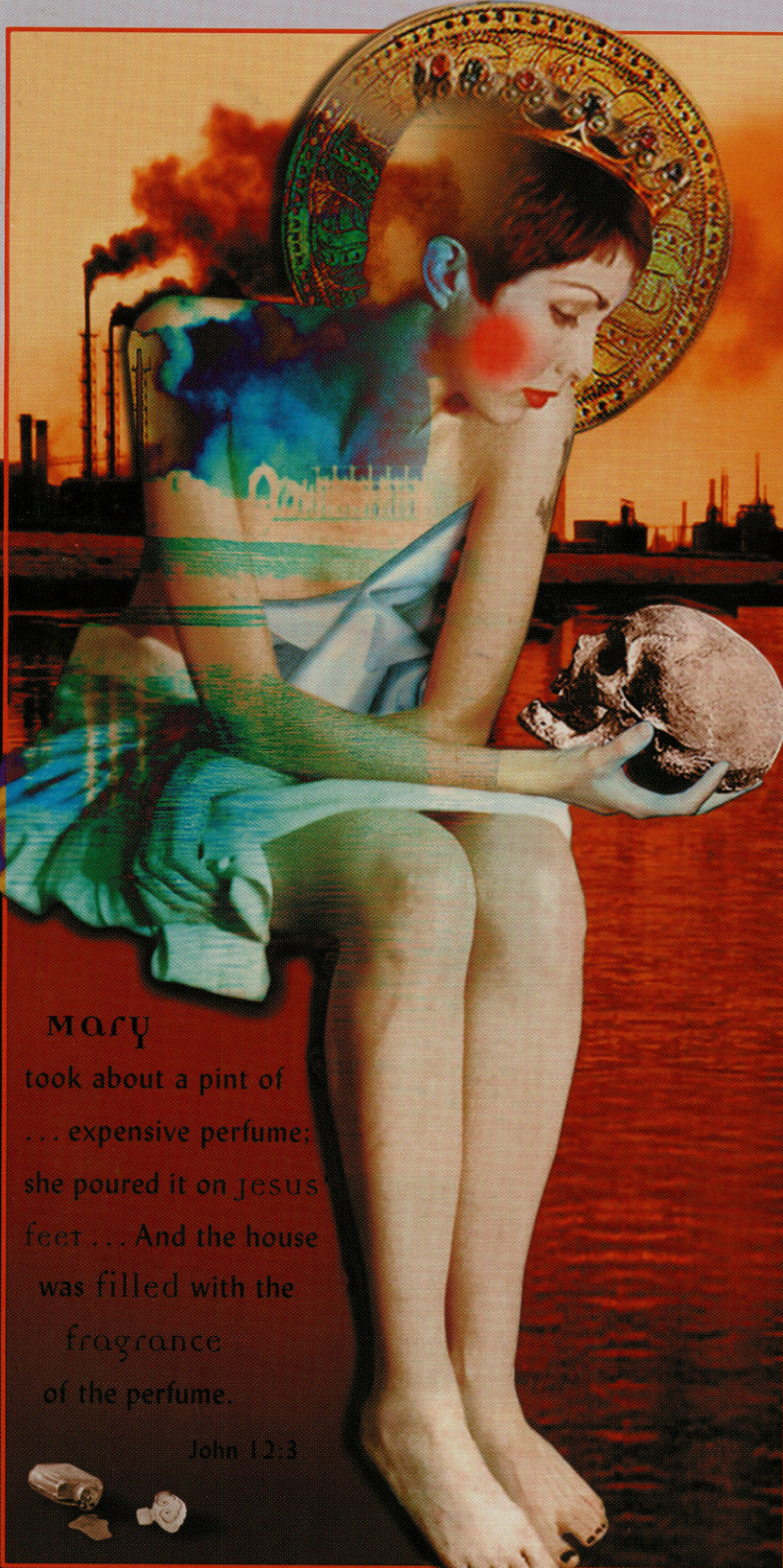


SPECTRUM

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MARY
took about a pint of
... expensive perfume;
she poured it on Jesus
feet... And the house
was filled with the
fragrance
of the perfume.

John 12:3

Challenging
the Legacies of
Eve and Mary

Is Islam Really
a Peaceful
Religion?

The Christian
and War

Seeds of
Friendship
in Việt Nam

Adventist and
Protestant
Fundamentalism

SPECTRUM

Editor **Bonnie Dwyer**
Associate Editor **Leigh Johnsen**
Promotions and Circulation **Julie Lorenz**
Design **Jennie Auman**

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About the Artist

John Hoyt is an instructor and visual artist; he currently teaches at Canadian University College in Lacombe, Alberta. Examples of his recent work can be seen at <www.artisvital.com>

About the Cover

I have been both teaching in Adventist schools and pursuing a career as a visual artist for almost thirty years. Yet it is obvious to people who know me well that these two aspects of my life have never been fully integrated. In "public" I teach college-level art, supervise student teachers, serve on committees, and so forth. In "private," I retire to my house, lock the doors, and paint. A few unfortunate attempts to show my work in an Adventist context were enough to convince me to stick to showing in public galleries far from campus.

The arts do indeed play a role in the SDA community. Yet the archetypal Adventist art form seems to be the hymn. The hymn arguably embodies the qualities we prize most in the arts: hymns are repetitive, predictable, formulaic, and didactic. In other words, hymns are above all safe.

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Editorial Correspondence

Direct all correspondence and letters to the editor to:

SPECTRUM

P. O. Box 619047

Roseville, CA 95661-9047

TEL: (916) 774-1080

FAX: (916) 791-4938

editor@spectrummagazine.org

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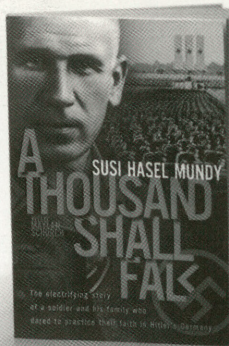
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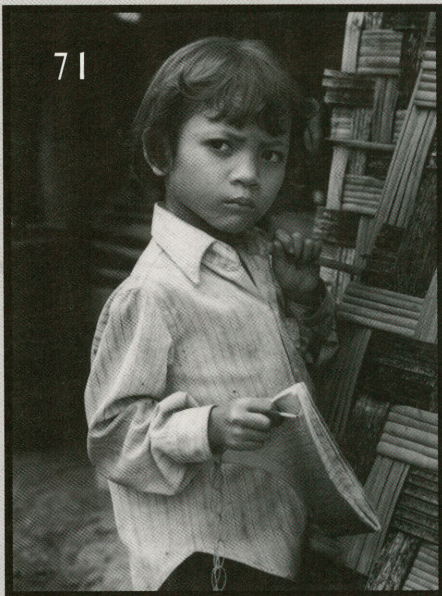


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As an adult student of the history of art I began to understand that our failure to appreciate the riskier aspects of the visual arts is not inadvertent. Christian art is like a tree that blossomed during the Middle Ages and bore a crop of wonderfully strange and varied fruit during the 1400s. After the Reformation, however, the Protestant branch of this tree shriveled and all but died.

It seemed reasonable to me, then, as an artist looking for roots in the Christian tradition, to return to the 1400s. This world — peopled by holy saints and grotesque sinners, by angels and demons — will indeed seem odd to a “modern” Protestant. Perhaps most “shocking” of all is the realization that Christian artists of the 1400s were not afraid of the human body.

Christian artists of the early Renaissance “spoke” to their viewers in a symbolic language. Trees, flowers, animals, are things of beauty in and of themselves, of course. Yet in the vocabulary of the 1400s a rose is rarely “just” a rose, nor is a lion “just” a lion. The depiction of the human body is even more complex: artists were fond using “attributes” to guide the viewer’s interpretation. A woman seated in front of a blazing fire, for example, is likely to be St. Barbara. St. Catherine is associated with a wooden wheel, and St. Mary Magdalene is often depicted contemplating a skull.

Unclothed figures often appear as well. “Nakedness,” I would suggest, evokes the world outside of time. Naked figures wander in the primordial garden, ascend into paradise, or descend into the pit of hell. Yet herein lies material for a future edition of *Spectrum* . . .

The Big 3-0

Once past that magical first anniversary, it's the big ones that count. Those that mark decades, silver and gold anniversaries. This issue marks one such milestone—volume thirty. Reviewing volume one, number one of *Spectrum*, we discovered topics that we have been discussing at length ever since: “The Christian Scholar and the Church,” “The Christian and War,” “Problems in Darwinism,” “A New Role for Eschatology.” Why do we keep talking about the same things? Are we just hitting our heads against a wall? Is there anything new to say as we enter our thirtieth volume?

The short answers to those questions are because we need to, maybe, and yes. Let me explain.

It is in the telling of our stories that we create meaning in our lives. So what if the story has been told before? We want it retold in a way that fits us and accommodates the nuances dealt by the details from our world, our time. We pick up the morning newspaper, click on the radio, check our personalized MSNBC. We need to know how the story is playing out today to make sense of life. Journalism, according to Bill Kovach, is our modern cartography. It creates the outline for our understanding of the world, maps out the alliances that we need to negotiate deals, provides the material for our jokes and stories. Historiographers note that successive generations tackling the same topics over and over again do so from perspectives different from those of their forebears. Maybe within Adventism it seems that we are approaching subjects in similar ways. We owe it to our generation and the next to find new perspective for our discussions.

In this issue as we look again at the Christian and War, the setting of America's war on terrorism has created different feelings about war than did Viet Nam or World War II. Our tour of the subject begins with what appeared in these pages on the topic in 1969. Plus, we asked some writers of that issue to revisit their ideas. Charles Scriven did so and decided he was dead wrong. Donald McAdams's position has not changed, but he offers new thoughts on how his stand plays out today. Unfortunately, Emanuel Fenz is not alive to reflect on his position. Our discussion of the Christian and war is further illuminated by Roland Blaich, who helps us see World War II with new eyes. Finally, Ronald Osborn brings the perspective of a new generation. He goes back to the *Illiad* to make the case that all war stories are essentially the same.

Peter Erhard, the talented artist who created the block print of the baby's head in the hands of the physician for that first issue of *Spectrum*, returns in this issue with a new perspective on Viet Nam based on a bicycle tour that he took recently.

We also look at women in the Bible with new eyes thanks to Jean Sheldon and Cynthia Westerbeck as they retell the legacies of Mary and Martha with surprising new insights to both characters.

Having just survived the legacy of the biblical Martha that lives on in Martha Stewart and haunts all women at Christmas, I for one am ready to be Mary—to read, reflect, converse, and stay out of the kitchen. There's a great new year out there waiting for us to carve our stories onto its pages to make meaning from the days of our lives.

Carpe Diem!

Bonnie Auinger
Editor



Peter Erhard. *Novum*, originally printed in *Spectrum*, winter 1969.

legends and legacies of biblical women



Credit: Giraudon/Art Resource, N.Y.

Georges de La Tour (1593–1652). *The Penitent Magdalen*.
The Louvre, Paris.

challenging the legacies of EVE and MARY

Sabbath Sermon at the Association of Adventist Women Conference,
October 2000, Sacramento, California

By Jean Sheldon

We have all heard about the legacy of Eve. She is the one to blame for all our problems, the weakling who could not withstand the serpent's lies and suggestions. Adam, no doubt, would have stood up to temptation if he had been the one approached by the serpent. But Eve, created last and therefore the least, could not. Despite the fact that she was called a "helpmeet," a term used elsewhere in the Old Testament only to apply to God and not to men, her legacy was the curse.

Because of Eve, all women are considered foolish, mindless, and easily deceived. They are the ones who must suffer pain and domination. When a friend of mine was about to have her first son, some women gathered around her and told her she was wrong to accept an epidural because of Eve's curse: "You shall bear children in pain" (Gen. 3:16).¹

Of course, Eve is the temptress, the seducer, the manipulator. That means all her daughters are as well. Eve lives on in all of us, and I would like to suggest that we share her shame. I would like to suggest, too, that we have not really read the text.

God cursed neither Adam nor Eve. The only two things he cursed were the ground and the serpent. When we read the first part of Genesis 3 and God's proclamation to Adam and Eve, we really should read the second part, not just what he said to the woman, but also his words to the man. I would like to recommend that men, especially male farmers, should be deprived of tractors, because they shall eat bread by the sweat of their brows (Gen. 3:19). At least men should not have air-conditioned tractors complete with televisions and cell phones.

If we continue in this vein, it is good for men to return to dust, and we should welcome and celebrate funerals. Death comes to all humanity, and so does domination. Just as the man was expected to dominate the woman, so the ground would dominate Adam and finally receive him again. Sin turned upside down—reversed—the kind of creation God originally made.

I would like to revisit the legacy of Eve: to retell the story about a woman whose trust had never been violated, or broken; a woman who was vulnerable, inquisitive, free, and perfectly loved by her Heavenly Father. (After all, it is a law that we love because he first loved us.) She ventured on ground he warned her against and engaged in conversation with the prime abuser of all creation, the fallen angel encased in the serpent.

Basically, the serpent moved her from the warning that God had given her as a loving parent to the notion that it was a command. She picked up that notion and took it further; trying to make it better, she made it worse. In the process, the serpent convinced her that God was an abusive parent and that the only way out was to believe she had power equal to his. If she ate the fruit, something external could control her and make her more powerful so she would be equal to God. Then he couldn't abuse her, because she would have power.



She bought into that notion, and as a result her entire world changed. Her perceptions of reality, her picture of God, and how she could relate to other human beings all changed. We see in the verses after her fall that she carries the victimization to her spouse as she manipulates him. Then both of them, when they hear the sound of God coming into the woods, become frightened. The Bible says they were frightened because they perceived they were naked. It was only a perception; they were already naked before. The problem was the way they perceived their nakedness; it has to do with the seeing.

The verb “to see” is carried throughout many of the Genesis stories as a primary verb. It seems to be the theme. The eyes of Adam and Eve were opened because they saw God in a different light, and they were afraid. Like any abused children, they ran from him in terror, which led to further victimization: Adam blamed Eve.

