actually, removing gifted children from a regular classroom may result in the stimulation of new leadership among students previously overshadowed.

*Won't gifted and talented individuals become "snobbish" if selected for a special program?* Research has proven otherwise. In fact, sometimes gifted and talented students become less "elitist" when included in a special program because they find they do not have to be defensive about their abilities with their classmates.

*Isn't providing separate education for the gifted akin to helping others become superior?* It is true that our way of life is based on the principle that everyone is equal. Although this means that all people should have equal opportunities to achieve their potentials, it should not be interpreted to mean that everyone has the same needs.

1. As reprinted in Betty W. Atterbury, *Mainstreaming Exceptional Learners in Music* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1990), p. 60.

2. The following arguments and corresponding rebuttals are adapted from Frederick B. Tuttle, Jr., Laurence A. Becker, and Joan A. Sousa, eds., *Program Design and Development for Gifted and Talented Students* 3rd ed. (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1988), pp. 13-21. They presume a context of the public school classroom. But while teaching and learning conditions in Adventist academy classrooms may occasionally differ from their counterparts in the "typical" school, the fact remains that these differences are unlikely to be significant enough to undermine the relevance of most of the following arguments or rebuttals.

3. Ibid., p. 13. One of the more typical arguments against removal of the gifted from smaller-sized classrooms has been the assertion that a small classroom enables teachers to provide the gifted with any necessary personalized attention. (See, for example, Miriam Wood, "Schools Need Special Learning Programs for Gifted Children," *Adventist Review* [October 27, 1988], p. 13).

4. *Program Design and Development for Gifted and Talented Students*, pp. 15, 16.

5. Ibid., pp. 16-18; see also Ray Simpson and Ruth Martinson, "Educational Programs for Gifted Pupils: A Report to the California Legislature" ED 100 072 (Sacramento, Calif.: California State Department of Education, January 1961).

6. See *Program Design and Development for Gifted and Talented Students*, p. 18. Studies which show that the participation of gifted students in special programs does not cause social or personal problems include Walter Barbe's "Evaluation of Special Classes for Gifted Children," *Exceptional Children* (November 1955), pp. 60-62, and *Education of the Gifted and Talented: Report to the Congress of the United States by the U.S. Commissioner of Education* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1972).

hood and college.”<sup>8</sup> The assumption that adolescents have special needs is shared by many parents who are willing to pay the often sizable tuition fees charged by most of the leading prep schools. (The average annual boarding fee for the “Select 16” in 1995 was \$20,925.<sup>9</sup>) The size of these fees is largely the result of the commitment made by schools to maintain first-class facilities and resources aimed at caring for adolescent needs.<sup>10</sup>

An equivalent Adventist institution would certainly run the risk of being viewed as the exclusive domain of the wealthy. However, the strong financial position of many of these schools (often ensured by the loyalty of alumni) enables them to offer financial aid to gifted and needy students who gain admission but find the expense prohibitive. Phillips Academy in Massachusetts, for example, and the Hill School in Pennsylvania, both charge yearly tuition of approximately \$21,000. Phillips, however, with an endowment of \$274 million, makes \$6.4 million available yearly in financial aid to students, and the less exclusive Hill School, with a \$61 million endowment, offers \$1.6 million yearly in financial aid.

Quite often, prep school facilities are as awe-inspiring as their endowments and corresponding fees. It is not uncommon for a leading prep school with a student body of less than 500 to have a fine arts complex, sizable library, beautifully crafted chapel and dining commons, adequate dormitories, and a superb athletic complex. Woodberry Forest School, for example, has a relatively small enrollment (approximately 350 male students), but maintains an athletic program that is supported by 17 tennis courts (three indoor),

eight football fields, four soccer fields, four lacrosse fields, two baseball diamonds, cross-country courses, a regulation nine-hole golf course, and sports complexes that house, among other things, a 200-meter track, five basketball courts, three squash courts, two swimming pools, and a racquetball court. The justification for the expense related to such comprehensive athletic facilities is not dissimilar to Adventist philosophy, which maintains that a clear mind requires a healthy body.

But leading prep schools also assert that active participation in sports can have a profound influence on a young person’s potential to succeed in a position of leadership. As one

school explained, sports can become an integral part of an adolescent’s growth into a well-rounded adult because by “working toward a common goal, students learn the value of commitment, discipline, and sacrifice while learning to deal maturely and gracefully with victory and defeat.”<sup>11</sup>

Prep schools acknowledge that by maintaining facilities that can provide better superior support for sports, extracurricular activities, and artistic endeavors, they can ensure the better development of their charges and contribute to what one headmaster described as “the liveliness and joy of our community.”<sup>12</sup>

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*Adventism is a world of diversity. Adventists and the world would benefit enormously if an independent Adventist prep school were established, committed to the inseparability of excellence and spirituality.*

## Communities of Care

While most agree that classes, teachers, facilities, and resources are responsible for defining the school experience and giving it value in the marketplace, an additional,

defining characteristic of most prep schools is their status as boarding institutions. This should be an area of particular concern to Adventists, since the denomination's distribution dictates that an exclusive institution like the one discussed here would require boarding facilities.

The likelihood of "bad apples" among the pool of possible friends and the possibility of their bad influence has been enough to convince some that the boarding school experience is inherently undesirable. As one Adventist author stated:

At this time [in teenagers' lives] peer group pressure also becomes exceptionally significant, and it would be naive to believe that all other students at the boarding academy will have a positive and productive spiritual influence. It is the belief of the authors that for most youth it is far better for them to be with their parents until at least college age.<sup>13</sup>

Regardless of the potential for a negative experience, parents of many prep school students and many students themselves remain eager to experience boarding life.

The potential for the "dormitory experience" to shape an adolescent's character and performance was illustrated most recently by the wonderfully candid collection of essays on life inside prep schools, entitled *Casualties of Privilege*.<sup>14</sup> In this volume, student essays such as "Living Inside the Prep Culture," "Beating the System," and "Hazing" describe the enormous (and often negative) impact that the boarding experience had upon their character, behavior, and memories. One student summarized his perception of life at Dervey (the fictional name he had assigned to his dormitory) as follows:

Here, in bold-face print, was the division between myth and reality. . . . We were viewed as independent and responsible young adults capable of taking care of ourselves. But in fact, the school in general, and Dervey in particular, housed many who acted with wild irresponsibility toward themselves and others.<sup>15</sup>

The assumption has long been that the factors that most significantly impact student life in dormitories are peer relationships. To a large extent this is supported by research.<sup>16</sup> Samples of the rich literary tradition describing this culture include John Knowle's stirring *A Separate Peace* (New York: McMillan, 1959), and Arthur Marshall's hilarious *Whimpering in the Rhododendrons: The Splendors and Miseries of the English Prep School* (London: Collins, 1982).

In spite of occasionally disturbing reports, and because leading schools are increasingly doing so much to ensure that their dormitory experience is rewarding, parents continue to present their children at the prep schools' doorstep, knowing that their child is about to become totally immersed in an intense and comprehensive educational experience unlike any other, and convinced that prep school adults will become involved in and care for that child's growth and development.<sup>17</sup>

## Fostering "Moral Decisiveness"

Morality is perhaps the issue most relevant to a discussion of an academically rigorous Adventist secondary school. Because of this fact, it is important to note how the best prep schools aim to do more than simply provide superior academic instruction and a nurturing boarding environment for talented and/or wealthy students. From the employment of full-time psychologists (St. Paul's) to offering a ninth-grade required course in Movement and Mime (Milton Academy); from providing a weekly service of worship (Woodberry Forest) to using chapel to encourage the consideration of broad ethical questions outside of any religious denomination (Phillips Exeter); these schools utilize various activities and tools to positively influence the wholistic development of their charges.

For most parochial and non-parochial schools, the desired development necessarily includes some type of spiritual or moral growth.<sup>18</sup> This fact is often publicized in prep school mission statements. Groton School, for example, asserts that it has an “unflagging commitment to each student’s intellectual, moral and physical development. . . .”<sup>19</sup> The mission statements of other prep schools, however, clearly reveal a desire to avoid the rigidity and perhaps condescension suggested by such absolute terms as *morality* or *religion*. Choate Rosemary Hall, for example, proclaims a commitment instead to “integrity, individual worth and responsibility to others.”<sup>20</sup> And Philips Andover Academy strives to help young people achieve their potential in “aesthetic sensitivity” and “moral decisiveness.”<sup>21</sup> Occasionally, this curious-sounding language comes from a school which has steered away from an earlier and more religious mission. Deerfield Academy, for example, acknowledges in its mission statement that it was “originally pledged to the instruction of youth, and the promotion of piety, religion, and morality.”<sup>22</sup>

It is interesting to note that while some prep schools support their efforts in directing students toward a desirable moral position by the imposition of many rules and regulations, many of the leading schools emphasize disci-

pline through the maintenance of honor codes (“I will not lie, cheat, or steal, and will report those who do”) and often reserve more severe punishment for those who fail to show self-discipline than for those who break other imposed rules. The rationale offered for focusing on the student’s own sense of honor or fairness is occasionally stated with eloquent frankness:

At St. Paul’s, rules and regulations are described as “expectations” because relationships, not rules, are designed to inspire and ensure appropriate behavior. . . . The School recognizes that a moral life cannot, ultimately, be imposed from without by means of prohibitions; it must grow from within, inspired by worthy norms and cultivated in meaningful relationships.<sup>23</sup>

A warning note for Adventists should sound when they review the records of parochial secondary schools. The moral training provided by these schools is often aimed less at creating social conscience or moral integrity than it is at ensuring denominational fidelity and church participation.<sup>24</sup> The achievement of this desired outcome is more assumed than assured. It is true, on the one hand, that parochial schools are often successful in imparting knowledge of a denomination’s history and beliefs.<sup>25</sup> These same researchers, however, also found that a large range of factors assumed to have a significant effect on youths’

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## The Effect of Uniforms on Classroom Conduct

Many schools utilize various methods besides relationships to modify undesired behavior. For some schools, these methods have recently included the adoption of school uniforms or strict dress codes. Educators supporting this adoption often believe that uniforms represent a “concrete and visible means of restoring order and discipline to the classroom” (Kathleen L. Paliokas and Ray C. Rist, “School Uniforms: Do They Reduce Violence—Or Just

Make Us Feel Better?” *Education Week* 15:28 [April 3, 1996], p. 52). While the real benefit of uniforms and dress codes remains in question (see Derek C. Wilde, in a letter to the editor, printed under “School Uniforms and Pride, Envy, Responsibility,” *Education Week* 15:31 [May 8, 1996], p. 40), the popularity of uniforms continues to rise. For some schools, their desirability is not only cosmetic (improving the way students look and simultaneously in-

creasing their identification with classmates), but also stems from issues of security (identification of students in an open school). Under the direction of its principal, Takoma Academy adopted uniforms during the 1995-1996 school year for these reasons. The result, the principal recently asserted, has been a different and improved attitude among students (conversation with Dunbar Henry, then principal, Takoma Academy, May 13, 1996).



church participation and attitudes had, in fact, little effect. The results of their research clearly indicated that among those factors that had *little* effect on youths' church participation were years of formal religious training (either in a Sunday or parochial school), extent of religious knowledge, and socioeconomic factors.<sup>26</sup> Their research also indicated that church participation was determined more by youths' reported like or dislike of past religious education than it was by "either the number of years of their religious education or the knowledge gained (measured by our test of Bible knowledge)."<sup>27</sup>

Factors that did significantly influence youths' attitudes toward church included types of relationships with other people; peer pressures; the religious activities of parents (i.e., what parents did, not what they had their children do); and relationships with church leaders.<sup>28</sup> Other researchers have also concluded that relationships are of primary importance in the development of matters of faith. In their study of six mainline denominations, Benson and Elkin found that one of the most important predictors of whether adolescents and adults could report having a "mature faith" was whether or not, as children, they could recall conversations with their mother or father about issues of faith.<sup>29</sup>

## Adventist Diversity Can Embrace Excellence

**T**his discussion of the "prep school experience" suggests a wealth of unanswered questions, of course. How might students be selected for the program? How much would such a school cost, and who would fund it? Who would have ultimate responsibility for the institution?

Great care would obviously need to be taken in seeking answers to these and many other questions. Although there would be many similarities with leading prep schools

around the country, an Adventist prep school would be different in that it employed teachers chosen not only for their exemplary scholarship and character, but also for their basic commitment to the church.<sup>30</sup> One would assume that some of our denomination's best scholars would be readily attracted by employment at an institution that provided support for continuing scholarship while nourishing their efforts as mentors and teachers to eager learners.

The curriculum at an Adventist prep school, with merit-based admissions, would also need to be carefully tailored so that it prepared the brightest of our young people for the highest level of scholarship in major fields of learning covered by our own higher education institutions. For example, a particular emphasis could be placed on theological education and a special diploma could be earned in this field. Such a diploma might be awarded to those who have completed core studies with distinction, taken extra classes in the theology department, and completed a significant foreign language requirement that would enable serious and significant biblical scholarship (three years of Greek, for example, and two years of Latin).

**C**ould our church benefit from the formation of an Adventist prep school as described above? Yes. Can the church accommodate yet another alternative mode of education? If the variety of opinion among early Adventist educators on the relevance and purpose of education is anything of an indication, the answer is also undoubtedly Yes.

From its infancy, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has harbored diverse opinions on the relevance and purpose of education. While most agreed that the goal of such institutions was to win converts to the Advent faith—and, in turn, to fit them as messengers of that faith—those most committed to the idea of the imminent return of Jesus Christ were under-

standably suspicious of the value of institutions that required sizable financial and temporal investment. In response, some early educators asserted that

[t]he object in establishing these schools is not to make them full fledged colleges, or to take persons through a long course of study . . . [but] to provide schools where brethren and sisters desiring to fill some position in the cause can have a preparatory drill upon those points in which they are deficient. . . .<sup>31</sup>

But other leaders of the early church argued against any move to provide temporary training at the expense of academic and intellectual development.<sup>32</sup> James White, arguing for the establishment of Adventist schools, asserted that

[t]he fact that Christ is very soon coming is no reason why the mind should not be improved. A well-disciplined and informed mind can best receive and cherish the sublime truths of the Second Advent.<sup>33</sup>

Ellen G. White agreed, voicing her support for the importance of intellectual growth:

Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thoughts.<sup>34</sup>

Further differences of opinion existed regarding the scope of the education to be offered at Adventist schools; a popular focus was on the development of the entire person. The first of the four original goals of South Lancaster Academy, for example, was described as being “to connect physical labor with mental discipline.”<sup>35</sup> In addition, some educators supported a focus on manners and communication skills—skills they believed would complement the proselytizing mission. Students attending Adventist schools, Haskell insisted in 1884, “should not only be taught a knowledge of the truth, and how to present it, but how to enter all classes of society so as not to give offense.”<sup>36</sup>

The variety of opinion among early Adventist educators on the relevance and purpose of education continues to be reflected in the many alternative modes of education that Adventism currently accommodates. While church-supported academies publicize a commitment to the conversion of enrolled students and their academic preparation for Adventist and other similar colleges, some church members consider these church-supported institutions inadequately religious and unable to support the development of needed practical skills.<sup>37</sup> In response, a number of self-supporting schools adopt a conservative and religious focus, one which more often than not is accompanied by an emphasis on the development of practical skills. The recently opened and self-supporting Heritage Academy, in Monterey, Tennessee, for ex-

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## Does Education Jeopardize Faith?

Dean R. Hoge and Gregory H. Petrillo's research has shown that more abstract religious thinking among high school students is often associated with more religious rejection (Hoge and Petrillo, “Development of Religious Thinking in Adolescence: A Test of Goldman's Theories,” *Journal for the Scientific*

*Study of Religion* 17:2 [June 1978], p. 151). These researchers suggest that “an intriguing dilemma exists for the educator in the American church today hoping to enhance the level of abstract religious thinking among adolescents. Under most conditions, the more he or she succeeds, the more likely it is the adolescent will

become negative toward the doctrine and the church. But for the private school Catholics it is the opposite—the more he or she succeeds, the more positive the adolescent will tend to be toward the doctrine and the church” (Hoge and Petrillo, “Development of Religious Thinking in Adolescence,” p. 153).

ample, operates with the objective of providing a "conservative academic Seventh-day Adventist school with opportunities in music and in practical work situations."<sup>38</sup>

Adventism is a world of diversity. It embraces members and institutions reflecting all

the world's cultures. Adventists—and the world—would benefit enormously if Adventism's institutions included an independent Adventist prep school committed to pursuing excellence and spirituality as two inseparable sides of God's will for humankind.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Conservative assumptions for enrollment suggest a potential student body of between 236 and 355 students. Assumptions are based on the following: 15 percent of high school students currently enrolled in NAD Adventist schools might qualify for admissions and 10 to 15 percent of qualified students might choose to attend such a school. Given that the North American Division high school enrollment in 1995 was 15,766, this formula would suggest the potential student body of 236 to 355 students. This final figure of course does not include Adventist students currently enrolled in non-Adventist high schools or potential foreign students. Enrollment figures are taken from *General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists North American Division Office of Education Annual Report, 1995* (Silver Spring, Md.: North American Division Data Management Service, 1996), p. 28. The separate but related debate over whether gifted students should receive special treatment is covered later in the paper.