You can see why God would say that Eve’s desire would be for her husband and that he will rule over her—he already had. That arrangement was not anything new. The game started in the conversation God had with them.

Because Eve became vulnerable to the serpent—to his deception and abuse—she became victimized and vulnerable to further abuse. She would be dominated. She would bear children in pain, but there was more pain than just childbirth. The story of Cain and Abel reveals the outworking of a cycle of abuse as one brother kills another. Genesis records the cycle of abuse as it continues from generation to generation until the earth is filled with violence. The human imagination and thoughts become evil continually.

I would like to suggest that the story does not end there. The real legacy of Eve is not encased in her fall, but rather is found in Genesis 3:15. It was to womankind that God gave the one who would break the cycle of abuse for eternity. That is really Eve’s legacy. God took the first to fall and entrusted to her the greatest treasure the world has ever received. God is not the dominator of women, but their restorer.

I recently counted all women in the Old Testament and organized them into three categories: recipients



Photo: Dover, Inc.

Mary Magdalen at Jesus' feet.

of salvation, instruments of salvation (any time they rescued anyone from any kind of danger), and participants of evil. Roughly two-thirds were saviors in some way. That is impressive. This proportion means that the primary role of women in the Old Testament is one of bringing salvation. The overall image of women in the Old Testament is intended to be that of a savior. Think of God taking the one on whom we blame all our trouble and saying, “I am going to turn you into someone who will help rescue humans.”

There is another woman of the Bible whose story and legacy, I believe, also deserves closer attention: Mary Magdalene. Mary has a sense of appearing and vanishing at certain points in the Gospels. She does not always appear to be named. I will take the risk that she may have been involved more often than it appears, just for the sake of trying to map out her life. In the process, I will give a lot of imaginative details that I cannot prove, but that answer a lot of questions that might otherwise be raised.²

This is one of my questions: How is it that Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived in a house together? From my studies about Jerusalem in the time of Jesus, this seems very strange. Are these grown adults? Are they young people? What is their age and why are they living in a house together alone? Young women of that time were often betrothed as early as the age of twelve. Their fathers, who were their masters, arranged their marriages to other masters, their husbands, whom each daughter would call, “my lord.” It seems strange that Mary and Martha were not married, neither was Lazarus. Where does he fit in? I suspect that he was younger than these two women.

Based on what I have read in the *Desire of Ages*, pieced together with the story in the Gospels and other research, it seems to me that something terrible had happened in the lives of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus at a very young age. They once had a happy loving home, but something happened—maybe illness—that took away their parents and left them orphans.

Uncle Simon took them in. He lived in Jerusalem, about two miles from Bethany, where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived, and became their guardian. Simon was a Pharisee, and Pharisees were known for their ardent support of law. They were the middle-of-the-road conservatives in the church; they also tended to be abusive. Remember what Jesus said about the

their ways they would accept her into their family.

She tried very hard to live up to everything she learned, but it was not enough to fill the void in her life. After drifting out of the Church and through several marriages, she finally ended up in the hospital, in a coma, with a high fever, ranting and raving.

Shortly after midnight one morning, she finally opened her eyes to see a man standing by her bed, smiling gently at her. He looked at her and called her first “Mary” and then “Rebecca,” her name. Later, she realized he was Jesus. He told her that during the night he had cast seven demons out of her life one by one. “They tried not to hear Me. They argued that you had freely given yourself to them. But I know the struggles

It was to womankind that God gave the one who would break the cycle of abuse for eternity.

Pharisees, how they laid heavy burdens on the people’s backs and would not lift a finger to help them? (Matt. 23:4). That is abuse. We know that studies show some of the highest incidents of abuse lurk in conservative Christian families. Simon probably took over the care of these children more out of duty than love.

Perhaps that is when the nightmares began for Mary, and possibly Martha. Night after night, Mary had to put up with this visitor to her bedroom, and like all molesters of children, he blamed her as the guilty one. She was too beautiful, too seductive, too attractive. Mary probably had an extremely affectionate heart. She was a dreamer who liked to sit and think. She was naturally very affectionate, open, and trusting. Bit by bit, Simon destroyed her trust, her dignity, her personhood—the very last thing she had. She had already lost her parents; now she was bereft of her personhood.

Imagine Mary’s experience to be something like the story LaVonne Neff has written about in the book *A Heart of Flesh*.³ Neff tells about a Jewish girl named Rebecca, who grew up in New York with physically and emotionally abusive father and brothers. She finally got married in order to escape her hard life. She married a very loving man but could not handle his love, so she threw him out of her life and went to a very large city.

There she found she could make lots of money selling her body, and for many years she became wealthy engaging in high-class prostitution. Eventually, she lived in Arizona, where downhearted and desperately needing love and affection she found some Adventists. She learned that if she obeyed their rules and believed

of your heart, and I am making you My daughter. Follow Me,” he said.⁴ The woman became a new person, with a new mission, goal, and purpose in life.

In sharing her story, the woman told Neff about how the demons had entered her mind. The first one convinced her that she was a thing. Because of the abuse she had suffered as a child, the demon entered her by devaluing her as a person, by destroying who she was, trashing her, and making her feel totally worthless. That’s Mary.

Mary came to devalue herself. Simon may have told her she was no good for any man because she was not a virgin. Maybe she decided to do the only thing she knew she was good at to escape his domination. She went north to Magdela, a town of international commerce, and there she found lots of customers.

For years, she brought in the money, served the men with her body, and occasionally visited Martha and Lazarus. On one of these visits, Simon stopped by and said he had a customer for her. He smirked when he suggested that the customer would bring her lots of money. Not sensing anything unusual, she saw the customer, but he did not seem interested in what she offered.

Sometime in the wee hours of the morning there was a heavy knock on the door, some men rushed in, surrounded them, and grabbed her. She was forced to put something on quickly, then they dragged her out the door toward the temple. When she realized where they were headed, she knew she had been set up.



Jesus had recently returned from the Mount of Olives. Now he was sitting on the temple steps teaching the people. Mary's accusers brought her through the gates to Jesus. Of course, Mary had probably heard something about Jesus, but she had never met him.

He was a humble-looking man. According to the rules, she was not supposed to look at any man, and a rabbi was not to look at her. She waited, wondering what would happen next. Strangely, the man did not stand up to pronounce the judgment, and the men with whom she had come pressed around her. "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" (John 8:4-6). She had assumed she was headed to the Sanhedrin, where the members would have a meeting. Most often, prostitutes caught in adultery were stoned or burned.

She knew this was Simon's ultimate act of cruelty. First, he had destroyed her personhood, then he had taught her this trade, and finally he had set her up with a client for his own cruel end, thus reducing her to less than zero.

She stood with bowed head. Perhaps she did not even have a veil on her face as she stared at the ground. In response to questions, this man did not say a word. He simply bent down and began to write in the dust. She did not know what he was writing, because she had never learned to read. Simon believed in the rabbinical saying that it is better to teach a daughter lechery than letters.

She stood, waiting. By then, she had been so destroyed she was numb. The men kept yelling at Jesus, trying to get him to answer. He continued to write in the dirt.

Finally, the oldest one, the most pompous of them all, pushed forward to look over Jesus' shoulder and see what he was writing. Red rose up from his neck and moved slowly to his face. Silence settled on the group. Jesus looked up and said, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her" (John 8:7). Then he resumed writing. Suddenly, the man with the red face disappeared. One by one, the other men left until Mary was left alone with Jesus.

I once thought this was a scene of judgment, with Jesus standing, Mary at his feet and the crowd



Photo: Stephanie Gifford Reeder

Stephanie Gifford Reeder. *Eve*. 2001.

surrounding them. However, the Gospel of John portrays something different. While Jesus bent over, he was still seated and Mary stood before him. That picture has to be very clear: Jesus was not looking down at her in some kind of masculine condescension. Rather, Jesus was looking up at her. Then Jesus, the God of the universe, asked her a question, a teasing one, I think. "Woman, where are they?" (John 8:10).

The men who had brought Mary had called her "this woman" (John 8:4). Jesus simply said "woman" (John 8:10), which is the same way he addressed his mother. At that moment she looked into his eyes, a daring thing for a woman. It was his eyes that drew her. She had seen other's eyes; they had broken down her defenses and destroyed her trust. Jesus' eyes drew out her self-control and showed trustworthiness.

Other men's eyes had ravished her inner purity. Jesus' eyes appealed to her highest moral values and worth. Other men's eyes had demeaned and degraded her, and treated her like a plaything. Jesus' eyes restored her honor, integrity, and dignity. Other men's eyes had manipulated her, forced her, demanded and controlled her, and vilified her. Jesus' eyes loved her unconditionally and set her free to be her truest self. Other men's eyes had ripped her and destroyed her soul. Jesus' eyes began to make her whole.

That was only the beginning. My understanding is that Jesus spent nights of prayer in tears for Mary to free her from the demons. I wonder why it took so long. After all, he was always casting out demons or

making disease go away with a word. Why did it take so long to free Mary?

The only answer I can find is that those demons were imbedded in her, diminishing and destroying her self-image and self-worth. For Jesus to convince her that she was a person of worth he had to go through nights of agony to convince her that she was valuable to God. I do not think Mary knew instantly that Jesus was God. It took his prayers to heal her broken heart. His tears began to undo the lies she had believed about herself. There is no other woman in the Bible who shares the evil legacy of Eve as much as this abused victim. She was still no one even after Jesus set her free.

He took this woman who had been crumpled like a piece of paper and thrown into the trash, and lifted her up to a level with himself.

One of the last acts of Jesus' ministry was to go to Simon's house for a feast. I have often wondered how Mary related to Simon after Jesus set her free. How could she stand to be in the same room at this party? Yet she slipped in quietly, trying not to be noticed.

She had heard that Jesus had predicted his own death, and she actually believed him. No one else did. She began to pour an expensive perfume on Jesus' feet because she could not wait until he was dead to anoint his body. The aroma reached Simon and he began to mutter that if Jesus knew what kind of woman Mary was he would not let her touch him. The irony is that Simon had made her who she was. However, very often in such situations, the woman is blamed.

What Jesus said in those moments after Simon's accusation restored Mary. "Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me," said Jesus (Matt. 26:10). This comment undid Simon's remarks about her beauty being too seductive for him to control himself. "By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial. Truly I tell you, wherever this good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her" (Matt. 26:13). Those were the most powerful words Jesus ever spoke. There is only one other instance when he established a memorial like that: "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).

In this story, Jesus took a woman trashed by the world, by the people who represented God, by the people who were her guardians and who were supposed to protect her. He took this woman who had been crumpled like a piece of paper and thrown into the trash, and lifted

her up to a level with himself. That is what will be told throughout the world in remembrance of her. This woman—not the male disciples (with one exception)—made it to the cross and stayed there until Jesus died.

Interestingly, this disciple was the most sensitive and caring of the lot. One might ask when we look at the final weeks of Jesus' life who his closest disciple was. Jesus met Mary again at the garden tomb, and there Jesus completes Mary's restoration.

It appears that Mary got there first while the other women followed shortly. The other women stayed at the tomb long enough to find out that Jesus had risen.



Photo: Dover, Inc.

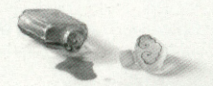
They, too, were told to tell the other disciples, a commission that seemed preposterous to the women.

Mary and Martha's house.

The Gospel of Mark says they were terrified. They probably thought they were seeing things and had a lot of self-doubt. Mark reports that they would not go and tell the disciples. I think they left and went home in fear and trembling; they did not intend to tell the disciples. Mary told Peter and John, who went into a frenzy because the tomb was empty—that part they sort of believed. Then Mary returned to the garden and stayed there.

Who was Jesus' closest disciple? When Jesus met Mary in the garden, he only had to call her by name for her to recognize him. When he later met the other disciples, Jesus had to use all kinds of supernatural signs before they would accept his true identity.

In Mary's recognition of Jesus, I believe she held him as though she would never let go. "You are not going to get away from me again, I am not going to find that tomb empty," she may have said. "In fact, the tomb can stay empty, but you are never going to leave me. I am not going to let you die again." Then Jesus did one last thing for Mary that not only set her free, but also should set us free: He broke the final abuser, death, and gave her the good news of the resurrection.



When we began our story in Genesis 3, we noted that the ultimate abuser was the ground and that it was cursed. All of us are dominated by the earth, by death, and ultimately we return to dust. Jesus broke that abuser, death, and gave Mary, probably the person most abused of any to whom he ministered, the privilege of announcing the victory. In some early Christian circles, Mary was later considered an apostles to the apostles—the one sent.

Think of what a preposterous thing Jesus had done. These apostles had been given the keys to the Kingdom as it were; they were the leaders of the church, the General Conference committee. And, yet, they hid in terror behind closed doors. You would think Jesus would have gone through those doors a little sooner and confronted them.

He didn't. Instead, he sent the one who waited at the tomb, the one who was his closest disciple, the only one who only needed to have her name said to recognize him, and he commissioned her to tell the brothers the implications of his words, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and Your God" (John 20:17).

Mary now knew her Heavenly Father as the opposite of Uncle Simon. She believed that Jesus would die and that he would rise again. She was probably the only disciple who really grasped what he predicted.

What must have gone through her mind? Once she had no credibility, and the only power she had was because of her body; now she was told to go to the apostles and tell them the good news. She apparently

wanted help and went to the other women, rounded them up, and said, "Would you please join me. Maybe they will believe us." "Some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." "Oh how foolish you are," Jesus said (Luke 24:22-25).

All of us know that blind prejudice—whether it involves race, gender, ethnic background, religion, or whatever—is all a part of this directory of abuse to which we fall victims. Prejudice tends to blind us to the evidence, to make us look silly when we find out we are wrong.

I believe that in these stories of Jesus' ministries to Mary he took her from where Simon had put her and lifted her slowly up to the level of the apostles. She was the one who got to go up to the General Conference gathering and tell them that the last abuser, death, had been vanquished.

Today, we stand in the garden tomb with Jesus. Today, Jesus calls us—no matter who we are, no matter where we have been, regardless of our past reputations, regardless of our race or gender—to be his sent-out ones to fulfill the legacy of Eve and tell the good news to the world that God is not an abuser, but that has conquered abuse.

Notes and References

1. Translation is my own. All other texts are quoted from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible
2. When I created this fictionalized composite of the various women in the Gospels who at times have been considered by Bible readers to be the Mary whose siblings were Martha and Lazarus, I knew I was working with fiction, not scholarship. I did it in order to deal with issues of abuse within a single sermon that related to the fall. My imaginative interpretation reflects the kinds of scenarios that no doubt took place in Jerusalem during the time of Jesus; in addition, it answers a number of questions these stories raise. When I prepared the sermon, I was aware of other interpretations, less traditional and more feminist, that are offered by current scholarship. In a scholarly paper, I would discuss these, but would really prefer to look to my New Testament colleagues for such a treatment.
3. LaVonne Neff, *A Heart of Flesh* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1973).
4. *Ibid.*, 67.

Jean Sheldon is assistant professor of religion at Pacific Union College. jsheldon@puc.edu.

DANUBE RIVER CRUISE

June 25-July 10, 2002

Dr. Merlene Ogden will lead a group on a Danube River cruise, from Budapest, Hungary, to Nuremburg, Germany, passing enroute over the Main-Danube Canal. The trip will include sightseeing stops in Vienna, Melk, Passau, and Regensburg, as well as a three-day pre-cruise visit to Budapest and a four-day stay in Prague after the cruise. The price includes airfare from New York (with reasonable add-on fares from other cities) and charges for full cruise and all sightseeing, plus transportation, hotels, and two meals a day for land segments. Price: \$3,500

DR. MERLENE OGDEN
616-471-3781 or 616-471-3338
ogden@andrews.com

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Martha Defeating the Dragon. Church of St. Laurence, Nuremberg. Mary Altar, 1512.

from kitchen scold to dragon slayer: The gospel according to Martha

By Cynthia Westerbeck

Poor Martha. She works diligently to be a proper hostess, only to be chastised by the Lord she wants so much to serve. Even worse, she is upstaged by a sister who has done nothing but sit and look pretty. Whenever I read this story, I feel her pain—that combination of indignation and shame that comes when our own self-righteousness is unexpectedly exposed and found wanting. So we usually leave Martha in the kitchen, licking her wounds and trying to figure out which of her many duties to neglect in order to find time for contemplation.

This encounter represents just one moment in what was apparently a long-lasting and close friendship between Jesus and this family. Unfortunately for Martha, this is one of the few clear pictures we have of her in Scripture, so there is little opportunity for her to redeem her image. There is, however, a medieval tradition regarding Martha's life that allows us finally to see her not as a domestic victim, but as a victorious evangelist and even a dragon slayer.

Before we turn to legend to rescue Martha, however, we must first look at what we do

know about her from Scripture and examine how she has been treated by theological and artistic traditions.

The brief story of Jesus' visit to Martha's home in Luke 10:38-42 seems to be included in the Gospel solely to teach a lesson about priorities—at Martha's expense. As she hurries to prepare a meal for her guests, Martha needs help and asks Jesus to send her sister into the kitchen. Jesus replies, "Martha, Martha . . . you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41-42).¹

Many biblical scholars have tried to soften the blow by looking to the Greek to clarify whether Jesus said Mary had chosen the "better" thing or the "best" thing or even the "good" thing. Still other Martha sympathizers find comfort by hearing in Jesus' voice affection rather than criticism: "Martha, Martha."

Regardless of linguistic subtlety, Martha ends up looking like a scold, in part because she attempts to chastise her sister publicly through Jesus rather than privately asking Mary for help. In her book, *Choosing the Better Part? Women in the Gospel of Luke*, Barbara Reid describes the dilemma for harried women who read this passage and sympathize with Martha:

From such a stance, there is no good news from a Jesus who not only seems indifferent to the burden of the unrealistic demands, but even reproaches one who pours out her life in service. Since Jesus is not supposed to be unfair, the resentment that one feels from the position of Martha is directed at those sisters who are approved for luxuriating in contemplative sitting. Consequently, interpretations abound that try to rescue the text, or rescue Jesus from being unfairly critical of hard-working women.²

Whether or not Martha seems justified in her actions, this story sets up an important dichotomy between contemplation and action that becomes the defining difference between the two sisters.

This contrast between action and contemplation can also be seen in John 11 when Martha runs out to meet Jesus after Lazarus' death while Mary remains behind. Here we learn that "Jesus loved Martha and



Credit: Scala / Art Resource, N.Y.



Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, by Fra Angelico, (1387-1455) Museo di San Marco, Florence.



her sister and Lazarus," yet still he delays his visit to Bethany. When he finally does arrive, Martha characteristically speaks her mind: "Lord . . . if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:21). But when Jesus challenges her faith, she eagerly declares, "Yes, Lord . . . I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world" (John 11:27).

Despite this profession of faith, her practical nature still asserts itself at the tomb when she protests that there will be a bad odor if the stone is rolled away. She seems simultaneously eager to believe yet unable to subdue those domestic impulses that serve her so well under most circumstances.

The third and final mention of Martha in Scripture comes in the next chapter of John, where Jesus is being honored at a dinner for having raised Lazarus from the dead. Again, we see Martha hard at work and being upstaged by her siblings:

Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with Him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet

with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. (John 12:2-3)

Martha served. Period. This time the complaining is left to Judas, who argues that the money spent on perfume should have been spent on the poor. We aren't told what Martha thought of her sister's gift; she might have been just biting her tongue to keep from agreeing with Judas. I prefer to think, however, that in a lovely irony she was generously pouring on Jesus the gift of that same domestic service for which she had earlier been chastised.

Much has been made of the differences between these two sisters, despite the very limited amount of space devoted to them in Scripture. To complicate the debate, the identity of Mary of Bethany has been traditionally conflated with that of Mary Magdalene and even the "sinful woman" who anoints Jesus' feet at the house of Simon the Pharisee in Luke 7.

Although these women share a passion for Jesus' teachings and visibly demonstrate their love through acts of anointing, there is no evidence to suggest that Martha's sister Mary had ever "fallen" (like the woman in Luke 7) or been cleansed of demons like Mary Magdalene. Nevertheless, the historical confusion over these biblical women has added yet another dimension to the historical treatment of Mary and Martha. Mary becomes not just a figure of contemplation, but also a figure of intrigue and seductive beauty in contrast to the hard working, dispassionate Martha.³

The medieval church viewed these two sisters as symbols of the important dualities of the Christian life: action/contemplation, doing/hearing, preaching/silence, practical/spiritual, serving/being served. These contrasts could be seen most dramatically in the decision between whether to serve God as a working lay person or as a contemplative monk.

Early church leaders alternated between these two poles, sometimes idealizing the contemplative, monastic life, and other times calling for a more active Christianity. Pope Innocent III, for example, had political reasons for upholding Martha's active spirituality as a model,

arguing that although Mary's part was sweeter, Martha's was more useful. In his sermons, he makes Mary appear almost selfish and safe in her choice, not productive and courageous like Martha.⁴

On the other hand, Martha's story was used frequently by those who wanted to keep women silent in church. The image of Martha as scold fit beautifully with the stereotype of the shrewish wife that appears so frequently in medieval literature. The primary tendency, however, was to argue that neither sister is perfect on her own. In an interesting linking of the characters of Martha and Mary with the Old Testament figures of Leah and Rachel, Walter of Chatillon (d. 1179) writes:

Now Martha and Leah are busier than they should be.
Rachel and Mary exert themselves less than they should;
Neither chooses the better part because
They falter equally unproductively on the way.⁵



The astute reader was to learn a lesson of balance, recognizing that there is a time to speak and a time to remain silent. Some argued, in fact, that Martha's mistake was not working when she should have been listening, but instead speaking when she should not have spoken. She should have continued in her work and not interfered with Mary's role as listener.

The strong contrast between Martha and Mary can be seen in most artistic representations of the sisters, as well. *The Gospels of Henry the Lion*, published in 1188, includes in one panel the scene of Mary anointing Jesus' feet. The scroll unfolding from Christ's hand reads: "Your sins are forgiven, go in peace," clearly associating Mary of Bethany with the "fallen woman" from Luke 7.

In the lower panel we see the two sisters in their traditional roles: Mary sits at the feet of Jesus with her hands uplifted in the traditional orans positions, echoing the position of Christ's hands. Martha is off to the side with a scowl on her face, wagging her finger in a gesture of disapproval. Her scroll expresses her request



for help, whereas Christ's scrolls say, "Martha thou art careful and troubled" and "Mary hath chosen the best part which shall not be taken away from her."⁶

The traditional distance between the sisters vanishes in an unusual mid-fifteenth century painting by an assistant to Fra Angelico entitled "The Prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane." Here the artist shows both Martha and Mary in contemplation in the foreground of the picture, keeping watch while Peter, James, and John are seen fast asleep in the middle distance.

Because their names are inscribed in their halos, we know that Mary is the character absorbed in a book. Meanwhile, Martha gazes intently at Mary with her hands in a position of active prayer, mirroring the hands of Christ as he prays in the upper left-hand corner. Here the wakeful contemplation of both women stands in striking contrast to the sleeping disciples. Not surprisingly, Martha appears even more active in her meditation than her sister, who is absorbed in her book.

"Christ in the House of Mary and Martha" is the subject of several later paintings, including works by Tintoretto (1567), Jan Bruegel the Younger, Peter Paul Rubens (1628), and Jan Vermeer (1654-55). For the most part, these paintings show the sisters in their traditional roles, one serving while the other listens.

A unique painting by Caravaggio entitled "The Conversion of Mary Magdalen" (ca. 1600) emphasizes the role of Mary as the converted sinner, needing to renounce her wealth and jewels. According to this version of the story as told in "The Golden Legend," Mary's conversion is brought about in part by Martha's pleading.⁷

In Caravaggio's painting, Mary is dressed in magnificent clothing, with her arm resting on a mirror. On the table is a well-used comb and cosmetic dish with a sponge, indicating her concern with outward appearances. While light shines on Mary's face and chest, Martha's face is in shadows and turned toward Mary. The light shines instead on Martha's hands, symbols of her domestic work as well as her spiritual efforts on behalf of her sister.

Although there are many images of Mary as the fallen woman (generally very voluptuous and sensual), it is difficult to find any images of Martha alone, as if she is not worthy of attention except as a complement to her sister.⁸ In one striking exception, however, we find an image of Martha transformed from kitchen scold to dragon slayer. The Church of St. Laurence, Nuremberg, houses a 1517 depiction of "Martha Defeating the Dragon," based on a medieval legend that traces Martha's

journey following Jesus' death.⁹

Medieval parishes often competed over claims to holy relics in order to add prestige (and money) to their churches. As a result, many stories began to circulate that attempted to explain how it was that the bones of various apostles could end up buried in churches throughout Europe. *The Life of Saint Mary Magdalene and of her Sister Saint Martha* is one such medieval biography.¹⁰

According to this legend, after the deaths of many apostles, such as Paul, James, and Peter, some of the remaining seventy-two apostles (who according to this legend were all at Martha's house on the day she got grumpy) decided to become missionaries to Europe rather than risk martyrdom. The Bishop Maximinus—along with Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and an archdeacon named Parmenas—sailed to Rome, then made the arduous journey across the Alps to Marseilles. In order to spread the gospel more efficiently, Maximinus and Mary stayed in Aix while Martha traveled with Parmenas to Avignon.

Both sisters are described as working tirelessly to spread the gospel and were reputed to have the power to perform miracles. The descriptions of them, however, continue to emphasize the traditional duality between contemplation and action, except that in this legend Mary's contemplative nature evolves into a form of spiritual ecstasy:

Mary hungered in spirit for the Word of God, which, in a wonderful manner, excited her desire again and again. Drawn by the sweetness of her beloved, she became drunk on the cup of heavenly desire, composing herself and raising herself up so that, dissolved at last in the heat of a most chaste love, she drank in interior joy. (95)

Following the traditions of ecstatic meditation later embraced and popularized by Loyola in his *Spiritual Exercises*, Mary evangelized by sharing the full sensory experience of her spiritual love:

She showed to them those eyes which in weeping had dampened the feet of Christ and which saw for the first time the Christ who had risen from the dead; she showed also the hair which a first time she dried the drops of her tears from his feet and a second time, at the feast, she wiped off the precious nard she had poured over those feet; also the mouth together with the lips, by which his feet were kissed thousands and thousands of times. (96)

The medieval church viewed these two sisters as symbols of the important dualities of the Christian life.

Martha, not surprisingly, is depicted as sharing a much more active and less sensual gospel. Rather than hungering after the spirit, Martha “preached about divine power, and performed miracles herself” (97). In imitation of Christ’s own ministry, Martha was actively involved in meeting people’s needs—whether spiritual or physical:

The gift of healing came to her, so that when occasion demanded, by prayer and by the sign of the cross, she healed lepers, cured paralytics, revived the dead, and bestowed her aid on the blind, the mute, the deaf, the lame, the invalid, and the sick. *Thus did Martha do.* (97, emphasis supplied)

It is this reputation for “doing” that gets Martha tangled up with a dragon. One day as Martha preaches the gospel in a region between Arles and Avignon, she finds her audience distracted by talk of a “terrible dragon of unbelievable length and great bulk”:

It breathed out poisonous fumes, shot sulfurous flames from its eyes, and emitted fierce hissings with its mouth and horrible noises with its curved teeth. With its talons and teeth it tore to pieces anyone who crossed its path; with its poisonous breath it killed anyone who came too near. (99)

The people test Martha by claiming that if she truly is of Christ, she ought to be able to defend them against the dragon. Undaunted by their descriptions of the ferocious beast, Martha responds in words similar to those Jesus spoke to her after Lazarus’ death: “[I can,] if you are ready to believe, for all things are possible to those who believe” (99).