2. The following discussion refers to "the select 16," which, as E. Digby Baltzell reports in *Philadelphia Gentlemen: The Making of a National Upper Class* (New York: The Free Press, 1958), "set the pace and bore the brunt of criticism received by private schools. . . ." These include Choate Rosemary Hall (Connecticut), Deerfield Academy (Massachusetts), Episcopal High School (Virginia), Groton School (Massachusetts), Hill School (Pennsylvania), Hotchkiss School (Connecticut), Kent School (Connecticut), Lawrenceville School (New Jersey), Middlesex School (Massachusetts), Phillips Andover Academy (Massachusetts), Phillips Exeter Academy (New Hampshire), St. George's School (Canada), St. Mark's School (Massachusetts), St. Paul's School (New Hampshire), Taft School (Connecticut), and Woodberry Forest School (Virginia). Data on these schools come from school catalogues and *Peterson's Private Secondary Schools 1996-1997* (Princeton, N.J.: Peterson's, 1996).

3. This emphasis is first noticeable upon reading the admission statements from the more selective prep schools. Typical are statements such as the following: "Exeter looks for student of exceptional promise who demonstrate intellectual curiosity and tenacity, welcome challenges, and take initiative" (*Phillips Exeter*

*Academy Catalogue*, distributed in 1996, p. 4). And "At St. Paul's, we are interested in attracting students who have demonstrated intellectual ability, motivation, and curiosity both academically and outside the classroom" (*St. Paul's School Catalogue*, distributed in 1996, p. 29).

4. Students share the assumption that academics define prep schools to a considerable degree. In fact, Cookson and Persell report that students appear to measure the "authenticity" of their prep school experience by the extent to which their school meets academic or intellectual ideals (see Peter W. Cookson, Jr. and Caroline Hodges Persell, *Preparing for Power: America's Elite Boarding Schools* [New York: Basic Books, 1985], pp. 148, 149).

5. Many schools recognize the close relationship that exists between teacher satisfaction and classroom performance. This satisfaction is the result of many factors, primary among which is that of workload.Sizer has noted that the size of a typical high school teacher's workload seriously undermines that teacher's ability to perform (see Theodore R.Sizer, *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School* [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985], p. 20). Elsewhere he suggests that the maximum total student load per teacher should be 80 pupils (see the final of the nine points that make up "The Common Principles" published by and available from the Coalition of Essential Schools, Brown University, Box 1969, Providence, RI 02912).

6. See, for example, the *Hotchkiss School Catalogue*, distributed in 1996.

7. This occurs in most of the better prep school catalogues: Groton's, Hotchkiss', Kent's, Phillips' (Andover and Exeter), St. Paul's School's, and etc.

8. Taken from a letter written by Tony Hill, the head of St. Mark's School, printed on page 2 of the school's 1995-1996 catalogue.

9. This figure does not take into account Canada's St. George's School.

10. The modern understanding of adolescence as a time of trial and opportunity (when needs are great) is at least a few centuries old. In *Emile: Or, On Education*, Rousseau held that youth could best make the transition from child to adult if given the opportunity to be rightly educated. His description of an appropriate education

can be summarized as follows: "The young student should be plucked from his parents and the contamination of the city and placed in a rural environment (isolation) to be tutored by a knowledgeable and sensitive mentor (intervention) in order to produce a natural man (transformation)" (as quoted in Cookson and Persell, *Preparing for Power*, pp. 31, 32.) Scholars such as educator and psychologist G. Stanley Hall (in his two-volume *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relation to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education* [New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1904]) further defined adolescence as a kind of demilitarized zone between childhood and adulthood where growth was rapid and the possibilities of fulfillment and despair extreme. Many prep schools, like grammar schools of old, maintain that the development of leadership skills also requires a social setting that prepares the youth for work among the socially elite.

11. Taken from the *Middlesex School Catalogue*, distributed in 1996, p. 19.

12. Taken from the *Kent School Catalogue*, distributed in 1996, p. 1.

13. Colin D. Standish and Russell R. Standish, *Adventism Imperiled* (Rapidan, Va.: Historic Truth Publications, 1984), p. 148.

14. Louis M. Crosier, ed., *Casualties of Privilege: Essays on Prep Schools' Hidden Culture* (Washington, D.C.: Avocus, 1991).

15. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

16. For example, when they asked prep school students to indicate boarding school's best feature, Cookson and Persell discovered that "32 percent chose the 'other students,' 23 percent chose 'the academics,' and 5 percent chose 'the teachers'" (Cookson and Persell, *Preparing for Power*, p. 154).

17. *Ibid.* Crosier has described the essential system needed for a successful dorm slightly differently. The essential systems needed for a successful boarding school, he asserts, include (a) training of dorm faculty; (b) value of student prefects; and (c) promotion of the idea of professional parenting (see Crosier's "Great Ideas: Communication on a National Level," in *Healthy Choices, Healthy Schools: The Residential Curriculum*, Louis M. Crosier, ed. [Washington, D.C.: Avocus, 1992]. For detailed information on dorm faculty and prefects, see especially Hamilton Gregg's "Dormitories: Staffing and Rooming," and Susan Graham's "Dormitory Prefects: Making a Difference, Defying the Odds," *ibid.*)

18. Of course, America has unique and historical interest in moral education. Perhaps no account of this country's educational heritage, a heritage that began with puritanical efforts aimed at ensuring the promotion of various religious and moral postulates, is a more delightful read than Adolphe E. Meyer, *Educational*

*History of the American People*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967).

19. *Groton School 1995-1996 Catalogue*, p. 2.

20. *Choate Rosemary Hall: A Sense of Place*, catalogue distributed in 1996, p. 4.

21. *Andover*, the Phillips Andover Academy, catalogue distributed in 1996, p. 9.

22. *Deerfield: Catalogue 1995-1996*, p. 43.

23. Taken from *The Trust: A Compact With Students and Parents*, a pamphlet distributed with the St. Paul's School catalogue in 1996.

24. The idea that schools are better equipped to be the primary teachers of the faith than the home is a relatively recent creation, with roots not in early Jewish or Christian traditions but in the Reformation. For a fine overview of the changing locus of religious education, see Frank E. Proctor, "Teaching Faith in the Family: A Historical Overview," *Religious Education* 91:1 (Winter 1996), pp. 40-54.

25. Weber's study comparing instruction in Catholic schools with "out of school" instruction concluded that the Catholic high school is "fulfilling the function of imparting Catholic knowledge more effectively than is 'out of school' religious instruction for Catholic students who attend public high schools" (Larry J. Weber, "A Study of the Effectiveness of Catholic Schools for the Purpose of Imparting Religious Knowledge," *Religious Education* 63 [July-August 1968], pp. 320, 321.) And Hiltz showed that research could not support the theory that "pursued religious interest, operationalized through independent study, would result in greater religious interest than subject-centered religion study exposure, nor did the research find that students' importance and commitment to further search and study of religion significantly increased through exposure to independent study" (John T. Hiltz, "Effects of Independent Religion Study on Religious Interests of High School Sophomores," *Religious Education* 70:4 [July-August 1975], pp. 424, 425).

26. Dean R. Hoge and Gregory H. Petrillo, "Determinants of Church Participation and Attitudes Among High School Youth," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 17:4 (December 1978), p. 376.

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*, p. 372. For more information on the Creedal Assent Index, see Morton King and Richard Hunt, "Measuring the Religious Variable: National Replication," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 14 (1975), pp. 13-22.

29. Conclusions of research of six mainline denominations outlined in Peter Benson and Carolyn Elkin, *Effective Christian Education: A National Study of Protestant Congregations* (Minneapolis: Search Institute, 1990), as quoted in Frank E. Proctor, "Teaching

Faith in the Family: A Historical Overview," *Religious Education* 91:1 (Winter 1996), p. 41.

30. Would these teachers also need to be able to entertain a critical approach to matters of religion while being concerned that these ideas not critically undermine a student's commitment to the church and faith? Such an ability is certainly desirable, though difficult to define or measure.

31. S. N. Haskell, "Preparatory Schools," *Review and Herald* (April 11, 1882), p. 233.

32. After all, such training could be supported by individuals or households as well as it could by institutions.

33. James White, "Questions and Answers," *Review and Herald* (December 23, 1862), p. 29.

34. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1903), p. 17.

35. Eugene Leland, "The South Lancaster Academy," *Review and Herald* (February 19, 1884), p. 116. The other four were "[2] to provide a place of education whose moral atmosphere is such that parents can feel safe in trusting their children under its influence. . . . [3] to provide a place for the proper religious training of its students, as well as to protect them from the pernicious doctrines of 'freedom of thought,' and positive infidelity, so prevalent in some of the leading schools of the

day. . . . [4] to provide a place where young men, and those even of more advanced years, can prepare themselves to enter the great harvest field which is fast whitening for the sickle. . . ."

36. S. N. Haskell, "Our Schools," *Review and Herald* (January 1, 1884), p. 11. Other matters of concern to the early educators seem quaint in retrospect. When describing the primary goals of the Battle Creek institution, for example, George Butler stated that "we hoped to have a school . . . where frivolity, pride, vanity, and premature courting, could be mainly shut out" (George Butler, "Unpleasant Themes: The Closing of Our College," *Review and Herald* [September 12, 1882], p. 586.)

37. Occasionally, the stated objectives of church-supported institutions appear to weaken an assumed religious and denominational commitment. Some academies, for example, aim for greater identification with the larger Christian community and hesitate to assert that the Adventist conversion experience may be a privilege rather than an imposed requirement. As one such school recently stated: "As a Seventh-day Adventist Christian high school, we are responsible to both evangelize and nurture our students in our faith" (see *Forest Lake Academy Bulletin*, distributed in 1996, p. 7).

38. Richard Garver, "A New Academy Is Born," *Southern Tidings* (February 1995), p. 22.



# The Immunology Of Humor

Recent research confirms the centuries-old belief that humor, mirth, and laughter produce beneficial effects on health.

by Sandra L. Neblsen-Cannarella

A MEDICAL STUDENT IN A HOSPITAL GOWN SITS in a darkened room at the Loma Linda University Medical Center, watching a videotape of a popular episode of "Candid Camera." The student is laughing heartily and apparently enjoying the show. As the movie comes to an end, an intern immediately draws a vial of blood. He sends it, along with a similar sample drawn before the movie started, for analysis, one more piece in a puzzle that may someday reveal whether laughter really is good for our health. The findings, thus far, suggest that the answer is Yes.

In a research trial at Loma Linda University Medical Center in 1986, a team of investigators measured the effects of mirthful laughter by administering psychological tests to, and testing the blood of, five sophomore medical students before, during, and after viewing a comedic videotape. They confirmed the expected fluctuations in neuroendocrine hor-

mones,<sup>1</sup> and found that these correlated with the subjects' perceived humor as defined by their psychological tests.<sup>2</sup> In addition, there was increased activation and proliferation of lymphocytes and increased destruction of tumor cells by natural killer cells, above the pre-laughter "baseline" levels, suggesting a beneficial effect of specific neuroendocrine hormones on the immune system.<sup>3</sup> These data gave support to the thesis that a diversion such as humor was capable of eliciting an emotional response that leads to the release of biochemicals capable of modulating immune system function. Such modulation may then affect an individual's health, an effect that would depend, at least, on the strength and durability of the modulation and the frequency of exposure to the emotion-inducing experiences of similar or different types.

## The Physiology of Laughter

For the layperson, these conclusions may seem predictable, even intuitive. Most have

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experienced the emotional “high” that a long, hearty spell of laughter produces (not unlike the “high” reported by runners). But the similarities go much deeper. In both situations—laughing and exercising vigorously—similar neurohormones are produced, including beta endorphins. Beta endorphins, produced by the brain, are our own tranquilizers. They belong to the family of opiates (which includes opium, morphine, and heroin) that can slow respiration, lower blood pressure, decrease sensitivity to pain, lower motor activity, heighten certain immune responses, induce feelings of well-being, and relieve stress.

Biomedical research conducted in the 1970s and 1980s revealed that endorphins influence immune system function. Further, some lymphocytes produce their own endorphins and bear membrane receptors for receiving endorphin signals from the brain as well as from each other.<sup>4</sup> It has also been reported that endorphins are released when stimulation of the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis leads to release of corticosteroids from the adrenal glands. This phenomenon can be interpreted as the body responding to stress signals by supplying “dope” to make it feel better.<sup>5</sup>

Physiologically, laughter is a respiratory act and results in increased pulmonary ventilation (above-normal breathing cycles); it increases the heart rate proportional to the intensity and duration of the laughter episode. After laughter, the heart rate drops below the pre-laughter baseline rate; it does the same to the blood pressure (systolic and diastolic).<sup>6</sup> Typical laughter produces musculoskeletal activity and subsequent relaxation in muscles of the ribs, abdomen, diaphragm, neck, and shoulders. In hearty laughter, many more muscles are involved, leading to total body relaxation. These effects stem from stimulation of the central nervous system, resulting first in a release of adrenaline, then of beta-endorphin. Research has shown a direct correlation between intensity of mirth and levels of catecholamines.

Endocrine and digestive functions are also stimulated through laughter.<sup>7</sup> Many parallels are drawn between laughter and the benefits of exercise, including an enhanced sense of well-being, stress reduction, and relaxation.<sup>8</sup>

But research also suggests that the benefits of laughter and good humor cannot be defined strictly within the context of exercise, in this case, the physical act of laughing. The mental state of humor, or mirth, is beneficial in and of itself. Stanford University’s William F. Fry, Jr., a psychiatrist, is a recognized authority in the benefits of humor and laughter. He has evaluated the physiologic effects of mirthful laughter and, for nearly three decades, employed humor in his practice of psychiatry. In addressing the three major life-threatening disease conditions in the contemporary Western world (heart disease, cancer, and stroke), Fry points out the significance of humor in combating factors contributing to these disease processes:

Stress is antagonized by humor in both its mental or emotional aspect and its physical aspect. Emotional tension, contributing to stress, is lowered through the cathartic effects of humor. Anger demands a serious attitude; humor banishes the tightness and severity which are necessary for anger. . . . With only the exception of the most severe degrees of depression, humor relieves the devitalizing grip of depression. It offsets, opposes, diminishes depression. . . . Mirth opens our minds and raises us above slavery to archaic reflex. Humor precipitates a complex, thought-provoking experience shared with other humans. Humor gives us a choice.<sup>9</sup>

This power of humor as a liberating agent may be of particular importance in light of research by Steven F. Maier, Ph.D., professor and chair of experimental psychology at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Maier advocates the importance of the subject’s sense of control in a stressful situation in overcoming stress. In a 1983 study, Maier and his col-

leagues<sup>10</sup> reported that rats given a series of inescapable shocks, escapable shocks, or no shocks exhibited very different immune reactivity. Those animals not capable of escaping electrical shocks demonstrated suppressed immune activity. There was no difference, however, between the animals that were given the ability to escape the shocks (but still received shocks) and the control animals not receiving shocks.<sup>11</sup> The authors' interpretation was that "the extent of behavioral control over the event may be more important than the event itself."

## Benefiting From the Distractions of Humor

**B**ased on observations similar to the ones made in Maier's study—that subjects ex-

posed to stress do not always suffer suppressed immune activity, or become ill—some have argued that stress does not, in fact, lead to illness. Using similar logic, others argue that laughter does not lead to wellness. But *perception* is the operative word here; it is responsible for the "placebo effect" and is the go-between (between event and response to the event) of all human emotions. Perception of one's life and life experiences is tied to our sense of control, and it is this sense that tempers much of our emotion and reaction to events.

Marvin Stein, M.D., chief of psychiatry at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, has tested the effects of perception and coping, by measuring psychosocial and immune capabilities of the husbands of women diagnosed with terminal breast cancer. For several years, he followed these men through their experi-

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# A Guide to Interpreting Scientific Studies

by Byron Greenberg and Sandra Nehlsen-Cannarella

**I**n scientific investigation, there are many ways to ask the same question. The manner in which you ask the question will determine the methods you use to answer it. If we look at reports of studies on the relationship of emotions and health, we find three frequently cited papers. One such study is that of S. Cohen and colleagues.<sup>1</sup> The question asked here was, "Does psychological stress suppress host resistance to infection?" To answer this question, the authors gave 394 healthy subjects a stress questionnaire and then administered nasal drops containing either a salt water solution (control) or a respiratory virus. They reported that the rates of respiratory infection increased proportionately to the degree of psychological stress measured in the subjects. Does this study lend any

credence to the notion that "a merry heart doeth good like a medicine"? Some would say Yes. But scientific scrutiny would reveal that the relationship between stress and a merry heart would need to be defined (for example, does the absence of stress ensure joyfulness?). Cohen and colleagues would have to have measured how merry their subjects' hearts were in order to infer the relationship. What this study does tell us is that there is a relationship between psychological processes and resistance to infection. But what about a merry heart?

When do we use medicine? Almost always, after we've become ill, much like the subjects in Cohen's study probably did (a merry heart). Did a "merry heart/medicine" ameliorate the illness in this study? We don't know, because we have neither a measure of the degree of the merriness nor knowledge about the rate of recovery that may have been

due to this merriness.

Another well-known study is the Western Electric Study,<sup>2</sup> in which 2,000 middle-aged men were monitored for 20 years to determine if depression was associated with the incidence and mortality of cancer. The authors indeed found a significant positive association between depression and cancer mortality, but the increased risk appeared to be minimal. Is depression (or anger, envy, guilt, or hopelessness) the opposite of a merry heart? In order to generalize this study's results to the question, "Does a merry heart do good like a medicine?" we would have to assume that these emotions are the opposite of a merry heart, and then we really would be addressing the question, "Does a non-merry heart do bad?" As mentioned earlier, the methods used by scientists are dictated by the research question. In both of the above studies, the research question had noth-

ence of witnessing various stages of their wives' illness and death. He continued to study them for at least two years after the loss of their spouses. Stein demonstrated impaired immune function in bereavement<sup>12</sup> and depression,<sup>13</sup> as well as general health and life expectancy. He also clearly demonstrated that positive perception helped these male subjects cope. In another study of mid-life wellness factors, by Harvard's George Vaillant, M.D., humor was again singled out as a major stress-coping mechanism possessed by healthy men. The men in this study understood and used the stress-relieving power of humor—to relieve tensions, break negative feelings, and put their problems in perspective.<sup>14</sup>

Perception, not coincidentally, was one of the aspects of mind-body interaction that we measured in our laughter experiment at Loma Linda University Medical Center. Our findings

fit well with Maier's. We first studied the immune responses of our subjects a few days before watching a comic video. Against this background, we compared measurements made immediately before watching the video with the same measurements performed several times throughout the viewing, and after the viewing. Remarkably, an increase in immune capability had developed in our subjects in response to the anticipation they perceived immediately *before* starting the experiment, as compared to an assessment done two weeks earlier (perception was measured by the Profile of Mood States [POMS] assessment questionnaire at each of these time points). The subjects knew that they could anticipate the viewing of a videotape of a comedian of their choice, and would be offered pizza and soda following the final blood drawing. In addition, they were encour-

ing to do with a joyful heart; instead, they were measuring stress (negative) emotions and their influence on the immune system.