She then marches “with confidence” to the dragon’s lair and immediately subdues the dragon and leads it out of the cave with her girdle, which she has tied around its neck. When she sees that the people are still frightened, she chastises them for their “scant faith” and urges the people to kill the beast.

It is interesting to note that Martha does not kill the beast herself; rather, she tames it and asks the townspeople to complete the victory. This stands in striking contrast to the traditional images of St. George defeating the dragon. St. George is often depicted in the midst of active battle, with his sword thrust deeply into the

dragon’s throat, whereas in images of Martha fighting the dragon she holds up her skirt as if not needing to even touch the beast that lies at her feet. Legend grants this woman victory over the dragon, but does not allow her to get her hands dirty in the process.

She doesn’t seem to mind getting her hands dirty in other endeavors, however. After her encounter with the dragon, Martha continues to serve actively those in her mission field:

All of the poisonous reptiles having been chased out of the wilderness of Tarascon by the power of God, the most holy Martha chose to make her home there, transforming a place that had before been hateful and detestable into a pleasant and agreeable habitation. (100)

Here again, we see Martha in her role as celebrated hostess, transforming the rough wilderness into a domestic paradise. She heals the sick, feeds the hungry, and clothes the poor. “Even the rich who streamed to her in great numbers, she did not send away empty: they always carried back something good for their souls or bodies” (101).

Although the legend celebrates Martha for her active service, the story of her death shows her finally in an act of contemplation. According to the medieval biography, Martha foresees her own death a year in advance and calls for her sister Mary to come visit her. Mary, however, dies before she can make the trip. Martha learns of her sister’s death through a vision in which she sees her sister carried to heaven by angels. In a final declaration of sibling rivalry Martha exclaims:

Oh most beautiful sister, what is it that you have done? Why have you not visited me as you promised and swore to do? Are you then going to enjoy without me the embraces of the Lord Jesus, whom we both love so much and who loves us so much? (108)



It is tempting to read into Martha's response latent jealousy over the image of Mary now sitting at Jesus' feet, just as she had done so long ago that day in Bethany. Just as Mary had stolen the spotlight in life (whether through costly ointments or being the "bad girl") so she appears to have upstaged Martha in death as well.

Martha pleads with God to let her join her sister in heaven, but it seems that she must first learn a lesson in patience. In a gesture of supreme irony, Martha is confined to her bed. She laments, "all my limbs have lost their motion, my nerves are paralyzed (110). Now that action is no longer an option, she turns finally to contemplation, spending her final days meditating on the story of Jesus' life and crucifixion:

When she heard read to her in her own language
the sufferings of her well-beloved, she burst out
in tears of compassion and began to weep,
forgetting for the time being her own death in
fixing all her attention on the passion story.
When she heard how Christ had commended his
spirit into the Father's hands and died, she
sighed deeply and expired. (111)

In this moment, just before her death, she learns the lesson Jesus had tried to teach her in Bethany and she finds rest at last.

The Roman Catholic Church still honors Martha's death each year on July 29. Appropriately, she is celebrated as the patron saint of cooks, servants, dieticians, innkeepers, and sisters. Thanks to a poem by Rudyard Kipling entitled "The Sons of Martha," she has also become a patron saint for engineers, who, since 1964, have given out the annual "Sons of Martha" medal that recognizes outstanding contributions to the profession of engineering. The opening stanza of Kipling's 1907 poem reads:

The Sons of Mary seldom bother, for they have
inherited that good part;
But the Sons of Martha favour their Mother of
the careful soul and the troubled heart.
And because she lost her temper once, and
because she was rude to the Lord her Guest,
Her Sons must wait upon Mary's Sons, world
without end, reprieve or rest.

The poem goes on to describe the heavy responsibility of engineers to protect humankind against the forces of nature. Like Martha, they must be vigilant in

their duties: "They do not preach that their God will rouse them a little before the nuts work loose." The poem ends almost bitterly with the lines,

And the Sons of Mary smile and are blessed—
they know the angels are on their side.
They know in them is the Grace Confessed, and
for them are the Mercies multiplied.
They sit at the Feet—they hear the Word—they
see how truly the Promise runs.
They have cast their burden upon the Lord,
and—the Lord He lays it on Martha's Sons!

Poor Martha. It doesn't seem fair . . . or perhaps we are feeling sorry for the wrong character. Although Jesus has occasionally to remind the Marthas of the world to keep their priorities straight, he still trusts them to do his work. He needs dragon slayers to protect and serve those who need to sit at his feet.

Perhaps the most fitting tribute to Martha is the fact that when you search the Internet for "Martha of Bethany" you find places like St. Martha's Hall, a home in St. Louis that provides a safe environment for abused women and their dependent children. You also find St. Martha's Catholic Church, an inner city spiritual haven for people of a variety of ethnic backgrounds. In these namesakes I think even Martha has found "the better part," which to this day has not been taken from her.

Notes and References

1. All biblical quotes are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.
2. Barbara Reid, *Choosing the Better Part? Women in the Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1996), 145.
3. For further discussion of the character of Mary, see Susan Haskins, *Mary Magdalen: Myth and Metaphor* (New York: Harcourt, 1993); and Giles Constable, "The Interpretation of Mary and Martha," in *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
4. Constable, "Mary and Martha," 99.
5. Quoted in *ibid.*, 51.
6. See Constable for reproductions of this and other artistic representations of Mary and Martha. See also, Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, *The Women Around Jesus* (New York: Crossroad, 1990).
7. Haskins, *Mary Magdalen*, 256-58.
8. For further illustrations, see *ibid.*
9. Reproduced in Moltmann-Wendel, *Women Around Jesus*, 16.
10. Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian, 1989; translated and annotated by David Mycoff.

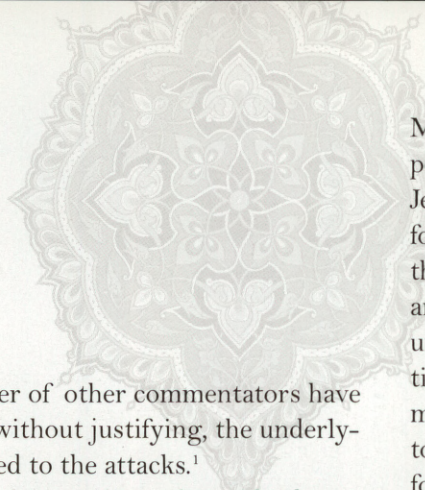
Cynthia Westerbeck chairs the English department at Columbia Union College. She first presented the material in this article to a Sabbath School class at Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church, Takoma Park, Maryland. cwesterb@cuc.edu.



Is Islam Really a Peaceful Religion?

By Malcolm Russell

As the days that followed September 11, 2001, merged into weeks and months, a surprising level of analysis began to puncture the initial perceptions of why the attacks took place. The first responses were simplistic. In the speech to Congress and the nation that may otherwise mark his finest hour, President George W. Bush depicted America's attackers as hating "Our freedoms, our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other," to the point of desiring to kill Christians, Jews, and all Americans. On October 15, however, *Newsweek* published Fareed Zakaria's cover story, "Why They Hate Us." The article presented a rather different



picture, and any number of other commentators have attempted to explain, without justifying, the underlying resentments that led to the attacks.¹

Although much has been written about “fundamentalism” in Islam, attention in academe and by the media usually finds other aspects (women, terrorism, repression, the Israeli-Arab conflict) more interesting than Islam’s traditional political conceptions. As *Spectrum* ventures into foreign affairs, this essay attempts to consider the dissonance faithful Muslims find between the religious and philosophical teachings of traditional Islam and modern practices of international relations. The issues behind that dissonance are distant from our perspective about the role of government because Seventh-day Adventists strongly support separation of church and state. However, Adventists familiar with Old Testament concepts of governance will find a number of parallels between them and Islam.

Pious (and not necessarily fundamentalist) Muslims suffer this dissonance because Western ideas about the nature of government dominate the world. At the most basic level, the West conceives a secular government, based on the nation-state, seeking its goals from the desires of its citizens, creating its own laws, and operating its foreign policy in its own self-interest. In such realms, the important criteria are human choices and well-being.

In contrast, Islam calls believers to live in a community of the faithful, subject to God’s precepts. Ideally, neither nations nor rival Islamic governments should exist; foreign relations become a matter of spreading Islamic rule—God’s law—around the globe. Thus, Muslims face a world where governments—often including their own—and international relations defy Islamic precepts, which are based on Scripture (the Qur’an) and the tradition (the sunna) of their religious community.

The Cornerstone of Muslim Understanding of Government

Western Christians can most easily approach Islamic theories of government and international relations by starting with the contrast between Jesus the Messiah and

Muhammad the Messenger of Allah. Rejecting contemporary expectations that the Messiah would liberate Jewish society from Roman rule, Jesus instructed his followers with the familiar command, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Mark 12:17, KJV). Christianity took form under the pressures of persecution; after the resurrection, its followers certainly spread a revolutionary message to the world, and their radical ethics eventually toppled polytheist Rome. However, early Christianity focused attention on preparation for the Kingdom of Heaven, not the seizure of power on earth.

When both ruler and subjects became Christian during the reign of Emperor Constantine, centuries of conflict between church and state followed. Sometimes this conflict was philosophical, but often it was physical. The immense bloodshed of the Thirty Years War (1618–48) and other religiously linked conflicts set Northern Europe firmly on a course that separated governments from religious authority and helped lead to foreign policies that served national interests, rather than those of the clergy.² Literally as well as symbolically, the writings of Machiavelli and Hugo Grotius replaced the Bible and St. Augustine as guides to government behavior.

Like Christ, Muhammad began public life as a prophet, in his case in the western Arabian city of Mecca, after an intense vision around A.D. 610.³ Warning of divine punishments to come, he called Meccan society to repent from unbelief, idolatry, and exploitation of the poor. His initial messages from Allah, the God of the Old Testament, share the flavor of the Hebrew prophets.⁴ As an example, consider Sura LXXX, “He Frowned”:⁵

Perish Man! How unthankful he is!
Of what did He create him?
Of a sperm-drop
He created him, and determined him,
then the way eased for him,
then makes him to die, and buries him,
then, when He wills, He raises him.
No indeed! Man has not accomplished His bidding.

Let Man consider his nourishment.
We poured out the rains abundantly,
then We split the earth in fissures
and therein made the grains to grow
and vines, and reeds,
and olives, and palms,

Because Muhammad had cleansed the region of non-Muslims through conversion, exile, or massacre, later Muslim tradition stressed the importance of keeping it pure of unbelievers.

and dense-tree'd gardens,
and fruits, and pastures,
an enjoyment for you and your flocks.

And when the Blast shall sound,
upon the day when a man shall flee from his brother,
his mother, his father,
his consort, his sons,
every man that day shall have business to suffice him.
Some faces on that day shall shine
laughing, joyous;
some faces on that day shall be dusty
o'erspread with darkness—
those—they are the unbelievers, the libertines.

The Meccan economy prospered on long-distance trade facilitated by an annual month-long truce that permitted pilgrims to cross the deserts in relative safety and worship at Mecca's shrines. Muhammad not only condemned leading merchants for their pride and refusal to care for the poor, he also attacked the many idols whose shrines provided the foundation of the merchants' prosperity. Opposition and persecution followed, and in 622, Muhammad left Mecca for the oasis of Medina to become its civic leader. This emigration, the *Hijra*, (sometimes translated "flight") became the turning point for the Islamic calendar. The symbolism is appropriate; the Hijra transformed Muhammad from an oppressed preacher to a civic leader and arbiter of the Muslim community. Unlike Christ, but like Moses, Muhammad became ruler and lawgiver.

Having escaped persecution by the idol-worshipping Meccans, Muhammad soon led attacks against them, cutting their trade routes and repelling Meccan reprisals. Moreover, as his opponents in Medina converted, fled, or were killed on grounds of treason, he became the sole executive and legislator of the city-state. Mecca surrendered in 630, and the Islamic pilgrimage, the hajj, replaced the pagan one.

The new responsibilities were reflected in prophetic messages that differed dramatically from the brief, almost sonnet-like utterings from the time spent in Mecca. Because the Qur'an is traditionally organized by chapter length, the longer, and chronologically

later, Medinan messages are typically found in the first part, where they often daunt hesitant readers with details of matters like inheritance.⁶

By 632, Muhammad directly ruled the Hijaz, today the western province of Saudi Arabia, and most tribes of the entire peninsula submitted to his authority. His birthplace, Mecca, formed with Medina the Haramain, the two sacred (or protected) places.⁷ Because Muhammad had cleansed the region of non-Muslims through conversion, exile, or massacre, later Muslim tradition stressed the importance of keeping it pure of unbelievers. Elsewhere, Christians and Jews—"People of the Book"—who submitted to Muslim rule would be treated with tolerance, though at the price of heavier taxes, second-class citizenship, and distance from the ruling Muslims. As the Qur'an warned, "O believers, take not Jews and Christians as friends; they are friends of each other."⁸ The fate of idol worshipers remained harsh, defined by the basic command "Kill the polytheists wherever you find them." Muslim believers were to carry forward Allah's commission to spread Islamic beliefs.

The early Muslims expected Christ's return, the resurrection, and God's final judgment almost immediately. Possibly for this reason Muhammad evidently failed to designate either the individual or institution to rule the Islamic community after his death. That came in 632, following a brief illness, and left the Muslim community leaderless. However, a relatively small group in Medina rapidly proclaimed his close friend and father-in-law, Abu Bakr, the *khalifat rasul Allah*, literally "Successor to the Messenger of God."

Muhammad had filled many different roles. He exercised great control over the community of Muslims, many of whom had broken their clan and tribal links at least temporarily when they converted to Islam. He had administered Medina, as a seventh-century city manager. By dint of conquest, the many tribes of Arabia's deserts and mountains acknowledged him as supreme chieftain, oftentimes a very



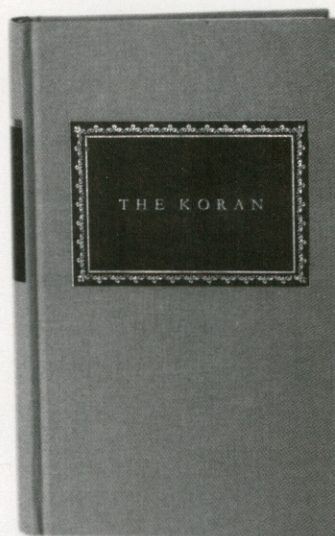
personal rather than institutional loyalty. What roles would his successor fill?

Though invoking religious terminology in their claims to office, neither Abu Bakr nor his successors ever claimed authority in religious dogma, let alone any prophetic calling. The final prophet for the earth's last days had appeared and died; God's last messages had been delivered. No one could replace Muhammad as God's messenger, but the community needed a leader, and there was no priesthood. While deferring to Muslim scholars over the interpretation of Islamic law, the caliph would enforce it over the territories he ruled, lead the faithful in prayer and battle, and symbolize the community of God's believers. Another common title for the caliph was perhaps more descriptive of the essentially nonspiritual role: *Amir al-Mu'minin*, Commander of the Faithful.

In the centuries that followed the caliphate came to play a far more central role than emperors or kings in the West. Jesuit orientalist Henri Lammens may have exaggerated a century ago when he claimed that sects arose in Islam over disputes about the caliphate.⁹ Nevertheless, it is reasonable to believe that the broader theory of the caliphate and purpose of the Islamic state lie behind the anti-Western resentment that reached its extreme forms on September 11, 2001.

Clearly, the broad equality and democracy of desert nomads influenced expectations of the caliphate. Rather than submit to hereditary authority, Arab tribes selected their best leader in war and peace as their *shaykh*. Likewise, according to theories developed over the centuries, adult male Muslims should select a new caliph when death rendered the office vacant. In practice, many caliphs attempted to designate their successors and manipulate the selection. Nevertheless, a sense of popular involvement in selecting leaders remains in Islam.

Some critics dismiss this sense of Islamic democracy by pointing out that Islam reached its zenith under the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties, or that today a disproportionately high number of the world's hereditary rulers are Muslim.¹⁰ For a pious Muslim, however, neither those shortcomings nor the lack of



established procedures for popular choice detract from a sense that Islamic rule is somehow democratic, a far cry from most Middle Eastern states today.

In theory, if not always in practice, the great obligation of any caliph was to carry out Islam's ultimate mission, the jihad to establish "the supremacy of Allah's word over this world."¹¹ In Muslim thought, the world was divided into two opposing camps. The *Dar al-Harb*, or Abode of War, applied to all regions outside the rule of Muslim law, for example, Christian Europe or Hindu India. By contrast, God's law was applied in the *Dar al-Islam*, the Abode of Islam. Although the word *Islam* itself means "submission," its Arabic root of the three consonants s-l-m carries strong implications of "peace" and "security," reflected in the widely recognized form of the root, *salaam*, and the Hebrew *shalom*.

Popular commentators and the American propaganda machine recently seized this sense of peacefulness to proclaim that "Islam is a religion of peace." Certainly, this is true: Islam promises the protection of Allah to the humblest believer. It does so because the *Dar al-Islam* is essentially a nomocracy, a society under the rule of divine law.¹² What could be more peaceful for the believer? Moreover, this law extended far greater toleration to Christian and Jewish subjects than Muslims and Jews received in Europe during the middle ages.

However, there is also a darker, warlike side of Islam that many of the current commentaries often overlook. This is the crux of my argument. First, it was the duty of the Islamic community (*Umma*) to extend the realm of Islam into the Abode of War. Second, and more fundamentally, relationships with non-Muslim societies were determined not by reason or logic, but by

For extremists like Osama bin Laden the worldview is confined and shaped by whats in classical Islam, fourteen hundred years ago

Muhammed's revelations interpreted by early Muslim thinkers. Put starkly, for a pious Muslim, the legitimate relationships of Christians and Muslims are fixed for the duration of human history. They were set by divine command fourteen hundred years ago.

Every baptized Adventist recognizes the gospel commission to go into all the world, preaching and teaching all nations before the end comes. Like Christianity, Islam recognizes the importance of persuasion in spreading the faith. This is literally effort, or exertion, spreading belief in Allah. Particularly in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, this is exactly how Islam expanded, as merchant communities shared their faith.

But "exertion" translates as "jihad," and although the doctrine of jihad covers proselytizing, for centuries it also carried harsher overtones for nonbelievers. Even more ambiguous than many Arab words—it may be translated as "struggle," as Arberry does—it may alternatively imply strife, war, and fighting.¹³ For the first sense of the word, personal effort for the faith became a duty of Muslims, though not a numbered addition to the famous five pillars or personal obligations. However, warlike "jihad," led by the caliph, became an obligation of the entire Islamic community, for its underlying purpose was to spread the law and message of Allah through all the earth.

So, in practical terms, Islam is not fundamentally a religion of peace. Far from striving to eliminate conflict with other societies, Muslim society bears a collective responsibility for warlike struggle to subject non-Muslims to the law of Islam (though not necessarily to convert them). *There can be no peace between the Dar al-Islam and the Dar al-Harb, only periods of truce.*

During the fourteen hundred Islamic years since Muhammad died, actual conditions in the Muslim world rarely matched those outlined above. Two of the first four caliphs died violently, including 'Ali, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law. After a century, rival rulers each claimed to be the caliph. Eventually, Muslim states, allied with Christians, fought other Muslims. For the past thousand years, the caliphate has carried no political significance, and it disappeared

in the 1920s. By then, most regions of the Muslim world had become colonies of one or another European power as the Dar al-Islam contracted.

But historical memory is always selective, and for extremists like Osama bin Laden the worldview is confined and shaped by events in classical Islam, fourteen hundred years ago. Moreover, for many sensitive Arab Muslims the present seems oppressive. The twentieth century witnessed defeat after defeat by Israel, and rule by largely undemocratic governments from Morocco in the Arab West to Iraq in the Arab East.

Eighty years ago, hopes lay in Arab nationalism, but unity proved a mirage. Five decades ago, Marxism or at least an alliance with the Soviet Union seemed to offer progress and weaponry, but these hopes proved false as generation after generation of Soviet arms proved inadequate. A quarter century ago, control over oil promised prosperity and power, but boom turned to bust. For Arab Muslims who feel wronged by the state of the world, the only solace, the only hope, appears to be Islam, in a form that will strike back at the myriad injustices.

Viewed from this perspective, the massacres of September 11, 2001, were not simple anti-Americanism, or punishment for social evils. Apparently, Osama bin Laden never included pornography and other social sins in his list of American wrongdoing. The hijackers themselves were not poor Africans or Bangladeshis so envious of our riches that they rubbed out a great symbol of U.S. financial power. Instead, they came from better-off Arab Gulf states or from middle-class families elsewhere. They grew up with wealth to travel abroad, and learned to speak English. Many had servants at home, and enough education to enter pilot training programs. Above all, their goals were political.

Osama bin Laden himself has frequently repeated three grievances to justify his openly violent campaign against America: the presence of U.S. military forces in Saudi Arabia; the U.S. treatment of Iraq; and, finally, U.S. support for Israel. His wide appeal in the



Arab and Muslim world becomes most understandable in the context of the traditional Muslim conception of relations with nonbelievers.

Significantly, the presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia usually receives first mention; it may be the prime motivating factor. Having waded through the discussion above, the reader can now understand why those troops affront local public opinion in ways that bases in Germany, Italy, or even Japan do not. The American bases in Arabia are used to patrol the skies of Iraq, a fellow Muslim Arab nation with which Saudi Arabia ought to ally against Zionism and the West.¹⁴

The bases themselves house unbelievers of both sexes whose private lives no doubt involve drinking, social mixing, and many other activities contrary to the Qur'an. Most of all, these bases are located in Saudi Arabia, the land of the two sacred sites, the haramain. In all sorts of detailed ways, Saudi society attempts to revive pure Islam and reject the man-made additions of fourteen hundred years of history. Now its government symbolizes its oppression and tyranny by providing military bases for the unbelievers!

The second grievance is U.S. policy that has condemned the pitiful inhabitants of Iraq's dictatorship to a decade of economic misery and social decline, including the collateral deaths of a few hundred thousand children from poor sanitary conditions, hospitals without equipment, and food shortages. This must offend Osama bin Laden and his supporters, for he must share the feelings of virtually all non-Kuwaiti

Arabs. But Osama's mindset presumably goes further and interprets these events as unbelievers attacking the Dar al-Islam, whereas the right order of things would be a jihad in the opposite direction.

Osama's third and oldest grievance is the U.S. support of Israel. Israel lies beyond the scope of this article, and the plight of the Palestinians has too often been manipulated cynically by other Arabs. However, it is also worth remembering that such manipulation can only take place because resentment over Palestine lies deep in almost every Arab's emotions. Once again, Osama's religiously influenced worldview finds much more at stake than the clash over a small bit of territory. Instead, Jerusalem, the starting point of Muhammad's night journey to heaven and thus the third holiest shrine of Islam, has fallen to the Jews.¹⁵

Where does all this leave Americans, collectively and individually? After the dust clears from Afghanistan, after we bring to justice at least some of those we can implicate for the attacks on New York and the Pentagon, we will have an unrivaled opportunity to seize the moral high ground.

Withdrawal from the Saudi bases, and perhaps their mothballing, could be simple and quick. Rather than abandon the Afghans to poverty, anarchy, and the repression of women, as we did after the Soviet withdrawal, we ought to become a source of generous assistance to suffering peoples, provided they can govern themselves with at least minimal standards of humanity. Toward Iraq, it is likely that even Machiavelli would counsel replacing the sanctions responsible for so much suffering so easily blamed on the United States. Finally, toward Israel and the Palestinians, it will be time to put physical form onto President Bush's allusion of an eventual Palestinian state. Admittedly, neither side seems inclined to compromise, but we possess powerful financial and other levers to induce agreement.

Some may object that policies of "disinterested constructiveness" are unsuitable for the world's superpower, whose responsibility is primarily to forge its own destiny. To such claims I can only offer two counterarguments. The first is practical. The struggle against terrorism will not be won by seizing territory or capturing individuals. Those who hate us are loosely organized, dispersed among a civilian population, and extremely difficult to infiltrate. Right now, we are disliked so thoroughly in a number of Middle Eastern countries that the only reason we can consider some countries friendly is because they repress democracy and dissent. We will only know we have won this war when we have

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reduced hatred over our policies and resentment declines.

The second objection is moral, and it applies to a much smaller group than the general American public. As Christians, do we carry a duty to bring justice and peace where we can in the world? If, instead, we ignore others in their suffering while we enjoy prosperity, does God still allow nations to suffer punishment as a corrective?

Notes and References

1. Among many examples, see Andrew Sullivan, "This is a Religious War," *New York Times*, Oct. 7, 2001.

2. Certainly countries like Denmark, Great Britain, France, and the various principalities of Germany maintained a state religion that influenced any number of domestic issues. My point is that foreign policy was one of the earliest areas freed from such influences.

3. The fashionable and politically correct designation "Common Era" for the Western calendar fails badly when discussing Islam. The Muslim lunar calendar (abbreviated A.H. for anno Hegirae) began in September 622. Given the existence of two faith-based calendars that disagree even on the number of days in a year, there is no Common Era between West and Islam. To assert that the Western calendar is "common" hints of (usually unintended) arrogance.

4. There are a number of interesting parallels between Muhammad and Ellen White, including a shared assertion among respective supporters that each was the final messenger predicted by the Apocalypse. Critics of each have suggested that epilepsy may account for the physical phenomena that accompanied the visions. One of the most thoughtful treatments of Muhammad's inspiration comes from a former communist, Maxime Rodinson. See his *Mohammed* (Penguin; various editions), especially chaps. 3 and 4, "Birth of a Prophet," and "Birth of a Sect."

5. A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (New York: Collier Books/Macmillan, 1955), verses 15-40. This rather free translation seems closer in style to the King James Version of the Bible. Among the many translations, Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall's sacrifices literary beauty for closeness in translation.

6. The implication that Muhammad's circumstances shaped the messages from Allah is completely contrary to orthodox Islam, for the Qur'an is considered the *uncreated Word of God*, not God's ideas presented in the words of a human. Adventists who have struggled with the nature of prophetic inspiration can perhaps understand better than most Westerners the great Muslim anguish aroused a generation ago by Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, which comically portrays Muhammad compromising his message to escape persecution. In this book, Muhammad's Persian scribe later alters the wording of visions, and Muhammad fails to recognize the changes.

7. *Al-Haramain* is the dual (two-item plural) form of *haram*, the protected or sacred place, applied to the private, family quarters of a home. Given Western images of sexually debauched Muslims, this word entered English as *harem*, the wives and concubines of a wealthy or powerful Muslim.

8. "The Table" 5:56 (Arberry's translation).

9. Henri Lammens, *Islam, Beliefs and Institutions, Beliefs and Institutions* (trans. 1929; reprint, London: Frank Cass, 1968), esp. chap. 7, "The Sects of Islam." Undoubtedly dated and clearly biased, this work nevertheless provides more detailed scholarship than many later studies.

10. Hereditary rule often takes unusual forms in the Arab world. Succession passes among brothers of the late ruler in Saudi Arabia, and alternates between lines of cousins in Kuwait. The late King Hussein of Jordan had long designated his brother, Prince

Hasan, as heir, and only replaced him at the last minute, apparently after family disputes.

11. Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1955), 152. The section that follows reflects Khadduri's approaches to the subject.

12. Khadduri advocates the term (*ibid.*, 14-18) because God only rules indirectly. This conflicts with those who attempt to interpret early Muslim societies or the Hebrews under the Judges as a theocracy.

13. The treatment of these Qur'anic verses provides a guide to the inclinations of the translator, because 2:215, 9:41, 49:15, 61:10-13, and 66:9 have been translated either as "struggle" or "warfare."