In any scientific investigation, certain assumptions are made. The challenge to consumers of the resulting literature is not to make additional assumptions, but to scrutinize the assumptions made by the investigators. For example, in the first article, the authors assumed that the measurement of stress that they used did indeed measure "stress." In the second article, the authors assumed that depression measured 20 years ago was a trait that would occur over time instead of it being a one-time event. It is tempting to make additional assumptions, such as assuming that a lack of depression is the equivalent of joy or merriment; this is not logical. One might also assume that host resistance to an invading organism is indicative of the ability of the system to fight off an infection that has already taken the upper hand. However, it is possible that the inborn

immune system (the "front line defense" for preventing infection) can be affected by a current, acute stress, while the adaptive immune system (the "elite army" responsible for fighting an established infection) can be left intact. Because the immune system is made up of multiple parts—each differently affected by various events—the whole system is not necessarily compromised by the presence of some stress emotion. This is particularly true if the stress emotion emerges from a short-term, acute event.

In the third study,<sup>3</sup> A. B. Zonderman, P. T. Costa, and R. R. McCrae considered the risk for cancer morbidity and mortality relative to depression. This study used a nationwide selection of subjects; they showed no significant relationship between depression and risk of cancer and death. This should cause some eyebrows to rise and questions to be asked—such as, "What were the instruments used in this study? Were they the same ones used in the Western Electric study?

Did they measure depression?" The truth is, this study used a different measure of depression from the first. Could this have caused the difference in results? Perhaps, but all we know at this point is that the two studies have differing results. One says that depression and cancer are related, and the other says they are not. If we are going to answer the question, "Does a merry heart do good like a medicine?" then we as scientists would use none of these studies.

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aged to bring a friend or spouse to the event. In other words, we had been able to measure the effect of positive anticipation on immune function, perhaps an extension of the perceived positive anticipation—demonstrated in Maier's experiment—of being able to escape an electrical shock.

Through numerous studies over the past two decades, investigators have demonstrated that during different mood states, substances are released in the mind and body. They have also observed the effects of those substances on immune function, and correlated them with either salutary, unhealthy, or inconsequential effects. The majority of researchers agree that stress, grief, loneliness, pain, and feelings of helplessness may eventually lead to ill health. Now we find growing acceptance of the role humor and laughter can play in diverting the subject from the stress and pain of unpleasant events and conditions.

Recent findings from two studies in pain tolerance management offer further support for this conclusion.<sup>15</sup> It is known that more than one type of cognitive psychological technique can increase pain tolerance. Distractions of several types can achieve this end. To measure its relative effectiveness in increasing pain tolerance, humor was contrasted with repulsive and neutral distractors. In these two studies using large numbers of subjects, repulsive stimuli were found to be as effective as humorous stimuli in successfully increasing tolerance to pain. These studies suggest that it is not a unique quality of humor that mediates pain (and perhaps stress) tolerance, but rather its ability to distract the subject from the experience of pain. While most of us would prefer to be distracted by joyous rather than repulsive subject matter, the fact remains that subjects capable of inducing strong emotional states can be effective pain reducers. Whether all stimuli capable of increasing pain tolerance achieve this effect by the same mechanisms remains to be established.

## Treating Stress With Humor

I am ready, then, as a scientist and practicing immunologist, to endorse humor and laughter as beneficial. Indeed, I routinely instruct our patients to bring diversionary activities into their lives such as laughter, music, and hobbies that bring personal enjoyment and satisfaction. Here, though, we encounter one of the more challenging facets of the study of humor—determining what humor is, and how one quantifies it. Jessica Milner Davis, an Australian psychiatrist,<sup>16</sup> and Carolyn Aust, chair of the Colorado Commission on Aging, are among the leaders using humor in their clinical practices. They, and others, have helped define humor as the attributes in a situation or story that lead us to perceive what is absurd, ridiculous, or incongruous. Our perception, in turn, leads us to feel mirthful, or to laugh. I recall reading a newspaper commentary a few years ago by Edward de Bono, a literary commentator specializing in humor, in which he describes humor as arising directly from the process of perception, which allows the mind to “switch over and look at something in a completely new way.” Harvey Mindess, author of *Laughter and Liberation*, agrees: “Humor is an attitude toward life, an ability to be objective, unattached, and see the absurdity of one's plight. Humor is willingness to accept life and oneself.”<sup>17</sup>

How does one measure humor? Consensus has been long in coming. About 25 years ago, research psychologists began setting their sights on positive emotions, and humor became a focus of attention.<sup>18</sup> For many years thereafter, psychologists and psychiatrists struggled to develop tools that could measure and define humor in all its many forms. Although great strides have been made toward identifying the “chemical nature” of humor,<sup>19</sup> researchers are limited, primarily, to instruments of self-report. The Situational Humor Response Questionnaire (SHRQ), developed by Martin and

Lefcourt, used in conjunction with the Profile of Mood States (POMS) test developed by McNair, Lor, and Droppleman, have become standards in this field. Other instruments exist, and each one has its peculiar strengths and weaknesses. In most cases, more than one test is required to suit the needs of a particular effort.

Once we have agreed on the definitions, how do we put humor to practical, everyday use? Laughter and humor have been used by professionals in treating patients, discussing treatment options, diagnoses and prognoses, relieving stress in the workplace (particularly in emergency rooms, surgical suites, and intensive care units), and resolving personnel issues, just as persons outside the medical profession have done for decades. More recently, however, humor has become a kind of treatment option in the modern medical setting. Numerous hospitals, medical centers, and rehabilitation cen-

ters have developed humor teams, humor carts that are wheeled through patient areas like the roving library and gift carts, and humor rooms, all intended to assist patients through their recovery process, or to help alleviate anxiety and pain. Dr. David Bresler, director of UCLA's Pain Control Clinic, tells us that "the most common expensive and disabling disorder in the United States is pain, and the key to eliminating pain is to change your mind and attitude—laughter provides that opportunity."<sup>20</sup>

In addition, humor is being used by the medical profession to improve the workplace setting. For example, nurses use humor to make themselves feel more at ease with their

patients, to lighten both their own and their patients' moods, to encourage their patients to communicate and express emotions, to dispel anger and aggression, and to relieve panic and anxiety. Both patients and staff report benefiting from sharing humor.

But humor—as a treatment—works equally well as "preventative medicine." Joel Goodman, Ed.D., in his quarterly magazine *Laughing Matters*, encourages us to observe good comedians handling hecklers to learn to become "light on our feet"—expert at defusing threatening or stressful situations. He

promotes the idea that we should practice humor—planned spontaneity—so as to prepare us to act with grace under pressure or in an embarrassing moment. He tells the story of humorist Robert Benchley who, when leaving a posh Manhattan restaurant, turned to the uniformed man at the door and asked him to call for a taxi. When the

man replied icily, "I happen to be a rear admiral in the United States Navy," Benchley said, "All right then, get us a battleship."

But, we may ask, what if we don't *feel* humorous, or in good spirits? What good can humor possibly do us then? Not surprisingly, many experts tell us to feign or pretend to be happy if we are having trouble getting into a happy mood. "You have to start somewhere, even if it means going through the motions at first," says psychologist Harry A. Olson, of Reisterstown, Maryland. "[I]f you decide to be healthy, hopeful, and fun-loving, that's what you'll be."<sup>21</sup> Remember the experiments of Ader and Cohen in which animals were "conditioned"? We, too, are conditioned in many

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*Whether humor, mirth, and laughter produce beneficial effects on the immune system, and therefore on health, is no longer in doubt. The emotion of happiness has, for many centuries, been equated with health. Recent research confirms this belief.*

ways,<sup>22</sup> one of which is to respond physiologically to a feigned smile in the same way we respond when smiling from pleasure—it is a “patterned response.”

Whether humor, mirth, and laughter produce beneficial effects on the immune system, and therefore on health, is no longer in doubt. Humor is an emotion, emotions elicit the release of neurohormones, and neurohormones modulate immune system function. Experienced events are processed by the mind; emotions and reactions to all events are tempered first by emotional reactions and then by cognitive processes that assign attributes. What is critical is each person's own

perception of the situation, the intensity and duration of his or her emotion, and the presence, type, and strength of collateral emotions.

The emotion of happiness has, for many centuries, been equated with health and longevity. Recent research confirms this belief. Future research in this area should establish whether humor elicits the same, similar, or different neurohormonal patterns than other types of stimuli, and determine which stimulus is most effective in a particular clinical setting. Then we will be empowered to use nature's own pharmacopia in a competent manner. Until then, I will continue to laugh—a lot.

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and remain angry at the same time. Another coping function of humor is its use as a means to deny or avoid feeling too frightened to face reality. The tendency of humor to playfully boost morale even when one is not in a playful frame of mind—known as “gallows humor”—was initially studied by A. Obrdlik in individuals about to face death in Nazi concentration camps (A. Obrdlik, “Gallows Humor: A Sociological Phenomenon,” *American Journal of Sociology* 47 [1942], pp. 709-716). Humor is used to normalize or break the ice under tense conditions, facilitate relaxation, establish trust, initiate conversation, achieve consensus, enhance cohesion between persons, and reduce nervous tension. Freud speculated that releases from the obligation to be rational and logical are necessary from time to time.

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M. Lorr, and L. F. Droppleman, *The Profile of Mood States* [San Diego: EDITS, 1971], have become standards in this field. There are a wide variety of “instruments” other than these.

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# Is a Merry Heart Like a Placebo?

Science is slow in supporting what many assume is self-evident—a healthy body presupposes a cheerful disposition.

by Gary Gilbert

CINDY SHIVERED AS SHE SAT ON THE EXAMINATION table in the medical clinic with the skin on her bare arms puckered into goose flesh. She dabbed her nose with a handkerchief and sniffed before talking. "I've been under a lot of stress," she said. "My boyfriend is mad at me, and I've been missing work too often. I'm afraid I might lose my job. This stress must have knocked out my immunity because I never get sick. Now I'm congested, my throat is sore, and my head hurts." I examined Cindy, explained to her that she was likely experiencing a viral infection, and reluctantly wrote out the antibiotic prescription that she insisted would make her well more quickly.

Two days later, I was in the oncology clinic with Mr. and Mrs. Goodwin. Only two weeks

earlier I had unhappily informed Mr. Goodwin that he had cancer of the pancreas and would not live longer than a few months. Mr. Goodwin slumped in his chair and kept his eyes trained on the floor while his wife talked. "I tell him to stop moping around," she said. "It will only make the cancer worse. He has to think positively." Mr. Goodwin's eyes were glistening when he looked at me.

"I try, Doctor, but I can't feel happy. I feel sad all the time." His shoulders shook and he started to sob. "How would you feel if you knew that you were dying?"

Outside of the examining room, Mrs. Goodwin pulled me aside to say that Mr. Goodwin had been moody for many years. "I think those bad moods may have something to do with this," she said, gesturing toward the room. "When you have bad moods it affects your body. It can make you sick. I heard about it on television. What do you think, Doctor?"

What do I think? Did emotional stress make Cindy susceptible to catching a cold? Did depression cause Mr. Goodwin to develop

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cancer? Will his current mood have any impact upon his outcome? Almost everyone I have talked to has an opinion about the effect of their attitudes upon their health. In my own family, my mother believes that a good mental outlook protects her from colds; and my sister, a psychologist, believes that with a good attitude, she may protect herself against cancer and heart disease. Educated people, as well as uneducated ones, seem to believe in a connection between their emotional well-being and their health.

Stephen Jay Gould, the Harvard paleontologist and essayist, is known for skepticism and is both admired and disdained for debunking myths about baseball players, historical figures, and natural history. He suffered the misfortune of contracting cancer and subsequently, benefited from good therapy and good luck in apparently eliminating the cancer. When he wrote about his cancer he said, "Attitude clearly matters in fighting cancer. We don't know why . . . But match people with the same cancer for age, class, health, and socioeconomic status, and, in general, those with positive attitudes, with a strong will and purpose for living, with commitment to struggle, and with an active response to aiding their own treatment and not just a passive acceptance of anything doctors say tend to live longer."<sup>1</sup> Did Gould do his homework before asserting this claim? Or have I caught him espousing the hopes of Norman Cousins rather than conclusions based upon scientific evidence?

My objective in this essay is to address Cindy's remarks and Mrs. Goodwin's question, "What do you think, Doctor?" More specifically, I will address the questions: What are the physiological mechanisms through which moods and attitudes may influence health? Does mental stress cause susceptibility to colds or to cancer? Does the mood of a cancer patient influence how long he or she will live?

## Narrowing the Focus to Colds And Cancer

Everybody knows that the state of the mind can have dramatic and immediate affects upon the body. Children cry from tummy aches when their parents fight. It is not that they have eaten too much fruit or acquired a viral infection; they get physical pain in their tummies because they are upset. Medical students get diarrhea on the morning before a biochemistry test. Again, the diarrhea has nothing to do with the food or water they have consumed, and it is relieved predictably after the test is completed. Most of us can remember a classical demonstration of the mind affecting bodily function: The Russian scientist, Pavlov, who taught dogs to salivate when they heard a bell. After sufficient training, the dogs' minds made the connection between hearing the bell and smelling the food, so they salivated in response to the bell when no food was present. Another classic illustration was performed by Sir William Osler, an American medical educator. He had a patient who reliably wheezed with asthma in response to the scent of a rose. To demonstrate that her response was habitual and no longer required the rose scent, he exposed her to an artificial rose. She began to wheeze.

It is not the existence of a mind-body connection that I wish to discuss, for it is very clear that a connection exists. Rather, I wish to discuss the importance of that connection for the common cold and for cancer. Colds and cancer are more difficult to explain in relationship to the mind than tummy aches, salivation, or asthma. Colds involve a viral infection as well as symptoms from the viral infection. Susceptibility to infection and the reactive symptoms may be modulated by the immune system and possibly by the state of the mind. Cancer is caused by the accumulation of genetic mutations in a cell so that eventually

its daughter cells are able to evade normal growth regulators and the body's immune system. These independent cells are finally able to crowd out normal life processes. Hypothetically, the genetic mutations of cancer, the failure of cells to repair them, and the failure of immune system surveillance in allowing the cancer cells to grow may all be related the state of the immune system or the mind. The many possible ways that the state of the mind may hypothetically influence susceptibility to colds and cancer have given rise to a great deal of scientific investigation and nearly limitless speculation in popular talk shows and magazines.

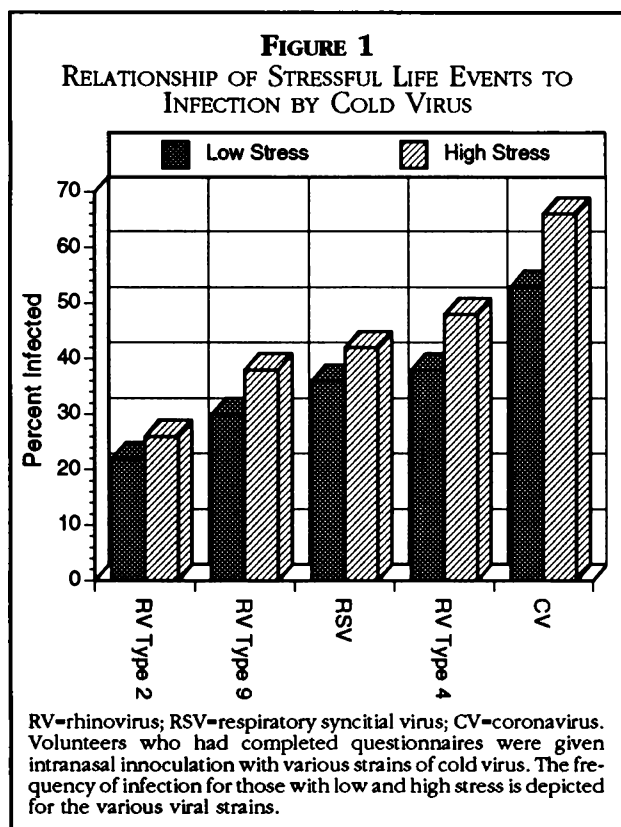
Because of my general skeptical bias, I decided to skip over the myriad scientific studies that indicate that the mind influences one specific immune function or another. Those studies are interesting, and it is fun to speculate about how one immune dysfunction may cause a disease. And there is no shortage of connections between the brain

and immune organs, pathways through which the mind may talk directly to immune cells. Recently, new biochemical connections have been described. These studies only get me halfway to my destination. I wanted to know if the state of the mind actually influences acquisition of and symptoms from a common cold, not whether there is a plausible immune pathway through which that effect may occur. Therefore, I have skipped those studies to sample only studies that have made direct correlations between the state of the mind and colds or cancer.