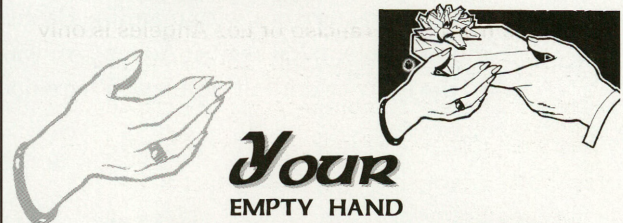
14. Readers over the age of twenty will remember that the United States saved Saudi Arabia from Iraqi threats during the Gulf War. Although many religious extremists in Saudi Arabia no doubt find Saddam Hussein a very objectionable character, they also seem to suspect that U.S. intervention really served America's self-interest by saving the Saudi ruling house and maintaining low world oil prices.

15. Laboring under a socialist-inspired delusion that they could create a single state in Palestine that included both Jews and Arabs, many members of the Palestine Liberation Organization were careful to distinguish between Zionists and Jews twenty or thirty years ago. From conversations I have heard in recent years, this polite resistance to anti-Semitism is gone, and the slogans written on the walls during the present intifada confirm this conclusion.

Malcolm Russell was born and reared in Lebanon. He earned a Ph.D. in Middle East Studies and International Economics from the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. He is professor of economics and history at Andrews University. Russell@andrews.edu

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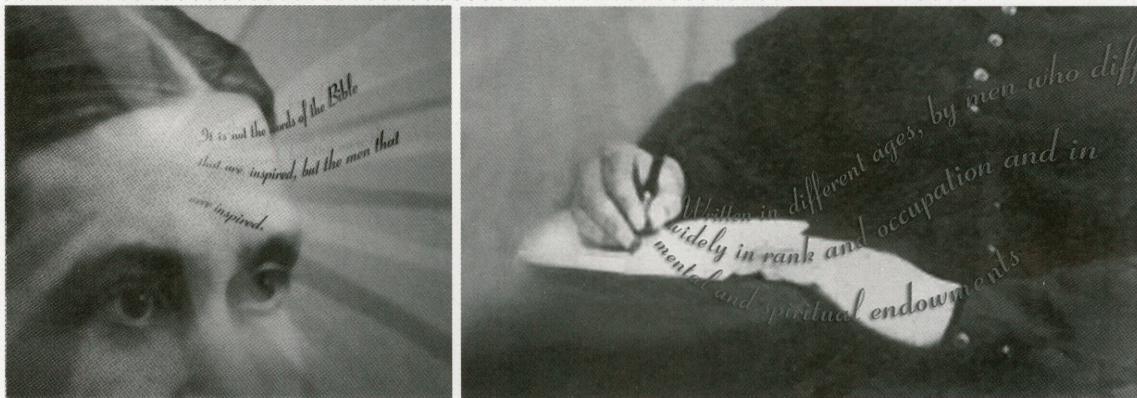
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Adventist and Protestant Fundamentalism

By Reinder Bruinsma

The tragic events of September 11, 2001, and increased interest in fundamentalism of all kinds suggests that now is an appropriate time to reexamine where Seventh-day Adventists stand on the religious spectrum. Are they part of mainstream Protestantism? Could they be considered evangelicals? Are they fundamentalists? Or are they a class in themselves, not fitting into any of these categories? To some extent, Adventists are, indeed, unique; they share many characteristics with mainline Protestant churches, while also possessing evangelical and fundamentalist traits.¹ Adventism was influenced by the fundamentalist movement of the early twentieth century. Where does it stand today?

What is Fundamentalism?

Among many definitions of fundamentalism, I have found the following useful:

Fundamentalism—a movement organized in the early twentieth century to defend orthodox Protestant Christianity against the challenges of theological liberalism, higher criticism of the Bible, evolution and other modernisms judged to be harmful to traditional faith.²

However, the term “fundamentalism” is increasingly used in a much wider sense. William G. Johnsson has noted in one of his editorials in the *Adventist Review* that, for

some, the term is interchangeable with evangelicalism. It has also been applied to forces outside of Protestant Christianity and has become “a catchall in recent years. It has been applied to figures as diverse as Jim Jones, the Ayatollah Khomeini, Billy Graham, and Jerry Falwell.” It is now often used, claims Johnsson, “in a negative sense to indicate a particular mind-set. A fundamentalist is a strident bigot advocating adherence to outmoded ideas. He is a separatist, suspicious of others.” According to Charles Scriven, the term “fundamentalism” has gradually “acquired the connotation of group-think, fear of knowledge, and hostility to innovation.” Kenneth Wood has depicted fundamentalists as people who demand simple answers to complex questions, who thrive on suspicion and eagerly believe all kinds of conspiracy theories.³

I will use the term “fundamentalism” mainly in the first sense, to refer to the religious current that gained momentum early in the twentieth century and has continued to influence or shape the theological convictions of a large segment of conservative Protestant Christianity. In the second part of this article, however, I will also use the word in the wider sense to suggest a mindset that is anti-intellectual, opposed to innovation, and mainly reactionary, and I will briefly address the question of whether present-day Adventism is affected in any large degree by this perspective.

Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism

The distinction between evangelicalism and fundamentalism is not always clear, so some historical background is in order.⁴ In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, much of American Protestantism embraced theological liberalism. A majority of theologians and other thinkers in the United States accepted a new scientific worldview, in particular the concept of evolution, and historical-critical theories about the origin of the Bible fit well into this wider philosophical framework.

As with German theologian Julius Wellhausen and other scholars of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many in the United States came to believe that Moses did not write the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible), but that it arose out of a complicated editorial process that spanned many centuries. They also expressed doubt about traditional views on the dating and authorship of other books in the Bible. These and other developments bolstered liberalism and reinforced an optimistic view of man and his abilities, which characterized the American spirit throughout the nineteenth century.⁵

Fundamentalism as a historical movement reacted against this trend. Between 1910 and 1915, opponents of theological liberalism published a series of brochures entitled *The Fundamentals*. Shortly afterward, Baptist editor Curtis Lee first used the expression “fundamentalists” to designate the growing group of Christians whose members were prepared to man the barricades to defend the “fundamentals.” This militant attitude, together with a predilection for revivals, a premillennialist approach to prophecy, a firm conviction that the Bible is totally inerrant, and a Victorian morality, forged diverse groups of evangelical Christians into a broad fundamentalist coalition. It has been justifiably argued that fundamentalism was, more than anything else, a negative reaction: *against* modernism, *against* the theory of evolution, *against* every form of socialism, and—not to be forgotten—*against* Roman Catholicism.⁶

For more than a century, Princeton Seminary, a Presbyterian institution established in 1812, was the center of orthodox Calvinism and a bastion of opposition to theological liberalism.⁷ Princeton theologians such as Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, Benjamin B. Warfield, and J. Gresham Machen, took the lead with others like James Orr and Augustus H. Strong in defense of orthodoxy, convinced as they were of every Bible verse’s historical reliability.

Although evangelicalism and fundamentalism overlap, they must not be confused. Evangelicalism is much broader, itself in part a reaction against the narrowness of fundamentalism. All fundamentalists are evangelicals, but not all evangelicals, by far, are fundamentalists.⁸

George Marsden, an expert in the field of American fundamentalism, begins his analysis of the fundamentalist movement with these oft-quoted words: “A fundamentalist is an evangelical who is angry about something.”⁹ Together with many others, Marsden believes that the militant attitude of many fundamentalists is the most readily noticeable difference between them and evangelicals. Fundamentalists are not just conservative in their convictions, they are also prepared to fight for them.

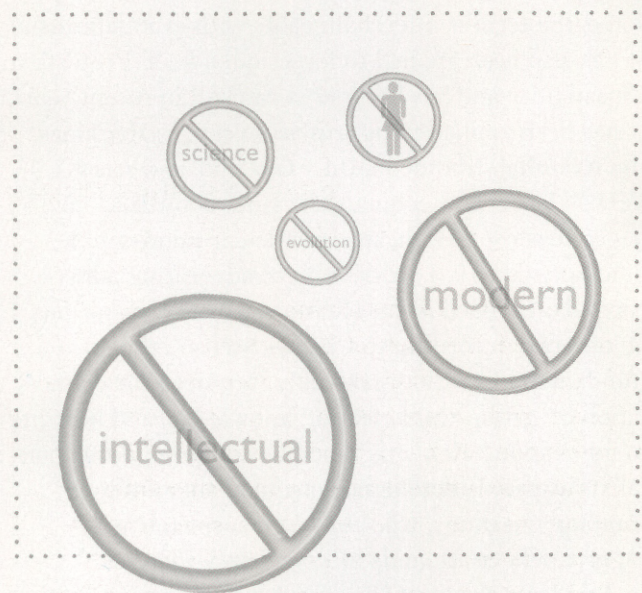
Evangelicals gained identity with the formation of the National Association of Evangelicals in 1943. Through this organization they sought to establish an alternative to the ecumenical Federal Council of Churches and the fundamentalist American Council of Christian Churches. John Stott summarizes the essential differences between fundamentalist and evangelical Christians in eight points:

1. Fundamentalists are suspicious of scholarly

- activities and often display distinct anti-intellectualism. In contrast, evangelicals are much more open to the results of scholarly research.
2. Fundamentalists believe that the Bible was verbally inspired and have little or no appreciation for its human dimensions and cultural context. However, evangelicals recognize those elements and pay more attention to context when interpreting Scripture.
 3. Fundamentalists usually prefer a traditional Bible translation, such as the King James Version. Evangelicals are more likely to use a modern version, for instance, the Revised Standard Version, the New International Version, or the Living Bible.
 4. Fundamentalists emphasize the need to interpret the Bible literally, whereas evangelicals devote more attention to context and show more awareness for the Bible's different literary genres.
 5. Generally speaking, fundamentalists have little or no interest in ecumenical activities, whereas evangelicals tend to be open to dialogue with other Christians and usually establish ecumenical contacts.
 6. Fundamentalists often follow current opinions of the majority, rather uncritically, with regard to such social issues as race relations and economic policy. Evangelicals are not immune to the influence of the culture that surrounds them, but are usually more critical and more inclined to construct a biblical world view as the basis for their views and actions.
 7. Fundamentalists tend to be further right than evangelicals on the political spectrum.
 8. Almost all fundamentalists are premillennial in their theology. Evangelicals hold widely divergent views on the Second Coming and other end-time events.¹⁰

Adventists and the Issue of Inspiration

Views about inspiration varied among early Adventist leaders, but most of them tended to have a rather narrow conception. The views expressed by George B. Starrs in 1883 while traveling in the company of



Ellen White (who herself held a different view) were probably accepted widely among rank and file Adventists. Not only was he vehemently opposed to “higher criticism,” which he described as “blasphemy,” but he also defended an inerrantist position.¹¹

Not surprisingly, questions regarding the inspiration of Ellen White soon became important. Were Ellen White's statements the last word on the many topics she addressed? If she was inspired, was this “verbal” inspiration? Many church leaders knew that Ellen White's writings were heavily edited and at times revised by literary assistants. How could it be maintained, as some leaders argued and many members believed, that she was inerrant in historical, geographic, and scientific details? If not, was she at least inerrant in matters of biblical exegesis and doctrine?

Naturally, these discussions led to questions about the inspiration of the Bible.¹² By the early years of the twentieth century, an often bitter controversy raged in the Church between those who believed in “thought” inspiration and others who strongly defended some form of verbal inspiration, both for the Bible and for the writings of Ellen White.

Ellen White was among those who rejected verbal inspiration and inerrancy. Her views are clearly expressed in the introduction of her book *The Great Controversy*:

The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers, though in human language. . . . The Ten Commandments were and beyond clearly

Fundamentalists are not just conservative in their convictions, they are also prepared to fight for them.

spoken by God Himself, and were written by His own hand. They are of divine, and not of human composition. But the Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. . . . Written in different ages, by men who differed widely in rank and occupation, and in mental and spiritual endowments, the books of the Bible present a wide contrast in style, as well as a diversity in the nature of the subjects unfolded. Different forms of expression are employed by different writers; often the same truth is more strikingly presented by one than by another. And as several writers present a subject under varied aspects and relations, there may appear, to the superficial, careless, or prejudiced reader, to be discrepancy or contradiction, where the thoughtful, reverent student, with clearer insight, discerns the underlying harmony.¹³

Ellen White's best known statement about inspiration, which I shall discuss below, was first written in 1886, but not published in any readily accessible form until some seventy years later. Her balanced position was reflected in the 1883 General Conference resolution on inspiration, which stressed that God imparted thoughts, not the actual words in which the ideas were expressed.