The mechanism through which attitude is to benefit health is obscure in Ellen White's writing. She mentions the effect of brain "electric power" on the whole system. Ellen White's "electric power" mechanism is not sufficiently articulated in her writings to be either validated or invalidated by more recent findings involving brain function and the immune system. In the late 20th century, we understand the nature of the electrical impulses from the brain more thoroughly than 19th-century health reformers did.

## Good Moods Don't Prevent The Common Cold

It is surprisingly difficult to perform scientific studies upon people who suffer from the common cold. If two different people are sick with runny noses, fatigue, and joint aches, does that mean that they are both infected with the same virus? Have they both had the same exposure to the causative virus? Special precautions were taken to perform the study that I believe is the most informative about the effect of mood upon susceptibility to cold infection.<sup>2</sup> Three hundred ninety-four healthy adults agreed to be isolated from friends and family in a large laboratory where inoculations of cold-causing virus would be squirted into their nostrils. Every person was asked to



complete a battery of questionnaires to determine whether he or she was *distressed*, *nervous*, or *sad*. They were asked whether they had difficulty coping with life and whether they had lost family members, been fired from a job, or suffered other stressful events within the past year. Each person was given a numeric score pertaining to his or her mood, attitude, and the stress to which he or she had been exposed.

After completing the questionnaires and receiving a viral inoculation, the test subjects were observed to see if they developed runny noses and headaches, to see whether nasal secretions contained growing viruses, and to see if they developed an immune response to the virus with which they had been inoculated. After hundreds of people had been studied, the cumulative results began to show a pattern. People who had experience stressful life events within the prior year were more likely to develop a runny nose and a headache after inoculation with a cold virus than those who had not (see Figure 1). Similarly, the chance of virus growing in nasal secretions and developing an immune response to the virus was higher in the people who reported stressful life events.

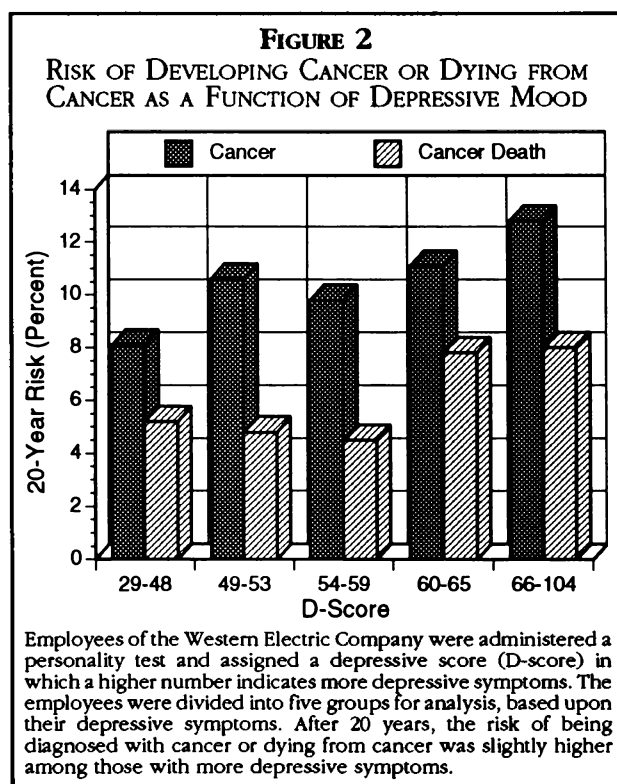
This study suggests that Cindy was right. Stressful life events apparently increase susceptibility to colds. The increased susceptibility was detected in this study in people exposed to all five types of cold virus. To be sure, the difference in susceptibility to virus infection was relatively small. On average, the chance of developing a cold was about 15 percent higher for the people who reported stressful life events than for those who did not. While those who avoided stress appear to have improved their odds, it is worth noting that a much more favorable increase in odds had previously been demonstrated in those who remember to wash their hands and hence avoid exposure to the cold virus.

What about a merry heart? This study did not show any advantage to a good mood or a

good attitude. The happy, confident people got colds at the same rate as those who were sad or angry. This study suggested that the stressful life events increased the risk of a cold without making people sadder, angrier, or more desperate than those who had avoided the stressful events.

## Depression Doesn't Lead To Cancer

Do bad moods cause cancer? Imagine how you would answer that question in a clinical study. First you would identify people who have bad moods and others who do not. You might do that by asking people questions using a standardized personality exam. After you determined how optimistic or depressed each person was, you might assign a depression score for each one; for example, 0 might mean no depression at all, and 100 might mean terribly depressed. Then you would have to keep track of all of these people for a



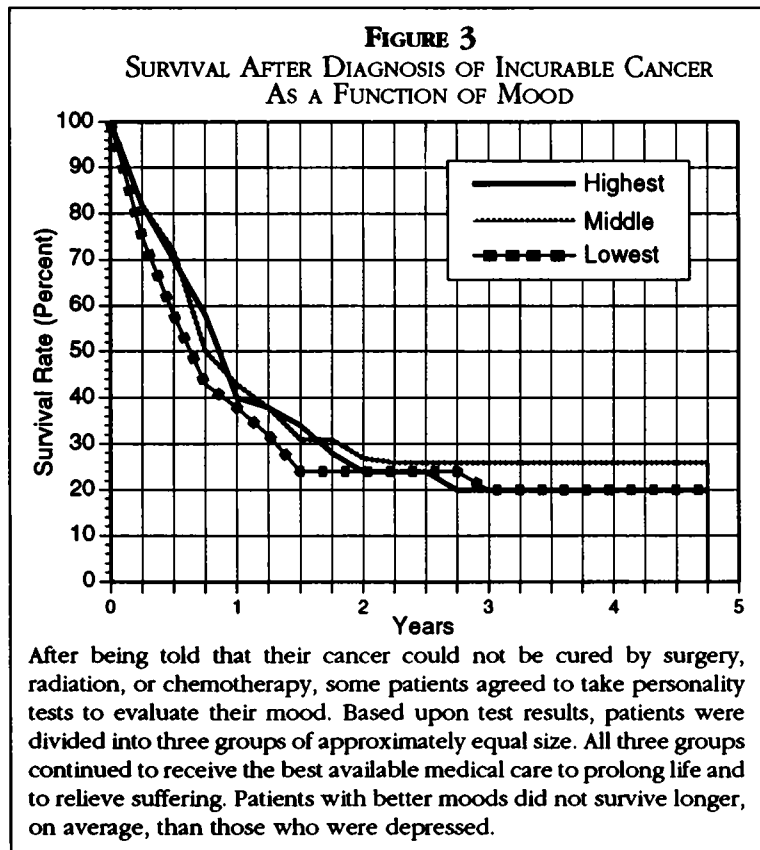
long time to see which ones developed cancer and which ones did not. This is precisely what was done with men who worked for the Western Electric Company.<sup>3</sup> The questions were asked using the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory during the years of 1957-1958. Each man received a numeric depression score—less than 60 was normal, and a higher number indicated a more depressive mood than normal. In 1978, 20 years after taking the test, 2,018 men were located and the number who had contracted cancer and the number who had died from cancer were counted. The men were divided into five groups, according to their depression scores, to analyze the risk of cancer (see Figure 2). The men who were in the more depressed groups had acquired cancer at a higher rate than those from the non-depressed groups. In addition, men in the depressed groups had a higher risk of dying from cancer than those who were less depressed. The risk of dying

from cancer also appeared to be higher in those with an increased depressive score. By statistical analysis, however, the authors concluded that there was greater than a 5 percent likelihood that the association between cancer diagnosis and depression may have occurred by chance. In contrast, the increase in cancer deaths in the depressed men was not likely to have occurred by chance.

The scientists who conducted this study also asked the men how old they were, how much they smoked and drank, and whether family members had been diagnosed with cancer. You might suspect that the men who were depressed were more likely to smoke or were older or had family members who died of cancer. The scientists did not find any of these results. Only the higher depressive score corresponded to a higher cancer risk.

The Western Electric study suggests that men who are depressed have a cancer risk about 11 percent over 20 years versus 9 percent for the nondepressed. They have an increased risk of dying from cancer of 8 percent versus 5 percent over the same time interval. The increased risk from depression is small by comparison to the cancer risk from cigarette smoking or radiation exposure. It is substantial, however, when compared to the risk of early death from mild hypertension (mild high blood pressure) or mild hypercholesterolemia (mildly elevated cholesterol). These results support the contention of Mrs. Goodwin, who suspects that depression contributed to her husband's cancer, and the contention of Ellen White that bad mood may cause lethal diseases.

I have discussed the Western Electric Study because it is the study people quote most frequently as establishing a relationship between depression and cancer. If it were the





only scientific study that had addressed the relationship between depression and cancer, then we would conclude that evidence supported that relationship. But the Western Electric Study is not the only study to have addressed the issue, and it is not the best. The weakness of the Western Electric Study is that there were only a few patients who were depressed and had cancer. While the initial group of 2,020 men was large, only 389 men were clearly depressive and only 31 of these died of cancer. For comparison, 20 men died of cancer in the group of 382 men who were least depressed. A difference of 11 deaths between the highest risk and lowest risk groups is a small enough difference that a little bit of good luck in one group or a little bit of bad luck in the other—rather than depression or optimism—may account for the difference.

In a larger study, 9,000 patients with abnormal mood, including many with depression, were compared with 9,000 people with normal mood.<sup>4</sup> Over a period of 25 years, the risk of cancer was the same in both groups. In yet another study, 9,727 people filled out questionnaires designed to see if they were depressed, and the frequency of cancer was evaluated 10 to 15 years later.<sup>5</sup> The risk of cancer was the same among the people who had depressive symptoms and those who did not. The combined weight of these studies has led most doctors to conclude that the Western Electric Study showed an association between depression and cancer because of chance, not because of a real association. Editors in most influential medical journals have taken that position. Marcia Angell, of the *New England Journal of Medicine* concluded, “. . . the combined evidence . . . is clearly not consistent with a strong relationship between depressive symptoms and cancer . . .”<sup>6</sup> These studies do not entirely exclude a relationship between cancer and depression, but for the average person they

suggest that this relationship is not worth worrying about. Far better to use one's energy to avoid cigarettes and violence, exercise regularly, and eat lean foods.

## Good Humor Doesn't Cure Cancer

Mrs. Goodwin believes that her husband, who has cancer, could live longer by thinking positively, that he could fight the cancer if he only tried. Norman Cousins popularized this approach and gave it respectability. Outside of his dramatic and well-told personal experiences, however, he provided little evidence that thoughts and mood have any effect on the outcome of illness.

Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania Cancer Center conducted a clinical study to determine whether optimistic cancer patients lived longer or had a lower risk of cancer recurrence than pessimistic or depressed patients.<sup>7</sup> Two hundred and two patients whose cancer could not be cured by surgery agreed to complete a questionnaire evaluating their mood and attitude. The researchers divided the patients into three groups based upon their mood scores. We could call the groups the optimists, the realists, and the pessimists. Each patient received the best available therapy for his or her cancer. After five years, all three groups of patients had done equally well—or equally poorly (see Figure 3). Approximately 80 percent of the patients from all three groups had died. The optimists did not live any longer, on average, than the realists or the pessimists.

Another 155 patients who had recently had cancer successfully removed were asked to fill out the questionnaires. These patients had either melanoma, a skin cancer, or breast cancer. All of the patients had a 15 to 50 percent risk that the cancer would return elsewhere in their body. The researchers wanted to know if the effect of attitude might

be more pronounced in patients who were not as severely ill. Perhaps an optimal immune system would be able to eradicate a microscopic residual cancer even if it was no match for a large cancer which was inoperable. In this group of patients, the researchers monitored how many of the patients had cancer recurrences. Similar results were obtained as with the other study. The recurrence of cancer was just as common with the optimists as with the pessimists. Actually, the middle group—the realists—fared slightly worse than the optimists or the pessimists, but the difference was not statistically significant.

The results of this study contradict the belief of Mrs. Goodwin, Norman Cousins, Stephen Jay Gould, and my mother. The length of time a patient survived with cancer was not influenced by his or her attitude. Hopefulness, well-adjustedness, and strong social ties did not influence survival. The length of time a patient lived was influenced by age, the type and location of cancer, and prior health.

## Benefits Are Hard to Prove

When I started to read medical reports in preparation for this essay, I was aware of the Western Electrical Study, which suggested that depression may cause cancer, and the British cold study, which suggested that stress influences susceptibility to colds. Because of these studies, I suspected I would find evidence that attitude influences susceptibility to disease. In contrast, the best studies that I have been able to find suggest that the effect of attitude is not detectable. While emotional stress affected susceptibility to colds, attitude did not. That is, stressful events such as the loss of a loved one or the loss of a job increased the risk of catching a cold—whether or not the person felt sad or that life was out of his or her control.

Likewise, although the Western Electric

Company showed an association between depression and death from cancer, two larger studies did not. Furthermore, a favored idea of Norman Cousins and other mind-over-body advocates—that cancer may be held at bay by sustained laughter or by cerebral command of battles between lymphocytes and cancer cells—was not supported by these studies. To be fair to the mind-over-body advocates, I admit that the approach of patients being instructed to imagine their immune cells attacking cancer cells was not tested in these studies. Even so, the advocates of this type of approach claim that the benefits are indirect—they claim that the person gains a sense of control and hope, and it is these feelings that lead to remission from cancer or prolonged life. Nobody actually believes that the patients have cerebral control over specific lymphocyte attacks. The results from the Philadelphia cancer survival study did not give even a hint that these feelings of hope or control prolong survival from cancer.

You may now have the impression that I am claiming the mind has no effect on health. Not true. The short-term effect of mood upon some diseases has been dramatically demonstrated. For example, people with atherosclerosis of coronary arteries can have an immediate narrowing of those arteries in response to fear. In other people, asthma attacks predictably follow anxiety or anger. And I have not approached the claims that personality type influences health. Certainly you have heard something of the claim that “type A” personality causes coronary heart disease, and possibly of the Yale Medical School study suggesting that good health is associated with a personality type.

Nor am I ready to say that the mind has no effect in dealing with cancer. In two recent studies, cancer patients who had been randomly selected to participate in support groups lived longer than the patients who were not

selected. Although the reason for the improved survival was uncertain, it is hard to imagine that a support group could affect survival through a pathway other than the mind. In these studies, it did not appear that participation in a support group caused a change in attitude; attitude questionnaires did not indicate such a change. I believe that it is still possible that some types of connectedness with people or some state of the mind that scientists have not learned to measure affects resistance to cancer.

And what are we to do with the claim of Solomon that "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine"? If I am sick with pneumonia I will take penicillin, and if I develop diabetes I will take insulin, without regard to my mood. If, however, I develop pancreatic cancer that cannot be removed by a surgeon, I will know that chemotherapy and radiation therapy are not likely to be more effective than a placebo. I just might order videotapes with funny movies, preferring the merry heart to the chemotherapy that may do so little to improve my life.

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# The Sacredness of Laughter

Laughter expresses our enjoyment of creation, acknowledges the paradoxes of humanity, and celebrates the joy of redemption.

by Roy Branson

**I**N LAUGHTER WE HEAR THE SOUNDS OF THE sacred. Laughter responds to the pleasure of creation, recognizes the complexities of the human condition, and experiences the exultation of redemption. At the heart of our merriment, we discover the holy.

## At Play In the Fields of the Lord

**T**he laughter of play is not a polite titter here and there, but the robust, spontaneous laughter that tumbles out when we touch the colors, shapes, and textures of God's world. It is the laughter of pleasure—from rolling down grassy hillsides, riding ocean waves to shore, feeling directly, on our fingertips, the softness and swellings of spring. The laughter of play responds to the tentative greens, indigos, and brash yellows of springtime. In our delight with creation and its God, how can we not

break out new Easter outfits and flock to church to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord—the one who so dramatically restored his creation?

Gerard Manley Hopkins gathered creation into himself and exclaimed:

*Nothing is so beautiful as Spring—  
When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and  
lush;  
Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush  
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and  
wring  
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;  
The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush  
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush  
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their  
fling.*

*What is all this juice and all this joy?  
A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning  
In Eden garden. . . .<sup>1</sup>*

No wonder at Creation “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38:7, KJV). No wonder Isaiah exults, “You shall go out in joy, and be led

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back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands!" (Isaiah 55:12, NRSV).

The laughter of play comes in the Eden of our lives. Psychologists like Piaget say that children begin to laugh at about four months of age, when they are tickled, and at about eight months in response to others playing peek-a-boo.<sup>2</sup> Play is a direct, spontaneous response to the world, its shapes and colors, its movement and variety—Hopkins' "all things counter, original, spare, strange."<sup>3</sup> Play is not even games or sport, with their time-honored, formal structures, their rules and errors, winners and losers. Play is fun, revelry, even frivolity.

The laughter of play wells up from immediate sensations, carefree movement, a frolicking through God's universe; an essentially light-headed enjoyment of pleasures yearning to be indulged. The laughter of play is the music of carefree community: "The sound of mirth and the sound of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride" (Jeremiah 25:10, NRSV); "the sound of harpists and minstrels and of flutists and trumpeters" (Revelation 18:22, NRSV). Play is sensuality without tears; a delight in flexing muscles, in developing curves. It is "the voice of my beloved! . . . like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of spices!" (Song of Solomon 2:8; 8:14, NRSV). Play, as the theologian Hugo Rahner puts it, is the body moving "to the effortless measures of a heavenly dance."<sup>4</sup>

The laughter of play echoes God's litany of pleasure echoing through the days of Creation: "And God saw that it was good." Our laughter reverberates to God's delight in his creatures: the mountain goats, the deer, the wild ass and ox, the ostrich, the horse. "Its majestic snorting is terrible. It paws violently, exults mightily . . . It swallows the ground; it cannot stand still at the sound of the trumpet.

When the trumpet sounds, it says, 'Aha!'" (Job 39:20-25, NRSV). In the uncomplicated, direct enjoyment of one another and of the world, we emulate our Creator. To chortle at the sheer abundance of God's creation is an act of worship.

## Bring In the Clowns

At about one year of age a child begins to laugh at the unusual, inappropriate behavior of adults making funny faces or walking on all fours. At two, children laugh at incongruities and try creating their own juxtapositions.<sup>5</sup> Increasingly, comedy is different from play. Play is full of immediate sense impressions, carefree movement, full-bodied pleasures. Comedy is more studied. Its pleasures, especially those of wit, erupt in the mind more than the senses. Play loses itself in the moment; comedy remains one step removed.

The laughter of comedy is more nervous, sharper than the laughter of play. Comedy results from seeing unexpected connections, from putting two dissimilar situations together—a candidate for President of the greatest nation on earth, while addressing a campaign rally, manages to fall off a platform. Indeed, our ability to laugh at the incongruity of two aspects of reality, and realize that we are distinguishable from both, is not only central to comedy, but also to humanity. By seeing comic juxtapositions, we transcend our environment and become conscious of ourselves. In the laughter of comedy, we exult in the freedom of being human.

Within comedy, humans can use their freedom to create comparisons through puns. According to Stenson, puns can be sacramental. "In puns, several different lines of thought go through the same sign at the same time, and if one of those lines of thought is religious in some heightened sense, then that pun . . . will

be sacramental.”<sup>6</sup>

The laughter of comedy also responds to the more dramatic comparisons of wit. Rather than emphasizing parallel tracks—as in a pun—wit spotlights the single point of convergence of two dissimilarities. With wit, laughter explodes from the crash of incongruities—for example, the clash of the human and divine in the quick Yiddish response to predictions of good fortune: “From your lips to God’s ear.” To encounter a witticism, says Stenson, is to careen “into a tangle of logical falsity or psychologically self-defeating action, our train of thought thrown off the tracks of rational discourse and reasonable expectancy. . . . Having struck a witticism we can only laugh in shocked surprise.”<sup>7</sup>

While laughter celebrates the human freedom and creativity expressed in comedy, laughter also recognizes comedy’s underscoring of human limitation—the gap between what is expected and what arrives, between human pretense and reality, between what ought to be and what is. The laughter of comedy exposes humanity for the fools and sinners we really are. Comedy’s full bag of jest, prank, joke, burlesque, and parody snickers when the powerful and prestigious person, forgetting the boundaries, falls flat on his face. Winston Churchill, himself stumbling in the election following Britain’s greatest victory in history, commented on the man who had replaced him as Prime Minister of Britain: “The other day an empty limousine drove up to the curb, and Clement Atlee stepped out.”

One of my uncles was an evangelist who had preached hundreds and hundreds of sermons. He made a point of talking rapidly and fluently, almost without pause. However, one night he was brought up short. As he himself told it, he was giving a sermon on the Law and how it had not been done away with entirely. Reaching for the familiar text from the Sermon on the Mount, he started quoting confidently from memory, “For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass,” only in amazement to hear himself say, “one tot or one jittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” He was

so dumfounded he went right on talking and found an appropriate place to try quoting the passage again, only to hear—in horror—his voice saying, “one jit nor tottle shall pass . . .” In his many tellings of this story on himself he never attempted a recitation of the text from memory.

Reminders of the distance between human ambitions and capabilities

run throughout the Bible. Isaiah employs satire to elicit the kind of comic laughter that dissolves pomposity. A hungry carpenter, he says, selects an oak or a cedar. “Half of it he burns in the fire; over this half he roasts meat, eats it and is satisfied. He also warms himself and says, ‘Ah, I am warm, I can feel the fire.’ The rest of it he makes into a god, his idol.” The carpenter “stretches a line, marks it out with a stylus, fashions it with planes, and marks it with a compass; he makes it in human form, with human beauty, to be set up in a shrine.” Then the carpenter “bows down to it and worships it; he prays to it and says, ‘Save me, for you are my God!’” (Isaiah 44:13-19,

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*Joy cannot be scheduled; it does not come when summoned. Joy arrives of its own accord. Joy is the subjective side of grace. Joy overflows. It is a fountain, not a pool of bliss; not a still point, but a wave, rippling unceasingly outward toward others. Joy nurtures whatever it touches.*

NRSV).

Jonah, the reluctant prophet, cuts one of the most ridiculously comic figures in the Old Testament. Plucked off a runaway cruise, dragged back from attempted suicide, Jonah suddenly decides to be the biggest prophet of them all. He will single-handedly wipe out the mightiest nation in the world, Israel's bitterest foe—Assyria. Elijah's destruction of the prophets of Baal will be a minor skirmish in comparison. Only, of course, before he can even finish his prophet's full denunciation, the people repent—and God, to Jonah's horror, forgives them.

Sulking out of the city, Jonah nags at God: I didn't want to come in the first place because I knew you would do something like this. "I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil" (Jonah 4:2, KJV). At which point this would-be warrior of the faith petulantly insists that he simply wants to die—that's all—it's better than living. The next moment, Jonah becomes rabidly attached to the gourd. When it withers, he again insists in a faint, "it is better for me to die than to live" (vs. 3).

God, in one of the most ironic speeches in the Old Testament, asks this caricature of a

prophet—who a little while before had been ready to conquer a city—"Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?" And Jonah, shriveling in stature before our eyes, insists: "I do well to be angry, even unto death" (Jonah 4:9, 10, KJV).

A man has tried to transcend his limits as a human, and the incongruity of his aspirations and God's power shrinks Jonah to comic proportions. The author of the Book of Jonah is simultaneously inviting Israel to laugh at its condescending and punitive attitudes toward non-Israelites—even Yahweh, for pity's sake, can't squeeze within Israel's prejudices!

In the laughter of comedy, the poets and prophets of Israel created a form of dissent. Paul, steeped in the Hebrew tradition, called on his followers in Corinth to also be "fools for Christ" (1 Corinthians 4:10, KJV), the butt of derision in their community, dissenters from the prevailing wisdom. Of course, Paul, like the fool in the medieval European court celebrated by Shakespeare, believed that the joke was really on the powerful and disdainful. The skeptical establishment were really those pitiful folk who could never quite grasp what was so funny. Paul and all subsequent fools for Christ surrounded by the undeviatingly rational and solemn majority, laugh with the

## A Scandalously Brief Bibliography

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assurance that they are the ones who have “got it.” Because Christ is risen, the joke is on skepticism, tragedy, and death: “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” (1 Corinthians 15:55, 56, NRSV).

Some, of course, focus so fixedly on incongruity that the delicate balance of wit is overturned. The descant of comedy loses touch with the background harmony on which it depends. The sense of what is human begins to dissolve, fall apart. Satire and irony plunge into the absurd. Laughter becomes a scream.

## Good News of Great Joy

We are rescued because, in the memorable words of C. S. Lewis, we are “surprised by joy.” The person of faith insists that the absurd condition of humankind has not drowned out all other sounds. In the midst of all the paradoxes and dullness, the dry ordinariness and recurring pain of human existence, we unexpectedly hear the laughter of joy.

The respected, admired, and somewhat feared teacher says without warning: “Mary, that was one of the finest math exams anyone’s written for me. Have you thought of going on in the field?” The son, whom you loved because he had tremendous talent, and basically wanted to serve his fellow human beings, but who dropped out, writes home from a distant job: “I’ve reapplied to take pre-law. I hope you don’t die of shock.” In the midst of prickly negotiations, antagonists are astonished that they have become friends. Or, in a worship service attended routinely for years, there is the sudden, sharp delight at realizing that Someone actually does hear the anthems, does hallow the prayers.

Joy comes to humans unexpectedly, as a gift. To experience joy is to be surprised by the sacred. It is to join those in Luke astonished to the point of fear by Christ’s arrival—Zechariah,

Mary, Elizabeth, the shepherds; awed to hear, “I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people” (Luke 2:10, KJV). It is to be with Mary Magdalene and the “other Mary,” stunned by an empty tomb and a Christ that “has been raised from the dead,” then running “with fear and great joy” to tell the disciples (Matthew 28:7, 8, NRSV).

Many cultures have different words for happiness and for joy. America has defined itself by its commitment to not only life and liberty, but also the pursuit of happiness. Whether happiness is measured in achieving respect and fame, influencing the course of history, or enjoying a comfortable leisure, Americans assume that happiness is something you can pursue. But joy is not so easily within our grasp. Joy cannot be scheduled; it does not come when summoned. Joy arrives of its own accord. Joy is the subjective side of grace.

Joy overflows. It is a fountain, not a pool of bliss; not a still point, but a wave, rippling unceasingly outward toward others. Joy nurtures whatever it touches. Israel, having returned from exile to Jerusalem, gathers before the water gate for four hours of worship. The people think the appropriate action is weeping and wailing. Vehemently, Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites call a halt. “[D]o not mourn or weep. . . . Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.’ . . . And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing” (Nehemiah 8:9-12, NRSV).

Those who experience the joy of holiness are propelled outward toward others. The rescued exiles, rejoicing in the joy of the Lord, shared portions with those for whom nothing is prepared. Those amazed at the news of Christ’s birth rush to share the “good news of

great joy for all the people” (Luke 2:10, NRSV). Mary, who “rejoices in God my Savior,” immediately “set out and went with haste” (Luke 1: 39, 46, NRSV) to tell her cousin Elizabeth. Anna, upon seeing the newborn Christ, “began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem” (Luke 2: 38, NRSV). The two Marys, astonished at the resurrection of Christ, “left the tomb quickly and with fear and great joy” (Matthew 28:8, NRSV), and ran to share their good news with all the others. In the overflowing experience of joy, the sacred redeems the world.

The laughter of joy does not denigrate the laughter of play or comedy. Quite the contrary. When the buoyant tranquility of joy lifts us, our pleasures become more playful, our humor less strained. The laughter of joy halows the simple experiences of life—pleasure in the tasty food of celebrations, delight in colors and form of clothes, the fun of playing sports with all the gusto at one’s command. For the person of joy, pleasures afford more laughter because we can afford to be less serious about them. The laughter of joy rescues play from frenzied obsessions. Far from denegrating our created bodies, joy allows us to enjoy our bodies more lightheartedly.

Joy likewise rescues comedy from moving through absurdity to bitterness and despair. The joyful person can afford to laugh at himself to heal his fellow participant in the human comedy: “Listen, Harry, let me tell you about the first time I asked the boss for a raise. . . .” Joy does not avoid looking at the evil comedy finds, but invites irony to glimpse a wider horizon. A sense of the sacred never destroys creation or humanity. Joy makes play more jubilant and humanity’s laughter more robust.

The relation of the Sabbath to all other days expands our understanding of the relationship of all laughter to the laughter of joy. Karl Barth, the greatest theologian of the 20th century, refers to the Sabbath as “a true day of joy,” and “the mystery of all the other days hastening toward it.”<sup>8</sup> Sabbath joy does not empty meaning from the laughter of other days. The Sabbath does not drain these other days of their gaiety. Rather, the laughter of the week is intensified by the culminating joy of the Sabbath. In the week-day laughter of play we enjoy the innocence of Eden. Day by day, in the laughter of comedy, we recognize the adventure and trials of the human pilgrimage. In the full-throated, exultant laughter of Sabbath joy we hear all our laughter resonate already to the sounds of the Holy City and a God of joy.

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# Responding to Pipim and Scriven

Steve Dailey, David Larson, Kenneth Noel, and Alden Thompson debate Adventist interpretations of Scripture.

## En Route to a “Plain Reading” of Scripture

by Alden Thompson

Both Samuel Koranteng-Pipim and I cherish Scripture, belong to the same church, love the same Lord, and long for his return. But Pipim is unhappy with my book *Inspiration, and Receiving the Word* tells why. Now, with hard copy in hand, we can look for common ground, my purpose in this brief critique.

For me his book is valuable in two major respects. First, the response to the book makes it a powerful diagnostic tool, revealing the arguments and rhetoric that find a home in Adventism. Second, it is a clarion call for the “plain reading” of Scripture, a great line, and one with which I wholeheartedly concur.<sup>1</sup>

But the “plain reading” of Scripture is precisely what divides us. What seems plain to me is a threat for him, a threat to the essential historicity of

key biblical events, to our convictions that God is involved in history and human lives (providence), and to Adventist beliefs and practices.

Surprisingly, Pipim almost never quarrels with my reading of the text. His concern seems to be that I too eagerly point out where one “plain reading” differs from another “plain reading” in the same Bible. He needs to harmonize. I do not—and let me explain why, lest I appear to be a nasty critic bent on destroying faith. My goal is to build faith, and to that end I believe there are powerful reasons for the “differences” in Scripture.

### Valuable Differences

**D**IFFERENT NEEDS. Speaking directly about the *differences* between Bible writers, Ellen White said: “The Lord gave His word in just the way He wanted it to come,” noting that

the differing perspectives “meet the necessities of varied minds.”<sup>2</sup> Adventists have always said that God chose a mediated form of revelation to preserve our freedom. Blasts and blazes were rare (e.g., Sinai, Damascus Road); instead, a wide variety of messengers matched the needs of a wide variety of people.

**CHANGING TIMES.** In the Old Testament, foreign wives were accepted, forbidden, accepted, then forbidden again—depending on the circumstances.<sup>3</sup> In the New Testament, food offered to idols was first forbidden (Acts 15) and then tolerated with a people-sensitive, Spirit-guided shrug (1 Corinthians 8). A “plain reading” of Scripture keeps such passages in place—to help monitor the differences between the likes of Brother Thompson and Brother Pipim.

**DEFINING THE LIMITS OF “HUMANITY” IN SCRIPTURE.** When several witnesses describe the same event, the Lord reveals “naturally” the limits of the human element in Scripture. If Bible writers can be seen to be using

"ordinary speech," the "plain reading" of Scripture is not at risk. Major events stand clear and firm, but we allow for what Edwin Thiele, the respected Adventist chronologist, called "certain slight imperfections due to the fallacies of human hands."<sup>4</sup>

Now the model that allows me to see such differences and thus to revel in the "plain reading" of Scripture, is suggested by Ellen White when she shifts the emphasis from the inspired word to the inspired person. ("It is not the words . . . that are inspired, but the men that were inspired"<sup>5</sup>). Every word still remains crucial and unchanged ("No man can improve the Bible by suggesting what the Lord meant to say or ought to have said"<sup>6</sup>). But recognizing that the Spirit inspired people, instead of words, allows us to admit to the gap between the human words and God himself ("God and heaven alone are infallible."<sup>7</sup>) Ellen White herself said that the Lord speaks in "imperfect" speech because of our "degenerate senses" and "dull, earthly perception." Yet the Bible is still "perfect" in its "simplicity"—an adapted perfection, not an absolute one, for "infinite ideas cannot be perfectly embodied in finite vehicles of thought."<sup>8</sup>

And Scripture illustrates how a flawed humanity can actually enhance the power of the message. In 1 Corinthians 1:10 to 17, for example, Paul desperately wants to say that he hadn't baptized anyone so that no one could claim baptism in Paul's name—and Paul does stake his claim. But then his memory improves, and before he is through, he admits to baptizing Crispus, Gaius, the household of Stephanas, "and beyond that I do not know whether I baptized anyone else" (vs. 17, NRSV). His message is clear—and his stumbling endears him to us as a real human being on fire for God.

But those observations and implications are not helpful for Pipim, for his moral universe is dependent on absolutely correct information, a model reinforced in this century by oft-repeated fundamentalist rhetoric: "God's absolute test of Scripture is its accuracy." And "If God had gotten the names mixed up we should throw away our Bible."<sup>9</sup> That's the rhetoric we're up against.

## Significant Concessions

But Pipim's armor is not without cracks, hints that the Lord may yet lead us onto common ground. I cite three examples where Pipim departs significantly from his all-or-nothing stance.

THE HOW OF INSPIRATION. In a helpful corrective to the popular view that all Scripture came by way of vision, Pipim differentiates three basic methods by which inspiration operates: "visions and dreams," "reflection on nature and human experience," and "historical research," adding that the Bible writers used "sources" in their research.<sup>10</sup> That seems to legitimate "source criticism"—according to his mentor, the late Gerhard Hasel,<sup>11</sup> one of the "forbidden" methods linked with the so-called historical-critical method.

TRANSLATIONS. Pipim's remarkably broad position on translations allows the Spirit to use the New World Translation (Jehovah's Witnesses) and the Clear Word (Jack Blanco).<sup>12</sup> At mid-century, conservatives loved lower (text) criticism (transmission and translation of biblical text) and despised higher criticism (authorship, literary analysis, and historicity). But then conservatives discovered that text criticism is a powder keg—and the power to translate is the power to interpret and to change. The current "King James only" movement

reflects that new deep-seated conservatism.<sup>13</sup> Had Pipim been consistent with his own statement on translations, the tone and content of his book would have been quite different.

CASEBOOK VS. CODEBOOK. Although rejecting my "casebook" approach to Scripture, Pipim adopts a remarkably similar stance when interpreting Proverbs 26:4 and 5 ("Answer not a fool . . . /Answer a fool . . ."): "Sometimes your answer to a fool can make you look like a fool; at other times, your answer will help him; therefore be careful how you answer a fool."<sup>14</sup> Amen. That's a casebook approach. Maybe common ground is not far away.

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1. Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Berean Books, 1996), pp. 31-35. The section entitled, "The Historic Adventist Approach: Plain Reading of Scripture" (pp. 31-33), is followed by one entitled "The Contemporary Liberal Approach: The Historical-Critical Method" (pp. 33-35).

2. Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1958), Book 1, pp. 21, 22.