We believe the light given by God to his servants is by enlightenment of the mind, thus imparting the thoughts, and not (except in rare cases) the very words in which the ideas should be expressed.¹⁴

Nonetheless, many Adventist thought leaders held to the fundamentalist position about inspiration well into the twentieth century. In fact, a tendency "toward verbalism and strict inerrancy dominated Adventist theology in the decades following 1920," writes church historian George Knight, with overemphasis on the role of the writings of Ellen White. "In essence, Adventism, which had started out as a people of the Book, had become more a people of the 'books.' Adventists had forgotten their own history on the topic."¹⁵

Adventism and Emerging Fundamentalism

As noted later in this article, modern Seventh-day Adventism is eager to distance itself from fundamentalism. According to one student of this subject, however, this modern attitude "is not reflective of Adventist attitudes in the first half of [the twentieth] century."¹⁶

At least one Adventist observer, F. M. Wilcox, attended the 1919 conference that established the World Christian Fundamentals Association (WCFA). Wilcox reported in the *Review and Herald* that the aim of the conference was to combat "the influences of this evil age," such as higher criticism and evolutionary thinking, and "the subtle species of infidelity . . . taught by many who stand in the sacred desk." He stated his agreement with most of the nine Christian fundamentals identified at the conference, but took exception to a reference to the eternal conscious punishment of "the wicked" and the concept of a premillennial reign of Christ.¹⁷

Wilcox apparently saw nothing wrong with the conference's statement about the Bible: "We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as verbally inspired by God, and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are the supreme and final authority in faith and life." However, he followed with a statement of twenty-two "Fundamental Principles for Which Seventh-day Adventists Stand," which avoided the terms "verbal inspiration" and "inerrant" though it referred to the Bible as our "infallible rule of faith and practice."¹⁸

Adventist observers regularly attended the annual conferences of the WCFA during the next decade, even though, as H. A. Lukens reported, those meetings seemed to be running out of steam by 1928. Lukens, too, felt that Adventists and the fundamentalist movement had much in common, but he regretted that the fundamentalists did not emphasize the role of the Ten Commandments and that they held an erroneous view regarding life after death. "Seventh-day Adventists,"



he stated, “stand alone on the platform of truth.”¹⁹

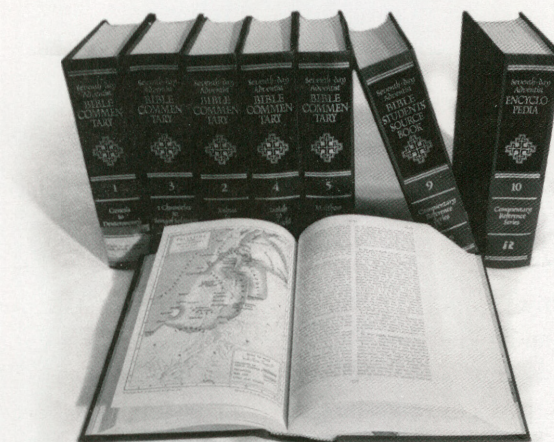
The Seventh-day Adventist Church of the 1920's and beyond clearly liked the term “fundamentalist.” As the Church began to develop a creedal statement, it began to refer to the various core doctrines as “fundamental” beliefs. When the Church organized a Bible Conference in 1919 for editors of denominational journals, Bible and history teachers of Adventist colleges, and General Conference administrators, General Conference president Arthur G. Daniells exhorted the participants to devote themselves to “earnest, prayerful study of the major questions—the great *fundamentals* of the Word.”²⁰

The aim of the 1919 Bible Conference was to bring greater unity on an array of topics among Adventist thought leaders. Many of these subjects (such as the identity of the King of the North in Daniel 11, the meaning of the term “daily” in Daniel 8, and the identity of the fifth trumpet in the book of Revelation) attract little attention in the twenty-first century, but all were related to the more basic question of inspiration.

The 1919 Bible Conference had more divergent opinions on the issue of inspiration than initiators had hoped. On the surface, a more “open” view of inspiration that denied “verbal inspiration” and inerrancy in the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White seemed to prevail. Foremost among the supporters of the more progressive view were General Conference president A. G. Daniells and other prominent church leaders.

In contrast, sharp and vocal criticism arose from those who considered such views dangerous steps toward modernism and the horrors of higher criticism. Prominent among these critics were J. S. Washburn, a well-known preacher, and Claude E. Holmes, a correspondent for the *Southern Watchman*. However, it was quite unfair of them to label Daniells and his group modernists and liberals. From 1909 to 1915, one of them, W. W. Prescott, edited the staunchly anti-Catholic periodical *The Protestant*, which endorsed many of fundamentalism's central ideas. Later, even the renowned Siegfried H. Horn, though far from being an inerrantist, counted himself among fundamentalist scholars.²¹

Insistence on a strict fundamentalist understanding



of inspiration prevailed and became dominant in the Church for decades to come. Two books that appeared in 1924 indicate that the Church increasingly identified itself with the fundamentalist movement: *Christianity at the Crossroads*, *Modernism/Fundamentalism*; and *The Battle of the Churches: Modernism or Fundamentalism, Which?*²²

One of the most important and most well-known events in the fundamentalist battle against modernism and evolution was the so-called “Monkey trial” of 1925, which occurred in Dayton, Tennessee. John T. Scopes, a high school biology teacher who taught the theory of evolution, was accused of violating a Tennessee law that forbade teaching the theory in public schools. The trial, which occurred in a circus-like atmosphere, received worldwide attention. Clarence Darrow, one of America's leading criminal lawyers, appeared for the defense, and former U.S. secretary of state William Jennings Bryan helped the prosecution. Scopes lost, but the trial ended up badly tarnishing the cause of fundamentalism.²³

The foremost Adventist expert on evolution and creation at that time was George McCready Price. Although Scopes's prosecutors wanted Price to be present at the trial, he happened to be teaching at Stanborough Missionary College in England and could not attend. In his books, Price had proudly proclaimed himself a fundamentalist. In fact, with the publication of his book, *Q.E.D.; or, The Battle of the Churches: Modernism or New Light on the Doctrine of Creation*, he began to influence the fundamentalist movement strongly. Throughout the 1920s his writings appeared in such publications as *The Sunday School Times*, *Moody Monthly*, and *Bibliotheca Sacra*. Indeed, according to Ronald L. Numbers, the science section of John C. Whitcomb, Jr. and Henry M. Morris *The Genesis Flood* (1961) reads “like an updated version of [Price's] *The New Geology*.”²⁴

The 1919 Bible Conference had more divergent opinions on the issue of inspiration than initiators had hoped.

Another example of Adventist involvement in the fundamentalism-modernism conflict was another public debate about creation and evolution, this time between Maynard Shipley, president of the prestigious Science League of America, and two young Adventists editors, Alonzo Baker and Francis D. Nichol. The two-day debate, which took place just weeks before the Scopes trial, on June 13 and 14, 1925, occurred in a large public auditorium in San Francisco and received wide publicity. Observers considered the outcome a draw. They declared Nichol the winner of the first debate, but Shipley the winner of the second.²⁵

One other illustration of Adventism's struggle to define itself in the context of the early fundamentalist movement was its attitude toward higher education. In 1918, Frederick Griggs, one of the denomination's most respected education leaders, became a victim of widespread bias against advanced academic degrees for college teachers. He was removed from his office as General Conference education secretary during the 1918 General Conference session and replaced by his far more conservative former assistant, Warren E. Howell.²⁶

Like most fundamentalists, conservative Adventist leaders who saw their influence rise in the early 1920s were very suspicious of highly educated people, particularly those who held advanced degrees from non-Adventist institutions of higher learning. They led a determined, and partly successful, effort to purge Adventist colleges and remove dangerous men who were spreading "modernist theology."²⁷

Why did Adventism to a considerable extent succumb to the temptations of fundamentalism? Why did it seem unable to build on the more creative and experimental dynamics of earlier decades? Graeme S. Bradford, an Australian church administrator, makes an important point. Fundamentalism emerged as a potent force in Protestantism just as Adventism lost its unique prophetic voice, Ellen White, who died in 1919. Writes Bradford: "The death of the founder of any movement is always of great significance. . . . Other religious movements of the past have shown a tendency to 'pull down the shutters' and strive towards conserving rather than exploring when their founding fathers passed from the scene. This is clearly mirrored in the

experience of the Seventh-day Adventist Church."²⁸

Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart agree. When Ellen White died, they maintain, the Adventist Church was "robbed of its chief means of authorizing innovation." That is one reason why the liveliness and flexibility that characterized Adventist theological debate in the nineteenth century evaporated. There was a clear shift toward consolidation and identification with fundamentalism. "Adventist theology has developed in parallel with that of the mainstream. It was at its most distinctive during a time of great diversity; it became fundamentalist in the era of fundamentalism; and softened with the rise of evangelicalism."²⁹

Fundamentalist Attitudes in Recent Adventism

In 1958, a collection of writings by Ellen White never printed before were published under the title *Selected Messages, Volume One*.³⁰ A chapter at the beginning of the book deals with the topic of inspiration and contains some remarkable statements.

The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen.

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine

mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.

Some look to us gravely and say, "Don't you think there might have been some mistake in the copyist or in the translators?" This is all probable, and the mind that is so narrow that it will hesitate and stumble over this possibility or probability would be just as ready to stumble over the mysteries of the Inspired Word, because their feeble minds cannot see through the purposes of God.³¹

To many Adventists, these statements seemed (and still seem) refreshingly new. Yet these quotations express the Church's official position prior to the emergence of fundamentalism and reflected the convictions, not only of Ellen G. White, but also of such prominent church leaders as long-time General Conference president A. G. Daniells, W. W. Prescott, and many others.

When the participants of the 1919 Bible Conference voted a short statement to summarize the consensus at the conference, no reference was made to the inerrancy of the Bible, nor was verbal inspiration mentioned. The participants simply thanked the Lord "for the increased confidence in God, in the integrity of his holy Word, and in the system of doctrine which we denominate present truth."³² As we have seen, however, the tide soon changed and a more fundamentalist approach to Scripture prevailed.

It is telling that the Ellen G. White Estate, official custodian of her published and unpublished writings, apparently needed a lot of convincing before it released the statements quoted above, which are now found in the first volume of *Selected Messages*.

Toward a More Balanced View of Scripture

The first major denominational Bible Conference after 1919 convened in Washington, D.C., September 1-13, 1952. A larger number of people gathered this time, 450 teachers and administrators, not only from the United States, but also from overseas.³³



The agenda of twenty items did not list the topic of inspiration, but organizers clearly seemed to assume a consensus in favor of thought inspiration rather than verbal inspiration. Interestingly, however, Siegfried H. Horn's lecture on recent archaeological discoveries ended with the statement that these findings "can give tremendous strength to our *fundamentalist* position of accepting the whole Bible as God's inspired word [*italics supplied*]."³⁴

The 1952 Bible Conference opened the door to a period of some fifteen years in which the Church experienced greater openness and freedom of thought than either before or after. Within that climate, the Review and Herald Publishing Association initiated the Bible Commentary project.

Publication of the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* was a remarkable achievement by any standard. Francis D. Nichol, editor-in-chief of the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, deserves much of the credit for completing the project within five years and for maintaining a high standard, both in terms of scholarly content and accuracy.³⁵

Raymond F. Cottrell, one of Nichol's associates, has given a fascinating account of challenges the editors faced working with thirty-seven different writers.³⁶ Cottrell considers publication of the commentary a milestone in Adventist approaches to hermeneutics. The commentary always takes note of historic Adventist

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positions, but often mentions alternate interpretations, as well. Writes Cottrell: "The proof-text method of interpretation used for the doctrinal apologetics began to give way to an objective investigation of Scripture using the historical-contextual-linguistic method."³⁷ The editors faced some tough decisions:

What should an editor do with "proof texts" that inherently do not prove what is traditionally attributed to them—as, for example, Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6; Revelation 12:17 and 19:10; Daniel 12:4; Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:1,2; and most of the texts usually cited with respect to "the law"? In most of these and a number of other passages, pastoral concern led us to conclude that the commentary was not the place to make an issue of the Bible versus the traditional interpretation, much as this disappointed us as Bible scholars and would be a disappointment to our scholarly friends who know better.³⁸

Cottrell's assessment that the Church continues to feel comfortable with this commentary seems correct. After almost half a century, it remains the foremost Adventist tool in Bible study.

Each volume of the commentary has a number of introductory articles, several of which deal with textual criticism ("lower criticism"). The commentary is outspoken in its rejection of the historical-critical method ("higher criticism"), which it considers a tool of the sceptic. It rejects the notion that the Pentateuch is a composite of various sources from different times, as well as the possibility of a Deutero- or Trito-Isaiah, and other views regarding the origin of the Scriptures that are widely accepted. Yet when it comes to the New Testament, it entertains the possibility that various documents predated the three Synoptic Gospels and that Mark (the earliest writer), Matthew, and Luke used them.³⁹

Additional signs of a more balanced approach can be glimpsed in three more recent Bible Conferences, which attracted a total of 2,000 delegates and occurred in separate locations in May and June 1974.⁴⁰ This time, the delegates focused specifically on biblical hermeneutics.

The program was built around a collection of papers, written mostly by members of the Biblical Research Institute, sent out to all delegates prior to the meetings. The conferences did not address the topics of "thought" inspiration versus "verbal" inspiration; apparently participants did not consider those topics controversial any longer. The hermeneutical principles discussed at the meetings represented a far cry from a traditional fundamentalistic approach to Scripture.⁴¹

In regard to this topic, the 1986 Annual Council voted a significant statement, "Bible Study: Presuppositions, Principles, Methods," which was in fact a report of a special ad hoc committee (Methods of Bible Study Committee). The statement addressed all members of the Church. It rejected the historical-critical method, but stated that "Seventh-day Adventists recognize and appreciate the contributions of those biblical scholars throughout history who have developed useful and reliable methods of Bible study consistent with the claims and teachings of Scripture."⁴² The statement rejects verbal inspiration unequivocally:

The Holy Spirit inspired the Bible writers with thoughts, ideas, and objective information; in turn they expressed these in their own words. Therefore the Scriptures are the indivisible union of human and divine elements, neither of which should be emphasized to the neglect of the other.⁴³

Students of Adventist history are aware that such discussion among Adventists about the inspiration of the Bible has unavoidably affected the Church's understanding of Ellen White's inspiration. However, the process has also worked in the opposite direction, as Robert M. Johnston has explained:

By applying to the Bible writers what we know about Ellen White, we resolve many problems. We are left with a truly Adventist hermeneutic

that is a via media between the Scylla of fundamentalism and the Charybdis of the radical skepticism of modernism.⁴⁴

Francis D. Nichol expressed similar sentiments. According to him, Adventists have had an advantage compared to other religious communities because they have seen inspiration at work. This has prevented them from maintaining a fundamentalist position on this issue. "If Seventh-day Adventists had not had demonstrated in their midst how inspiration operates," wrote Nichols, they would probably stand with inerrantists.⁴⁵

Recent Developments

In the 1980s and 1990s, it was clear that Adventism seemed to retain a remarkable degree of global unity, but it also had several "modalities." In 1984, Joan Craven, a former Seventh-day Adventist, wrote an insightful article for *Christianity Today* in which she expressed conviction that many Seventh-day Adventists demonstrate a strongly evangelical orientation. She also found fundamentalists, liberals, and even a few agnostics. Whether or not the inclusion of agnostics was justified, the rest of her observations are well taken.⁴⁶

Ten years later, an article in *Ministry* argued that at least four streams existed in Adventism: Mainstream Adventism, Evangelical Adventism, Progressive Adventism, and Historic Adventism.⁴⁷ It may be difficult or impossible to mark an exact demarcation between "mainstream" and "evangelical" Adventism, but it is probably safe to say that the Adventist Church has one wing that is quite conservative and another that regards itself as "progressive." In between, a large group considers itself "middle-of-the-road."