3. Deuteronomy 7:3 forbids marriage with non-Israelite inhabitants of Canaan, though Moses had a non-Israelite Cushite wife (Numbers 12). Deuteronomy 23:3-6 prohibits ties with Moabites and Ammonites "to the tenth generation." Yet Ruth was a Moabite (Ruth 1:4) and Rehoboam's mother was Naamah the Ammonite (I Kings 14:21), both in the royal lineage from which Jesus was born. At the time of Ezra-Nehemiah (ca. 450 B.C.), foreign wives were dismissed on the basis of Mosaic legislation (Ezra 10, Nehemiah 13).

4. Both Gerhard Hasel (*Understanding the Living Word of God*, [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1980], pp. 57, 58) and Pipim (pp. 316-319) cite Edwin Thiele (*Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* [Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1951]) as a faithful Adventist scholar who refused to admit "error" in Scripture. But when Thiele's second edition noted an "error" in connection with Hezekiah, Gleason Archer reviewed the book in *Christianity Today* (April 15, 1966), accusing Thiele of

abandoning inerrancy and leaving Christians "with all the grave consequences ensuing from a partially erroneous Bible." Thiele replied: "On the one hand are those who feel that the chronological data of Kings cannot possibly be as accurate as my work has shown them to be, and on the other hand are the few who regard as altogether inerrant a volume in which I admit certain slight imperfections due to the fallacies of human hands" (*Christianity Today*, June 10, 1966). In short, those who deny the supernatural or those who claim inerrancy have difficulty with the "plain reading" of Scripture.

5. *Selected Messages*, Book 1, p. 21.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

7. —, *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 37.

8. *Selected Messages*, Book 1, p. 22.

9. The quotes are from John MacArthur, *Is the Bible Reliable?* (pp. 121, 128), a book now available only on tape (Grace to You, P.O. Box 4000, Panorama City, CA 91412). A popular southern California dispensational fundamentalist, MacArthur is a not-infrequent visitor in Pipim's footnotes.

10. Pipim, pp. 48, 49.

11. Hasel's all-or-nothing position comes in a quote from Ernst Troeltsch,

the acknowledged "father" of the historical-critical method: "The theologian or exegete must not get the impression that he can safely utilize certain parts of the historical-critical method in an eclectic manner, because there is no stopping point: 'Whoever lends it a finger must give it a hand'" (Hasel, p. 26). Hasel's catalog of (forbidden) methods includes source criticism and redaction criticism (Hasel, p. 28).

12. Pipim, pp. 234, 235.

13. See, for example, G. A. Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions* (Munro Falls, Ohio: AV Publications, 1993). A subtitle on the front cover announces "The New Case Against the NIV, NASB, NKJV, NRSV, NAB, REB, RSV, CEV, TEV, GNE, Living, Phillips, New Jerusalem, and New Century." For a competent response from an evangelical perspective, see James K. White, *The King James-Only Controversy* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1995).

14. Pipim, p. 283.

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## Shrinking the Carpenter's Toolbox

by Steve Dailly

I believe that God has a big toolbox; I believe that his kingdom is furthered by diversity. The kingdom of God is richer for our various denominations; it is richer for the diversity that exists in our various Adventist colleges and universities; it is richer for the ethnic diversity that we find on our campus; and it is richer for the diversity of views that exist between the "liberal left" and the "reactionary right"—providing that these differences can be expressed in a spirit of tolerance and honesty.

The problem is that right-wing theology by its very nature tends to be dogmatic, monolithic, and intolerant. I affirm Pipim's right to express his views, but I also think he

must be held accountable where his words misrepresent what others have said, including what I said in my book *Adventism for a New Generation*.

### Noble Bereans or Negative Brethren?

The primary point that Pipim keeps coming back to in his book is that there is a crisis over the Word in Adventism that has been generated by "contemporary liberal approaches to the Bible" in our ranks, and the application of higher criticism and the "historical-critical method" of interpretation to Scripture and the writings of Ellen White.

Unlike the Bereans, whom Paul praised for being receptive to his

new message—and with whom Pipim identifies—*Receiving the Word* is a book of labels and accusations that seems to cleverly misrepresent people much better than it describes their actual views. Since Pipim dedicated an entire chapter to my book, *Adventism for a New Generation*, under the generous heading "Departing From the Word," I will hold him accountable for the personal misrepresentations that I found. I will briefly respond to the charges and accusations that he makes.

1. *He charges that I read Scripture through a "higher-critical lens" that results, not in perception, but in "blindness and deception" (pp. 181).* This is a remarkable charge, given that I have rejected the higher-critical approach to Scripture just as consistently as a literalistic, legalistic approach. In all three of my books I advocate a Christ-centered approach to the Bible that fully acknowledges that all Scripture is inspired. At the same time, I hold that God's highest revelation has been given through Christ, and that all of Scripture must be studied, understood, and interpreted ultimately through the words and acts of Jesus (which I take to be fully authentic as they stand in Scripture).

2. *In several places he charges that I reject a "Bible-based lifestyle" (pp. 183f).* By this he means that I do not share his strong emphasis on externals such as jewelry, dress, diet, etc., and argues from one quote taken out of context that my "position is not based on Scripture, but on listening to young people and my own experience." Such a conclusion must be based on either deliberate distortion or scholarly incompetence, for if he read my book he would have noted that I repeatedly emphasize that our standards must be based on biblical principles (pp. 20, 270, etc.), and not just traditions or subcultural norms.

3. *He charges that I advocate a "New morality on premarital sex and*

*masturbation*" (p. 184). Again, Pipim shows an expertise for misrepresentation and taking passages out of their proper context. Anyone reading his book would get the impression that I encourage or advocate premarital sex and masturbation, when in reality my book encourages neither of these, and takes a very conservative and balanced position with regard to both.

4. *Pipim charges that "week after week each Sabbath" I "led students" in our Adventist university to "clean the streets, paint houses and lay foundations"* (p. 193). Here is another example of Pipim totally misrepresenting my views. Even the most superficial reading of the pages he quotes in my book to support this statement prove it to be nothing but a lie. In the 17 years I have served as a campus chaplain we have taken students out on Sabbath afternoon to help with emergency clean-up after floods, earthquakes, or riots five or six times, and on rare occasions we have helped a handicapped person or widow with his or her house or yard in a non-emergency context. These latter forms of service have never occurred more than once in a year and have been exceptional, rewarding, and greatly appreciated. Yet Pipim states, with nothing to back it up, that we have become the city's Saturday street cleaning and construction crew on a weekly basis.

There are many other examples I could give of his gross misrepresentations. When I realized how flagrantly he distorted my views in his book, I could only assume that his attacks on so many other schol-

ars and church leaders were equally inaccurate and misinformed. If this is the kind of research and scholarship that we are to expect from our Andrews University doctoral students, then I think it is safe to say that the future of our church is in jeopardy.

## A Tare-able Parable

As I read through the pages of Pipim's book, I was struck by how he defines Adventism and the kingdom of God so narrowly that none but his own theological clones may enter in. This is always the case with those who condemn and seek to remove their fellow believers in Christ in the name of theological purity. Which is why Jesus told a very important parable (ignored by Pipim in his book) that must seem terrible to those committed to cleansing the church of theological diversity.

The message couldn't be any clearer. A man (Jesus) sowed his field with good seed, and at night his enemy (the devil) came and planted weeds or tares in the same field. When the sabotage became apparent his servants (disciples or church members) asked, "Shall we pull up the weeds?" The Master's answer was a very clear: "... No. For in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them" (Matthew 13:29, NRSV). Yet Pipim, who prides himself in living by the Word, has chosen to become a full-fledged "Theological Orkin Man." His mission, to exterminate every heretical tare or pest, ironically leads him to repeatedly violate Jesus' clear command to let the wheat and the tares grow together.

## The Carpenter Has A Big Toolbox

Jesus modeled and taught inclusivity. Jesus continually marveled at the faith he found among

the Gentiles, Samaritans, tax collectors (Zaccheus), and prostitutes (Mary). He even singled out a Roman centurion as having greater faith than anything he had ever seen in all of Israel (Matthew 8:10). In response to Israel's strong ethnocentricity, Jesus said, "I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:11, 12, KJV).

Yet Pipim insists that an openness to God's people in other movements (spiritual ecumenicity), and criticism of Adventism's exclusive claim to being the "Remnant Church," is "revisionism" and part of the liberal agenda leading church members down a path of deception. He fails to address any of the many passages where Jesus and the Bible writers warn against exclusivity and isolationism.

Jesus was not just a carpenter by profession, he was a "spiritual carpenter" as well. Here was a man who generally devoted his life to building people up—especially the poor, widow, orphan, stranger, the disenfranchised, and the outcast. Here was a man who had a huge "spiritual toolbox," that allowed him to constantly reach out and touch all kinds of "untouchables" from the perspective of the religious establishment. *Receiving the Word* seems committed to shrinking the carpenter's toolbox to fit a "vision" of Adventism that is both self-centered and self-serving. The good news is that Jesus is still alive and his toolbox is bigger than ever before.

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# Please Define *Fundamentalism*

by Kenneth Noel

Charles Scriven's article, "Embracing the Spirit" (*Spectrum*, Vol. 26, No. 3), uses the word *fundamentalism* or its derivative at least 37 times, but nowhere does he define what fundamentalism is. He says it leads toward a flat reading of the Word and the use of "proof texts," and similar epithets, but he left me without an understanding of the error he was trying to expose in Samuel Koranteng-Pipim's book.

*Fundamentalism* is such a nebulous term that, unless a person defines what he means by it, it is impossible for the one so accused to defend himself. One might as well try to fight against fog. It is everywhere and nowhere.

I grew up when *liberalism* was a bad word. I related it to all the myriad errors that come from Sunday-keeping churches, strange ideas that come from errors in prophetic interpretation, and the "once saved, always saved" theology.

On the opposite end of the spectrum is an adherence to tried and

true ideas that forbids exploration of new ideas. I remember when Uriah Smith's exposition of Daniel and Revelation said that Turkey was the King of the North. Anyone who dared to dispute that was certain to be called a heretic by old ministers who had grown up with that interpretation.

Since when is it wrong to try to defend historic doctrines? Since when is it an error to espouse interpretations that differ in degree from the historic stand but do not do injustice to the basic overall doctrine?

I found Pipim's book to be thought-provoking and cogent. It allows a person to have a slightly different opinion without being called a heretic or a liberal. His chapter on "Wrestling With the Word" is especially interesting. It shows that the mine of truth is inexhaustible, and opposite to dogmatic adherence to set ideas of fundamentalism.

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*Kenneth Noel, a graduate of Walla Walla College, retired from a career as an engineer for the space program. He lives in Madison, Alabama.*

cism" in the first sense or accepts it in the second.

A second key note is that of the "historical-critical method." Many use this term as an umbrella notion to cover both "higher criticism" and "lower criticism" as defined above in the first alternative. Others also use it as an umbrella term, this time one that covers both types of inquiry as carried out in harmony with the presuppositions mentioned in the previous paragraph's second option.

I am aware of no Seventh-day Adventist theologian anywhere in the world who rejects the "historical-critical method" in the first sense or accepts it in the second.

A third key note is that of *sola scriptura*, what Pipim calls "the sole authority of the Bible." Like Martin Luther, with whom this expression is often associated, many hold that it means that Christians have a number of legitimate sources of truth, but that the one that is the most authoritative is Scripture. Others claim that it means that all of our religious beliefs and practices, without a single exception, must be derived wholly and solely from Scripture and absolutely nothing else.

I am aware of no Seventh-day Adventist theologian anywhere in the world who rejects *sola scriptura* in the first sense or accepts it in the second.

I feel confident that even Pipim, like all of his colleagues in Adventist theology of whom I have knowledge, accepts "higher criticism," the "historical-critical method," and *sola scriptura* in their first sense and rejects them in their second.

Surely this much hermeneutical harmony in a community of faith as culturally diverse as ours deserves at least three hosannas!

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## Three Hosannas for Harmony

by David R. Larson

Contrary to what I gathered from Samuel Koranteng-Pipim's response to Charles Scriven (*Spectrum*, Vol. 26, No. 3), it seems to me that the worldwide choir of Adventist theologians sings in hermeneutical harmony. To be sure, harmony is not uniformity, but neither is it dissonance, let alone cacophony. But even when this is granted, on at least three of the key notes that Pipim strikes, this harmony is so close as to amount to unison.

One of these notes is the matter of "higher criticism." Many hold that

this term refers to the study of a passage's *context* (the times, places, circumstances, and agendas of its author and audience) while "lower criticism" refers to the study of a passage's *text* (the quantity and quality of its primary manuscripts and their variations). Others use the term "higher criticism" in reference to conclusions about such matters that conform to presuppositions that variously are materialistic, mechanistic, deterministic, individualistic, or methodologically atheistic.

I am aware of no Seventh-day Adventist theologian anywhere in the world who rejects "higher criti-





## Loma Linda Associate Professor Pioneers Smoking Cessation Aid

by Jocelyn Anthony

**D**r. Linda H. Ferry, chief of preventive medicine at the Veteran Affairs Medical Center in Loma Linda, California, was the original investigator to study and develop a promising new aid to smoking cessation—bupropion (Zyban), a non-addictive, non-nicotine treatment. More than one million prescriptions for Zyban have been filled in its first eight months on the market. Early sales figures indicate that in 1998 alone, Zyban may be used by as many as three million people who are trying to stop smoking. Ferry became interested in helping people stop smoking as a graduate student at the Loma Linda School of Public Health. There, she learned that smoking is the single worst “modifiable cause of premature death” among Americans. Ferry’s research interest was stimulated by her work at the VA Medical Center. In July of 1996, researchers estimated “30 to 40 percent of veterans who come to VA Medical Centers are nicotine dependent, and more than 60 percent have smoked at some point in their lifetime. . . .” Many veterans, Ferry says, “do not know how to live life without nicotine.” Helping them to stop smoking “is the most important and cost effective preventive strategy that can be instituted in VA facilities.”

Ferry immediately went to work investigating current smoking cessation aids. Nicorette gum was considered the only effective agent when

Ferry started her research, but she was not satisfied to rely on a nicotine-based remedy. After reading an article that linked smoking and depression—a finding she would later confirm in her own research—Ferry turned her attention to nicotine’s effect on moods and emotions.

“People who smoke,” Ferry learned, “are more likely to be depressed,” and nicotine acts as an antidepressant, releasing chemical messengers dopamine and norepinephrine into the brain. What she looked for, then, was a drug that mimicked the positive and reinforcing effects of nicotine. She selected bupropion (a common antidepressant marketed under the trade name Wellbutrin) as a potential agent to reduce nicotine withdrawal symptoms.

In 1991, Ferry—working together with psychiatrist Al Masterson—recruited her mother, preventive medicine resident physicians, and a medical student as research assistants. Funding her work with her own money and a small grant from the Loma Linda University faculty research fund, Ferry conducted a study of 45 veterans. The results were startling: While not one of those who received placebos was able to quit, 55 percent of those who received bupropion stopped smoking after 12 weeks of treatment. Between 1992 and 1994, Ferry conducted longer-term studies with another 190 subjects, again with favorable results.

Meanwhile, Glaxo Wellcome, the

*Loma Linda develops a drug for smoking cessation, Adventists send a U.S. ambassador to Malta, and Walla Walla wrestles with attacks on its school of theology.*

company that manufactures bupropion, became interested in Ferry's research, conducted trials of its own, and provided Ferry with additional funding. In May of 1997, bupropion, repackaged under the label Zyban, became the first FDA-approved non-nicotine-based prescription drug shown to be effective in smoking cessation. It went on the market in July of 1997.

Some of the latest studies con-

ducted by Glaxo Wellcome show long-term success rates for Zyban of between 36 and 44 percent, and one large study reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* suggests that Zyban is more effective than treatments using the nicotine patch.

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## Adventist Businesswoman Named Ambassador to Malta

by Doris Vincent

Kathryn Proffitt-Haycock, an active Seventh-day Adventist church member from Phoenix, Arizona, was recently appointed by President Bill Clinton as ambassador to Malta, an island rich in history situated in the Mediterranean Sea.

Proffitt-Haycock's nomination came on September 29, 1997, followed by a November 6 confirmation and finally an official swearing that took place on December 17. As an experienced business woman, she has held many posts, including president of Call America, a long-distance telephone company she founded in 1982. She has also served as director of ICG Communications, and as vice chair of the Competitive Telecommunications Association, an organization that represents telecommunications providers with annual revenues totaling just under \$5 billion.

Selected as a result of her strong business background and experience, Proffitt-Haycock, a onetime dental hygienist, also cofounded the East Valley Dental Hygiene Society in Phoenix, and served as its president. Proffitt-Haycock will be expected to articulate the complex interests—economic included—of the United States to the Maltese

government.

Prior to her appointment, Proffitt-Haycock worked closely with the U.S. government. As a representa-

tive of the telecommunications field, she attended a 1994 meeting of telecommunications executives gathered to discuss telephone regulations with Vice President Al Gore present. In May of 1996 she was a United States representative at the Information Society and Development Conference in South Africa. She was also a U.S. delegate at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Conference in Paris.

Proffitt-Haycock is heavily involved in the Phoenix Camelback Seventh-day Adventist Church. A mother of four, she volunteers her time to youth ministries and to her church's finance committee. She has also held memberships on several committees of the Arizona Conference.

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*Doris Vincent is a junior communication major at Columbia Union College.*

## Walla Walla College Board Accepts Commission's Report

In a specially called meeting in Portland, Ore., on December 16, 1997, the Walla Walla College Board of Trustees received and voted to accept the final report and recommendations from the Walla Walla College Commission studying concerns raised by constituents regarding the School of Theology and the spiritual training of students on the Walla Walla College campus.

During the meeting, the board unanimously approved the following motion:

"To accept the Final Report of the Commission on the Walla Walla College School of Theology as a working document; to refer it to the Walla Walla College administration for response as the first step in the process of its implementation, and to request the college administration to present its response to the Walla Walla Col-

lege Board on March 2, 1998."

In its 37-page report, the commission called not only for a timely resolution of issues and concerns, but also for active efforts to restore trust through direct and persistent dialogue. It also stated clearly that its report was intended to "define the issues that have impacted the campus and the field, and provide recommendations to the board that will both alleviate the present tensions and secure a strong future for the School of Theology in serving the needs of the student body as part of the larger constituency of the Northwest."

The commission's report contained the following recommendations and counsel:

1. That the Walla Walla College Board should recognize that the stated task of higher education is

indistinct in the minds of the constituency, and that the college has grown beyond its original charter to the point that its purpose is indistinct. It is clear that the majority of graduates do not work in the employment of the church.

2. That deliberate efforts be made to clarify and update the school charter and bring all operations into harmony with it.

3. That a refined and updated mission and purpose of Walla Walla College be clearly communicated to the constituency.

4. That the theology curriculum as expressed in the bulletin be reviewed and updated to contain more detailed information regarding class content and objectives to allow students to have a better understanding of what to expect from each class.

5. That a process be developed that ensures that students are happy with their choice of classes and that they are appropriately matched with the content and objectives of the class they plan to attend.

6. That the mentoring system that is in place be encouraged and further developed. This should include dialogue between religion faculty and non-religion faculty advisors who will be assisting non-theology majors in their selection of religion course requirements.

7. That the Walla Walla College Board oversee clarification and re-statement of its expectations of the religion department in relation to:

a. The purpose for its existence in relation to the needs and expectations of the North Pacific Union Conference constituency, particularly with respect to those who will enter the teaching and gospel ministries of the church;

b. The authority and instructional treatment of Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy;

c. The curriculum, and how it should intentionally facilitate the instruction and affirmation of the

fundamental beliefs and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

FACILITATION: That the faculty and administrators both nurture a process whereby progress toward the accomplishment of items 7. a-c can be evaluated. One idea discussed by the commission was for the board to set up a representative task force under the guidance of the board chair and college president, perhaps consisting of one representative from the religion department, with the other members coming from the board members; two lay persons; a church pastor; and three administrators, one representing the college, one from the union conference, and the other a local conference. The chairperson shall be one of the seven-member task force who shall be named by the college president and board chair.

8. That the "liberal" image of the Walla Walla College religion department be adjusted to better reflect the liberal-conservative continuum.

a. That the religion faculty engage in a self-study to determine why this image has been earned;

b. That the religion faculty critique their mission statement with a view to aligning themselves very positively as defenders of the faith and mission of Adventism, and proposing how this will be undertaken in the future;

c. That the department chair be rotated on a biennial basis.

9. The board oversee a deliberate adjustment to the balance of the department to reflect better the ideological spectrum of the constituency. Within an appropriate period of time, the department should be at a point where the liberal-conservative continuum is better reflected. The changes needed may include adjustments in curriculum, in focus, and potentially, in personnel.

FACILITATION: That when filling any future vacancies in the department, deliberate care be exercised to achieve a balance in Ad-

ventist theological perspectives. An expanded search committee will need to be formed to implement this objective. The members of this committee will be appointed jointly by the college president and the board chair, to include the chair of the college personnel committee, serving as chair; the vice president for academic administration; the chair of the theology department; a pastor and a lay person who both are members of the board; a conference president; union administrator; and union ministerial association secretary.

10. That there be a joint effort between Walla Walla College and church administration toward using the resources in the theology department in a more widespread fashion to educate the constituency at large with a view toward eliminating inconsistencies in the way we support our beliefs. And that the whole Adventist educational structure be encouraged to participate in a progressive building-block education enterprise that develops a clear understanding of Seventh-day Adventist history and doctrine.

11. That administrators intentionally help mitigate the dichotomy that now exists between the Adventist Theological Society and the Adventist Society for Religious Studies to ameliorate growing tensions between the two entities.

12. That a procedure be formalized to allow a mutual review of significant concerns and/or corrective actions to provide an understanding of the progress made and to enhance communications.

**C**OUNSEL: The commission urges those embroiled in this controversy in the strongest possible terms to set aside feelings of animosity, temptations to pass on unsubstantiated stories, and abuse of influence, to engage in persistent humble dialog in pursuit of resolution.

That those individuals involved in propagating erroneous reports be admonished to take action toward making amends.

That administrators at all levels encourage the principles of Matthew 18 to be fully utilized, i.e., common commitment to believe nothing until parties involved dialogue with each other.

The commission, made up of nine board members, was appointed during the May 5, 1997, Walla Walla College board meeting on the request of Jere Patzer, chair of the board, and W. G. Nelson, president of Walla Walla

College. The group met 10 times during its evaluation, from June through December of 1997. Commission members interviewed faculty and staff of the college, reviewed letters of concern and commendation and heard comments from church members in their efforts to properly identify the central issues.

Commission members were Ron Anderson, Alf Birch, Wilfred Geschke, Jon Kattenhorn, Stephen McPherson, Esther Littlejohn, Bryce Pascoe, Carlyle Raymond, and Dave Thomas. Bryce Pascoe served as facilitator to handle logistical and organizational concerns, while

David Thomas acted as the commission's secretary. Chairmanship was shared by various commission members.

A complete text of the commission's Final Report, may also be requested in writing from either the Office of College Relations, Walla Walla College, 204 South College Avenue, College Place, WA 99324 or North Pacific Union Conference Communication Department, P.O. Box 16670, Portland, OR 97292.

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*Adapted from the summary release posted on the Walla Walla College Web page at (<http://www.wwc.edu>). Text of the full report is also available there.*



## Ellen White Was Right: "Increasing Light Is to Shine Upon Us"

*Desmond Ford comments on Scriven, et al; a retired General Conference official says the Total Commitment statement is a mistake; and theologians praise the Wesleyan connection to Adventism.*

For obvious reasons, I read the September issue (*Spectrum*, Vol. 26, No. 3) with special interest. The articles by Rosemary Watts, Terrie Aamodt, Charles Scriven, and Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, the letters by Jere Patzer and David Thomas, and even the last six lines of the article by Patricia Johnston are exceedingly relevant for all who are aware of the real nature of the theological controversy within Adventism. It can be simply stated: There is a great gulf fixed between most administrators and most theologians. As one scholar remarked at Glacier View, "How do you tell administrators in a few days what it took you decades to learn?"

The issue is not whether Adventism has a special place in the plan of God. It is rather whether we have the same spirit as the one who wrote, "Most decided changes will have to be made in regard to ideas which some have accepted as without a flaw"; "increasing light is to shine upon us"; "we have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible"; "our leading men have need of greater light"; and "we are to catch the first gleamings of truth" (see *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 76,

and *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 33-41).

Prior to 1980, it was my joyous privilege to take weeks of prayer in most of the leading Adventist colleges in the United States. Fellowship with the faculties was an experience never to be forgotten. Our college faculties are outstanding in expertise and dedication. In mixing particularly with those in the religion departments, I found both loyalty to Adventism and the humility and openness that much study engenders.

I cannot but be reminded of the parable of the emperor who had no clothes. The recent *Spectrum* articles repeatedly allude to controversy over the sanctuary doctrine. Almost with impatience I inquire, "Have not the administrative brethren noticed that our scholars (and our editors) who know well the dictum 'publish or perish' for the most part *never* publish at length defending the traditional teaching of the investigative judgment?" It is not because they do not *want* to believe it, but because they *cannot*. The list is long of well-known Adventist scholars and editors in this country and others who have talked

to me privately of their views, which are very close to my own. Even some well-known administrators also confess to our theological embarrassment in this area. Elder Neal Wilson, in the presence of others, told me that LeRoy Froom before his death informed him of this problem.

The historicism that proclaimed dates such as A.D. 538, 1798, and 1844 as biblical is now dead among most Adventist scholars. (See Kai Arasola's *The End of Historicism*—the doctoral thesis of one who has been both an administrator and scholar.) Recent publications on the Book of Revelation have followed my own commentary (*Crisis!*, published in 1982) in repudiating August 11, 1840, traditional expositions of the seals and trumpets, and many other interpretations once held sacred among us. The east-west Armageddon, Turkey as king of the north, the literal 144,000, and at least another 15 positions once used as the litmus tests for orthodoxy have come to their end and none shall help them. The 50-year row over the "daily" of Daniel 8:13 has been followed by an equally attenuated dispute over Daniel 8:14 and as certainly as the old view of the daily has been buried, so it will be with the traditional interpretation of the "cleansing of the sanctuary."

There really is no need for embarrassment unless we are determined to hold on to error no matter what. Roman Catholics are learning, in huge numbers, that Luther was essentially right; the Episcopalian scholars have known for a long time that the Baptists are correct regarding immersion; dispensationalist scholars, in recent decades, have succumbed, one by one (at least privately), to the confession that they have been in error regarding both the rapture and the tribulation (not one of *Christianity Today's* 44 editors is a traditional dispensationalist). The list could be prolonged. Why should Adventism be immune to

growth, learning, and unlearning? If it is true, as Ellen White said, that the fact that certain doctrines have been believed for years does not make them infallible, why are we so coy? Are we surrendering to the carnal motivation of wishing to be superior to all others by clinging to the garb of infallibility? Will we refuse to heed the admonition that "age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair" (*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 35)?

The drama played out at Pacific

Union College, Southern Missionary College, and now Walla Walla College, will be repeated again and again in the Adventist world, and particularly on this continent—unless sanity dawns, with wisdom and knowledge for the administrators and fundamentalist Adventists. Why tear apart the seamless robe of Christ that adorns his enfeebled and defective, but infinitely loved, church?

Desmond Ford  
Auburn, California

## Total Commitment to Top-Down Management "A Real Blooper"



My wife and I read with interest General Conference President Robert Folkenberg's "Total Commitment to God" statement (*Spectrum*, Vol. 26, No. 2)—what he terms "a declaration of spiritual accountability in the family of faith."

We feel that this statement is an exercise in futility, and an unfortunate waste of time. Despite the denials, it's clearly a top-down approach to communication, which—

in this day and age—is outdated. I found this to be his style of leadership when I knew him in the Inter-American Division and in the Southern Union. Not that this was a surprise—it was the preferred leadership style of the vast majority of church leaders, boards, and committees in those days.

We, personally, like many of the things Elder Folkenberg has done since being elected president of the General Conference, but he is human and subject to mistakes, and this is a real blooper.

Alfred McClure seemed to be confused and waffled around, Ralph Thompson took his usual hard-line, top-down stance, and Harold Baptiste did the best he could to try to defuse a bad scene.

Warren and Gerri Banfield  
Los Angeles, California

## Don't Straitjacket the Holy Spirit

Thank you for printing the "Total Commitment to God" statement and the North American Division response (*Spectrum*, Vol. 26, No. 2).

The "Total Commitment to God" statement is fundamentally flawed because it bases the judgment and

success of the gospel on what we *do* instead of on our daily relationship with Christ and his Spirit. Christ's last command to his disciples was not *go*, but *wait*. "He ordered them . . . to wait there for the promise of the Father. 'This,' he said, 'is what



you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. . . . you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:4-8, NRSV).

The commission to "go . . . teach . . . baptize . . . and make disciples" will be acted out creatively, naturally, and spontaneously by the overflowing of the Holy Spirit from the human heart and should not be assessed by a checklist, monitored by a group of well-meaning religious elite. Christ's earthly work of going, teaching, and making dis-

ciples was constantly misinterpreted by the religious leaders of his day. How the great commission practically works itself out will be as different and unique as the people, location, culture, traditions, work settings, schools, universities, and church to whom and where the gospel is presented. Although it is the effort of good men attempting to preserve the church, I believe the "Total Commitment to God" statement places the Holy Spirit in a spiritual straitjacket. We should leave the work of the Spirit in God's hands.

Ronald E. Reece  
Redding, California

## Don't Blame Wesley for the SDA Investigative Judgment



I wish to express my gratitude to the editors of *Spectrum* for offering its readers three fine articles on "Adventism's Methodist Roots" (*Spectrum*, Vol. 25, No. 5). Wesleyanism is certainly the spiritual link that connects the generations of my own family. My Midwestern forebears converted to the Adventist Church from the Methodist, no doubt recognizing in the writings of Ellen White much of what they were already familiar with. And I, since leaving the Adventist Church, have chosen to serve as a priest in the church in which John and Charles Wesley exercised their ministry. If space would permit, I should praise the many solid contri-

butions that these articles make to an understanding of Adventism's past and present; so I must humbly ask the forgiveness of two of the three authors for the following criticism of a few of their paragraphs.

It is understandable that Woodrow Whidden (in "Ellen White and John Wesley") would attempt to link Adventism's most troublesome and idiosyncratic doctrine, the investigative judgment, to a figure so ecumenical and respectable as Wesley. But it won't work. Wesley may have used the doctrine of a final judgment to thrash the Calvinists (who, in my opinion, always deserve a good thrashing), but here he is merely repeating what Christians always and everywhere have professed. The Nicene Creed says that Christ "shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead." And of course that judgment will be investigatory; for how could any judge render a just verdict without an investigation to determine the facts? At the Last Judgment the facts presented in the case of each Christian will be his or her "Good Works, . . . insomuch

that by them a lively Faith may be evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit" (No. 12 of the Anglican *Articles of Religion*, which Wesley was required to subscribe at his ordinations to the diaconate and priesthood).

The problem with the Adventist doctrine of the investigative judgment is that it says much more than that. Wesley would have been appalled by the notion of Satan's punishment making a satisfaction for the sins of the righteous—which is implied by the rigid parallel the Millerite expositors set up between the Yom Kippur ritual and the Second Coming. And, while Wesley certainly believed in the possibility of being perfected by grace in this life (which is an old Catholic doctrine, by the way), he would not have thought much of the distinction that the Adventist doctrine makes between the forgiveness and blotting out of sin; for, if a person can still be punished for a sin that God has forgiven but not "blotted out" in the (Adventist) investigative judgment, then the forgiveness must be conditional. If the "blotting out" of sin referred merely to the mortification of sinful habits so that no more sinful acts will be committed (complete sanctification), then there would be no more problem. But that is not how the investigative judgment is explained in *The Great Controversy* and other traditional Adventist sources. I suspect that Mr. Whidden is here trying to use a Wesleyan teaching to present a slimmed-down version of an Adventist teaching, so as to eliminate those troublesome features of the doctrine which many Adventists no longer wish to retain. But the Adventist creed will not be reformed by scholarly sleight of hand.

My criticism of one part of David Larson's article ("Wesley Keeps Dad and Me Talking") points in exactly the opposite direction. If modern, educated Adventists suffer acute em-



barrassment over the peculiarity of the investigative judgment (and so are driven to look for a similar doctrine outside Adventist tradition), they are smitten with overweening pride when they point to the uniqueness of the Adventist doctrine of conditional immortality. Hence, on this point, they tend to magnify the differences between Adventist "present truth" and traditional Christian doctrine.

There is certainly a difference between the general belief that consciousness continues after death and the Adventist contention that "the dead know nothing" (NRSV). But isn't that difference enough? Adventist scholars turn silly when they begin to expatiate upon the difference between the Hebraic and Hellenistic view of man. Since when did the Platonic doctrine of the soul become the "Hellenistic" view? Have we forgotten that Socrates (who serves as Plato's mouthpiece in the *Dialogues*) was condemned to death by the citizens of Athens on a charge of having corrupted the youth of the city with his teaching? If Socrates was articulating orthodox Hellenic views, then I should hate to have witnessed how the Athenians dealt with heretics.

There is in fact a huge difference between Homeric and Platonic anthropology. But between the Homeric idea of what happens to human beings after death and the Hebraic idea (as represented in the Old Testament), the difference is slight. In the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the slain warriors become shades in Hades. In the Old Testament they become shades in Sheol. Odysseus can speak to the summoned ghost of Agamemnon, and Saul to the summoned ghost of Samuel. The Hebrew *Sheol* is the Greek *Hades* without the deity (which is why the latter could be substituted for the former in the Septuagint and New Testament). You can't use the world-weary Preacher to trump 1 Samuel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Job, any more than you can use the dissident Socrates to trump Homer, who was

sacred scripture to the pagan Greeks.

Now at this point Larson will protest that it was the Platonic anthropology in particular that influenced the Greek and Latin Fathers, and by that conduit infected Christian tradition with the alien doctrine of an immortal soul (as opposed to the Homeric/Old Testament doctrine of a barely conscious shade languishing in Hades/Sheol). Yes, early Christian thinkers did get a strong dose of Plato through the writings of Origen and Pseudo-Dionysius. But that doesn't mean they all became Platonists. In the *Republic*, Socrates speaks of the human soul's purification through a series of reincarnations (metempsychosis); and then, when the process is complete, the soul can make its escape from the material world and live as a free spirit. Where do you find that in any of the Greek or Latin Fathers? Every one of them adhered to the biblical and creedal doctrine of the resurrection of the body. Did they learn from Plato to view body and soul as two separable entities (a "dualistic" anthropology)? Perhaps. But if they did make such an appropriation, they had strong encouragement from St. Paul, who in 2 Corinthians speaks of being "at home in the body" (2 Corinthians 5:6) while being away from the Lord in this

present life, and also expresses anxiety at the thought of being naked without a body after death.

And before we leave this subject of the purported corruption of Christian doctrine by Hellenistic ideas, let us also note Thomas Aquinas's use of Aristotle. Aquinas followed Aristotle in defining the soul as the form of the body, and the body as the matter of the soul. Without a soul, the body decays and becomes shapeless. Without a body, the soul cannot function. Does Aristotelian/Thomistic anthropology, which is now standard in Roman Catholic theology, present a view of the human being as a psychosomatic unity? It surely sounds that way to me. I will concede that it doesn't quite match the wacky Christian materialism that some Adventist scholars and preachers espouse. Are they trying to win over atheists with their claim that the mind and brain are one and the same? I doubt you will find that "Hebraic" notion taught in the synagogue. And I don't think it quite agrees with the traditional Adventist doctrine of soul sleep either.

Despite these minor objections, Whidden and Larson both wrote very good articles.

Jeffrey Smith  
Rector, All Saints Anglican Church  
Aiken, South Carolina

## Larson Responds: Thanks Be to Wesley for Being a Spiritual Link

How grateful I am that Jeffrey Smith responded in a thoughtful way to my article despite his busy schedule as the rector of an Anglican church! And how happy I am that Wesleyanism is the "spiritual link" that connects the generations of the family, be they Anglican, Methodist, or Adventist!

Because he did not object, I presume that Smith agrees with the article's primary point that Christians should neither neglect Scrip-

ture nor restrict themselves to it. Tradition, reason, and experience also deserve consideration, even though Scripture is the primary source. If a conflict emerges in what we learn from these sources, we should re-examine all four without protecting our interpretations of evidence from any. This, I believe, is a Quadrilateral in particular. It seems that Smith concurs.

I regret that in my article Smith found an "overweening pride" in

the alleged "uniqueness" of the Adventist doctrine of "conditional immortality." I *am* proud of Adventism's emphasis on the psychosomatic unity of the human self, but I do not want to be so in an offensive way. Neither do I want to leave the impression that this emphasis is unique to Adventism. It isn't. The denial of a basic dualism between body and soul is now one of the most widely held views among theologians of all denominations. In this regard, Adventist theology appears right but not alone.

Smith observes that Adventist understandings of human nature are closer to those of Aristotle and Aquinas than to those of Plato, Plotinus, and Augustine. He is correct. The Adventist philosopher Jean Zurcher also made this point in *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1966), a volume that received favorable reviews by both Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars.

Thankfully, we do not have to choose between materialism and idealism, both of which are "wacky" in opposite ways. Much more promising alternatives can be found in those approaches that deny a fundamental split between mind and matter. I am attracted to the "organic realism" of philosophers like Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne and theologians like Daniel Day Williams, John B. Cobb, Jr., and Schubert Ogden, all of whom also descend from the English Reformation. But I am also drawn to the "nonreductive physicalism" Nancey Murphy defends from an Anabaptist point of view in *Reconciling Theology and Science: A Radical Reformation Perspective* (Kitchener, Ontario: Pandora Press, 1997). Similar alternatives can be found elsewhere.

Smith indicates that we should neither exaggerate the differences between the Hebraic and the Hellenistic traditions nor overlook the variations in each. I agree. But it

does appear to me and to others that Plato was much more of a dualist than was Paul of Tarsus, even though opposite tendencies can be found in each, and that this aspect of Plato's thought has not always been helpful. I gather from his appeals to Homer that Smith agrees.

Once again, I thank Jeffrey Smith for his ministry and for his thoughtful response to my article. I am genuinely grateful for both.

David R. Larson  
Faculty of Religion  
Loma Linda University

## Whidden: The Investigative Judgment Is Not Non-Wesleyan

I would like to thank Jeffrey Smith for his mostly positive response to the "many solid contributions" made in the clutch of articles on the Adventist roots of Methodism. I am also appreciative of the humble spirit in which he offers his "criticism" of these articles. I would like to respond in the same spirit.

While it is true that Wesley did not have all of the elements of the Adventist doctrine of the investigative judgment, I am not convinced that he would have found the doctrine as "troublesome and idiosyncratic" as Smith surmises. I am gratified that Smith has affirmed that, for Wesley and much of the Christian tradition, there has been a clear recognition that the last judgment does involve an "investigatory" element and that such an "investigation" deals with the "good works" of each Christian. I could just wish that Smith and others would give Adventist thinkers more credit for recovering such an emphasis on "responsible grace" in the Christian teaching of the last judgment.

I am also sure, along with Smith, that Wesley would have been "appalled by the notion of Satan's punishment making a satisfaction for the sins of the righteous"—if one means by this language that such "satisfaction" has meritorious, redemptive value (as Smith and many critics of the Adventist doctrine of the investigative judgment seem to suggest). But do Seventh-day Adventists teach any such thing? It

could well be that such an idea was "implied by the rigid parallel the Millerite expositors set up between the Yom Kippur ritual and the Second Coming." I am, however, hard pressed to find such parallel implications in standard Seventh-day Adventist literature. It is not taught by Ellen White or any minister, theologian, or evangelist that I know of. I would ask Smith to produce evidence to support such a claim.

Furthermore, I am not sure exactly how Wesley would react to the "distinction that the Adventist doctrine makes between the forgiveness and blotting out of sin." But I would like to pose the following question: In the spirit of Wesleyan theology, does it really matter whether the forgiveness of sins is final or conditional if the person finally loses faith in Christ and his redeeming grace? Once one assumes that Christian perseverance is conditional and not unconditionally granted (contrary to classic Calvinist claims), it really matters little whether previous sins have been conditionally or unconditionally forgiven. All it takes is a persistent faithlessness, manifest in attitudes of impenitence and willful disobedience to the known will of God, to bring about eternal loss. Whether all the sins of the finally impenitent eventually come back on their heads will be a very academic consideration for the lost when they are standing before God speechless because of the horrid realization of their lostness—a

loss caused by persistent, irresponsible unbelief. I really can't imagine that Wesley would have been all that troubled by any such distinction. I can, however, imagine that he would be deeply troubled by the spirit, so common in our day, that seeks to comfort people with some sort of cheap grace idea that God will vouchsafe a mushy, indulgent mercy to those who persistently engage in attitudes and acts of unresponsive faithlessness.

All of this raises a couple of final questions: What does it really mean for Christians to live in the antitypical day of atonement? To an-

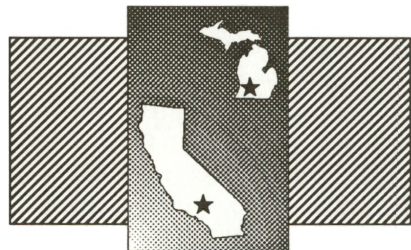
swer this question, I would like to invite Smith (and others) to a careful and prayerful re-reading of the chapters in Ellen White's book *The Great Controversy* that deal with the investigative judgment (chapters 23-25). The gist of the issue seems to involve the following closely related ideas: God is seeking to raise consciousness about (1) the nearness of the end of probationary time (hence it is urgent that we respond to Jesus quickly); (2) the High Priestly intercession of Jesus who longs to grant both an abundance of justifying and sanctifying grace—hence the importance of “responsible” living mani-

fest in obedience to all the known and revealed will of God (the law of God has not been done away with or changed); and (3) that there will be a judgment according to works where the professed people of God will ultimately have to give an answer as to how they responded to God's gracious redemptive initiatives.

Now to my final question: I simply ask Smith to tell us what, in principle, is so non-Wesleyan and unbiblical about such ideas?

Woodrow Whidden  
Andrews University  
Berrien Springs, Michigan

## Fourteen Colleges Into Two Schools Just Won't Go



I agree with the premise (*Spectrum*, Vol. 26, No. 1) that if we were starting our college system from scratch now we would certainly have fewer colleges. But the reality is that each of our colleges has loyal alumni and other supporters. It is not feasible to close more than one or two of our colleges, if any. A solution is to avoid the duplication of majors and programs that each college tries to support independently. This is too expensive and inefficient at a time of lowered resources. Why, for example, do we need to offer a dozen bachelor's degrees in physics? The same question applies to other programs. We also offer duplicate graduate programs. Why do we have three or four master's degree programs in biology?

Let's start getting our North American colleges working together to

eliminate inefficient duplication. Lower tuition would result. Our schools are currently all but closed to the poorer members among us. With enhanced and cheaper programs, we could attract more students, including those gifted ones who are currently schooled elsewhere. We could choose certain programs for each school, and divvy up our course offerings for all our

schools appropriate to each of their locations, strengths, and needs. Clearly this would require very careful planning and cautious implementation.

We have let our colleges do their own thing for too long. It's time to get cracking on something better.

Lance T. Hodges  
Grand Terrace, California

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## Back on Zion's Holy Mountain

The article by Delmer Davis, entitled “Growing Up on Zion's Holy Mountain” (*Spectrum*, Vol. 26, No. 1), gave me many hearty laughs. But I must add that life on that holy mountain 10 years earlier was even more strict, especially when you lived in the women's dormitory—“Graf Hall.” In those days, one had to wear sleeves that wrinkled at the elbow, and skirts 12 inches from the floor, whether you were five or six feet tall.

Geneva Beatty  
Long Beach, California

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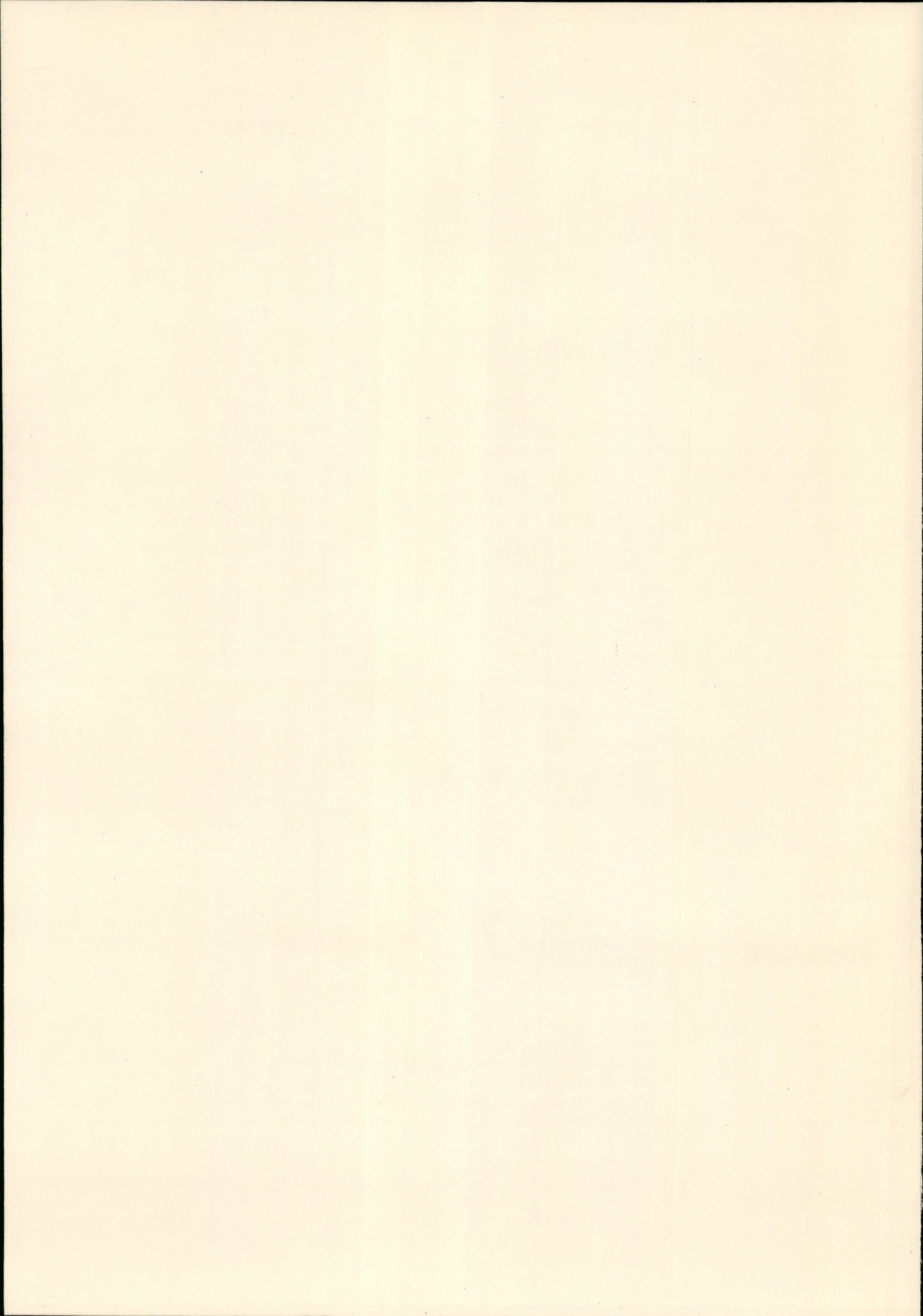
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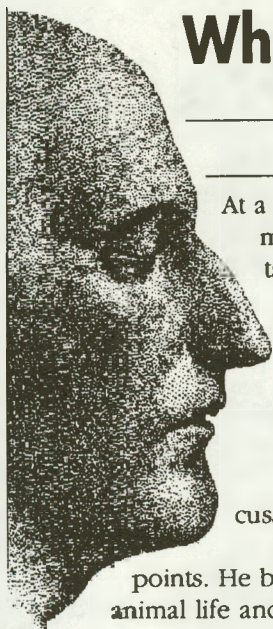
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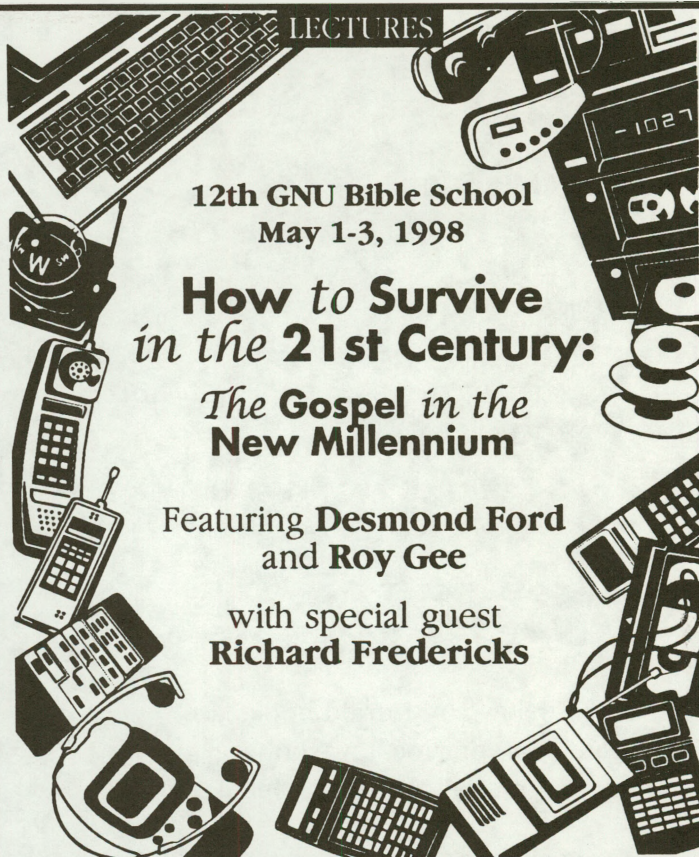
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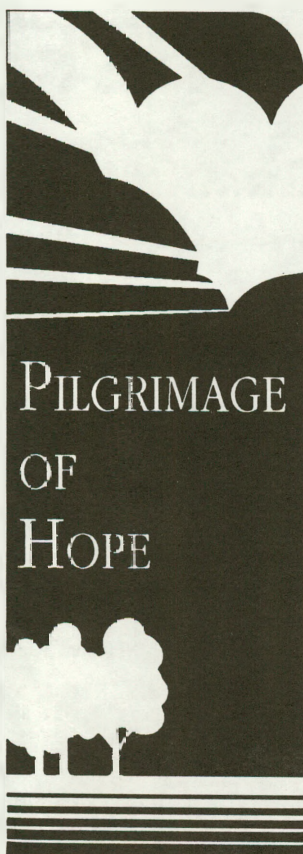
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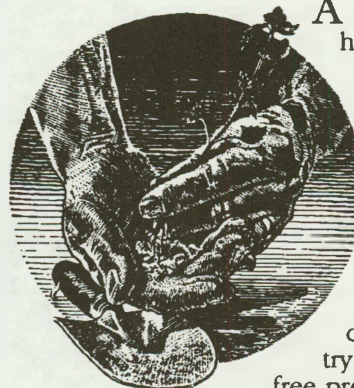
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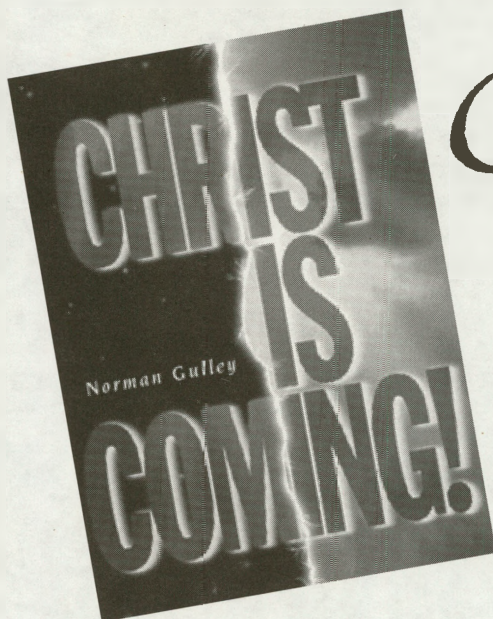


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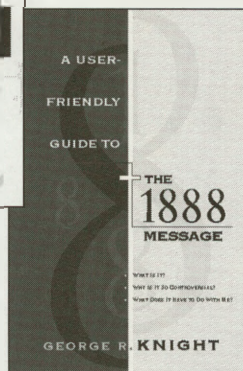
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