Nobody can deny considerable differences between such independently published journals as *Spectrum* and *Adventist Today*, on the one hand, and *Our Firm Foundation* and *Adventists Affirm*, on the other, or that the official church journal, *Adventist Review*, is somewhere in the middle.

Furthermore, Adventist religious scholars have the option of belonging to two Adventist professional organizations, each with a different ethos and goal. Both claim to represent mainline Adventism, but the

Adventist Theological Society (ATS) is considerably to be right of the Adventist Society of Religious Scholars (ASRS), and most Adventist scholars of religion make a conscious choice whether they want to belong to one or the other.

As for Seventh-day Adventist education, some faculties of theology position themselves at the conservative end of the spectrum, as for example those of Southern University and Andrews University, whereas others, especially on the U.S. West Coast, are generally perceived as more "liberal." One example of this latter perception is the theology faculty of Walla Walla College, which has experienced intense scrutiny from its parent bodies in recent years because of its alleged liberal thinking.⁴⁸

However, despite such diversity of opinion—whether real or simply alleged—it would be difficult to find evidence among Adventist religious scholars of any form of fundamentalism that advocates verbal inspiration and inerrancy.⁴⁹

The Historical-Critical Method

In recent years, controversy has raged among Adventist theologians and Bible scholars over whether legitimate use can be made of the historical-critical method in Bible study. When established in 1987, the ATS determined that one criteria for membership would be rejection of such an approach. Today, a growing number of Adventist scholars disagree with this view, arguing that at least some aspects of the historical-critical method can be accepted as useful tools without necessarily accepting its often antisupernatural presuppositions.⁵⁰

"Methods of Bible Study," a 1986 document voted by the Church's Annual Council, emphasizes that the text of the Bible cannot be properly understood without a study of its original historical context and literary form, thus leaving the door ajar for limited application of the historical-critical method. The document rejected the method only "as classically formulated." Gerhard F. Hasel has followed the same line in his influential publications on the topic of biblical hermeneutics. The recently published *Adventist Handbook for Bible Study* very much reflects the same approach to Scripture.⁵¹

Australian Adventist and New Testament scholar Robert McIver suggests that ample common ground exists between "progressive" and "conservative" Adventist scholars, and that the controversy is largely over semantics. To him, it would be better to drop the

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term “historical-critical method” from the debate. Robert M. Johnston agrees, writing that “many Adventists know only a caricature of the historical-critical method” and react emotionally to the term without really understanding it. According to Roy Gane, who teaches at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary at Andrews University, labels and litmus tests are not helpful in the discussion.⁵²

Thus, Adventist scholars seem to be close to consensus on a legitimate use of at least certain aspects of the historical-critical method, and most, if not all, would not want to be labeled as “fundamentalist.” But a fundamentalist approach to Scripture is not fully in the past. Anecdotal evidence suggests that it still lingers in the theology and religion departments of some educational institutions in the Church, particularly in the third world. In recent international gatherings, when important issues of principle have been at stake, the arguments of some speakers (administrators, laypersons, and some trained theologians) have definitely had a fundamentalist edge.

This tendency was certainly apparent during the 1995 General Conference Session in Utrecht, the Netherlands, when the Church discussed women’s ordination. Five years later, it resurfaced at the General Conference Session in Toronto, Canada, when the Church looked at the issues of divorce and remarriage. Furthermore, much of the popular material for personal and public evangelism continues to display an attitude toward Scripture that borders on traditional fundamentalism.⁵³

Nor would it be hard to identify fundamentalist trends in a number of critical independent ministries that operate at the Church’s fringe. The report of one minister who pastored a church near headquarters of the right-wing Hartland Institute could be an eye-opener for those in doubt about where this and similar organizations stand on Adventism’s theological spectrum.⁵⁴

A recent debate between two Adventist scholars highlights ongoing tension in the Church about how to approach the Bible. In 1997, Charles Scriven, at that time president of Columbia Union College, expressed serious concern that some were trying “to pull Adventism toward fundamentalism.” He referred

in particular to Samuel Koranteng-Pipim and his widely circulated book, *Receiving the Word*.⁵⁵

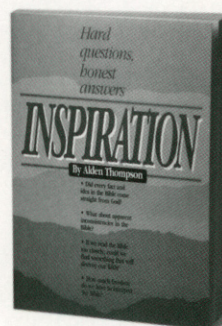
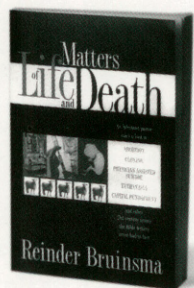
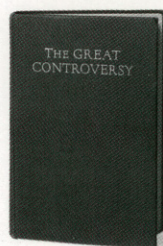
Koranteng-Pipim did not mince words in reply. He vehemently rejected the accusation, which he characterized as “more noteworthy for its breadth than for its depth.” He was confident that Scriven’s statements could “only win the sympathy of those who have already bought into the heterodoxy” challenged in his book. Koranteng-Pipim did not worry much about the accusation of fundamentalism, which, he stated, was “an overused word often invoked against anyone refusing to embrace the spirit of the age.”⁵⁶

The conservative ATS promoted Koranteng-Pipim’s book strongly, and it was distributed around the world. Some praised it as “an amazingly clear and competent presentation” and as “a major contribution in the history of Adventist theology and hermeneutics,” but others viewed it as a concerted attempt “to characterize some of the best-known Adventist efforts to refine and renew the church’s understanding as not simply fallible (which they surely are) but as pure threat.”⁵⁷

Though highly critical of many contemporary Adventist thought leaders, Koranteng-Pipim directed his wrath particularly at Alden Thompson, whose 1991 study on inspiration continues to attract interest. Thompson suggests that we should no longer use the Bible as a “codebook” that provides an unchangeable list of do’s and don’ts, but as a casebook that reveals how God’s unchanging principles were applied in constantly changing conditions.⁵⁸

One year after Thompson’s book appeared, the ATS published a series of papers that rebutted it, the editors viewing the volume as the “fruit of the historical critical method.” One of the contributors expressed fear that Thompson’s book will undermine the faith of the believers and may create further polarization in the Church, and questioned how the Church can allow one of its publishing houses to print a book that goes against the Church’s official position.⁵⁹





Creationism

If proof of fundamentalism can be found in rejection of evolutionary theory and acceptance of a literal six-day creation in the relatively recent past, then Adventists must plead guilty. In fact, Adventists have often spearheaded the cause of creationism, and, as discussed above, early in the twentieth century clearly identified with fundamentalists on this point.⁶⁰

In more recent times, however, some Adventist scientists have shifted away from traditional views on origins. Adventist scholars who continue to defend the creationist viewpoint are increasingly sophisticated in their arguments. In fact, though their literal reading of the creation account and the flood would seem to place them in the fundamentalist camp, most of them certainly do not deserve to be called “pseudoscientists” or fit into a traditional anti-intellectual fundamentalism.⁶¹

Adventists and Politics

As for politics, do Seventh-day Adventists currently have a fundamentalist tendency? The example of Adventists in the United States is instructive. Ten years ago, Adventist sociologists Roger L. Dudley and Edwin I. Hernandez found that, contrary to common assumptions, many Adventists do not vote Republican. In a survey conducted in 1988, Dudley and Hernandez found that Adventists were far from united in their political choice: 24 percent were Democrats; 44 percent identified themselves as Republicans; and 12 percent claimed to be Independents. Twenty percent expressed no interest in politics. In contrast, most fundamentalists in the United States tend to support the Republican party or right-wing independents.⁶²

Dudley and Hernandez also found that Adventists are often rather eclectic on various social issues. In many instances they favor “liberal” positions, but at other times they take “conservative” stands. Furthermore, in contrast to most fundamentalists,

who want churches to have a strong political influence, only 14 percent of Seventh-day Adventists want their church involved in political action.⁶³

Traditionally, Adventists have strongly advocated total separation between church and state. This may well be the most pronounced difference between Adventism and fundamentalism. Although some individuals in the Adventist Church no doubt hold positions similar to ideas that the Religious Right propagates, such fundamentalist organizations as the Moral Majority and the Christian Coalition have not succeeded at courting favor among many Adventists. On the contrary, the Adventist prophetic perspective leads members to view religious organizations involved in politics with great suspicion.

Conclusion

Are Adventists fundamentalists? William G. Johnsson, editor of the *Adventist Review*, asserts correctly that modern mainstream Adventism is certainly not fundamentalist in the theological sense because it does not subscribe to the ideas of inerrancy and verbal inspiration. Adds Johnsson: “The narrow, negative mind-set often associated with fundamentalism is one that Adventists should not share.” Robert McIver, though recognizing that Adventists and fundamentalists hold certain beliefs in common, emphasizes considerable disagreement, in particular with regard to inerrancy, but also in connection with respective views on dispensationalism and political involvement.⁶⁴

What can we learn from Adventism’s struggle with the fundamentalist approach to Scripture? Norman H. Young, professor of theology at Avondale College, suggests five important lessons. First, Adventists should realize that violent arguments about the Bible can lead people away from Christ. Second, they should be aware of alternatives to defend the Bible that promote a “high” view of inspiration. Third, they should rejoice that, although imperfect, the biblical text

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transmitted to us is not an impediment to faith. Fourth, they should not forget that a combination of inerrancy and a literal reading of the text often provides chemistry for bizarre interpretations. And fifth, they should be satisfied that inspiration safeguards the meaning of Scripture in a reliable way, which adequately conveys God's purpose. "Adventists," Young concludes, "would do well not to repeat within their ranks the nasty and enervating argument of the fundamentalists and evangelicals over the inerrancy of Scripture."⁶⁵

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36. Raymond F. Cottrell, "The Untold Story of the Bible Commentary," *Spectrum* 16.3 (Aug. 1985), 35-51.

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40. Don Neufeld, ed., *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, rev. ed. (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1996), 1: 199ff.

41. Gordon M. Hyde, ed., *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics* (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1974).

42. "Methods of Bible Study," *Ministry* (Apr. 1987), 22-23.

43. *Ibid.*, 22-23.

44. Robert M. Johnston, "The Case for a Balanced Hermeneutic," *Ministry* (Mar. 1999), 12.

45. Francis D. Nichol, "The Battle for the Bible," *Review and Herald* (July 26, 1979), 14-15.

46. Joan Craven, "The Wall of Adventism," *Christianity Today* (Oct. 19, 1984), 20.

47. O. J. David Newman, "How Much Diversity Can We Stand?" *Ministry* (Apr. 1994), 5, 27.

48. See Rosemary Bradley Watts, "Walla Walla Religion Faculty Under Fire," *Spectrum* 26.3 (Sept. 1997), 11-15.

49. New Testament scholar Robert M. Johnston, of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, is not so sure. He states that extreme "neo-fundamentalist" views "have been promoted during the last three decades by certain teachers in the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary and some members of the Biblical Research Institute," a service operated by the General Conference. Johnston, "Case for a Balanced Hermeneutic," 10.

50. Roy Gane, "An Approach to the Historical-Critical Method," *Ministry* (Mar. 1990), 5-9.

51. Gerard Hasel, *Understanding the Living Word of God* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1980); Gerard Hasel, *Biblical Interpretation Today* (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1985); and Lee J. Gugliotto, *Handbook for Bible Study* (Hagerstown,

Md.: Review and Herald, 1995).

52. Robert K. McIver, "The Historical-Critical Method: The Adventist Debate," *Ministry* (Mar. 1996), 16; Johnston, "Case for a Balanced Hermeneutic," 12; and Gane, "Historical Critical Method."

53. For a useful survey of developments in the Seventh-day Adventist Church regarding ordination of women, see Randal R. Wisbey, "SDA Women in Ministry—1970-1998," in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, edited by Nancy Vhymeister (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1998), 235-55. C. Raymond Holmes, a retired Andrews University professor, has also written about the topic and rejected ordination of women as totally unbiblical. C. Raymond Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg: Biblical Authority, Biblical Interpretation, and the Ordination of Women in Ministry* (Wakefield, Mich.: Pointer Publications, 1994), 65. P. G. Damsteegt argued against the proposal to allow ordination of women in North America during the 1995 General Conference. His views were based on a literal reading of a number of texts, and he rejected the proposal as a violation of the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures because it did not accept them as they plainly read.

54. Alton D. Johnson, "Adventist Fundamentalism: The Charlottesville Story," *Adventist Today* (July/Aug. 1998), 13-15.

55. Scriven, "Embracing the Spirit," 28; Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word: The Crisis over Biblical Authority and Biblical Interpretation* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Berean Christian Publications, 1996).

56. Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "In The Spirit of Truth: Pipim Responds," *Spectrum* 26.3 (Sept. 1997), 38-44, esp. pages 38, 42.

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60. Numbers, *Creationists*, passim.

61. James L. Hayward, "Shifting Views of the Past: Adventists and the Historical Sciences," *Spectrum* 28.1 (winter 2000), 65-68.

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63. Dudley and Hernandez, *Citizens of Two Worlds*, 151-59.

64. Johnsson, "Are Adventists Fundamentalists?" 14; Robert K. McIver, "Are Adventists Fundamentalists?" *Record* (Dec. 12, 1992), 6-7.

65. Norman H. Young, "Fundamentalists and Evangelicals: A Guide for Adventists" <www.adventist.org/gc/presidential/bibconf/Articles/YoungN.htm>

Reinder Bruinsma writes from the Netherlands, where he is country director for the Adventist Disaster and Relief Agency. This article is based on two lectures delivered on November 9, 2000, as the W. R. and B. B. Lectures at Newbold College, England. 74617.522@compuserve.com



DIVIDED LOYALTIES

American and German Seventh-day Adventists and the Second World War

By Roland Blaich

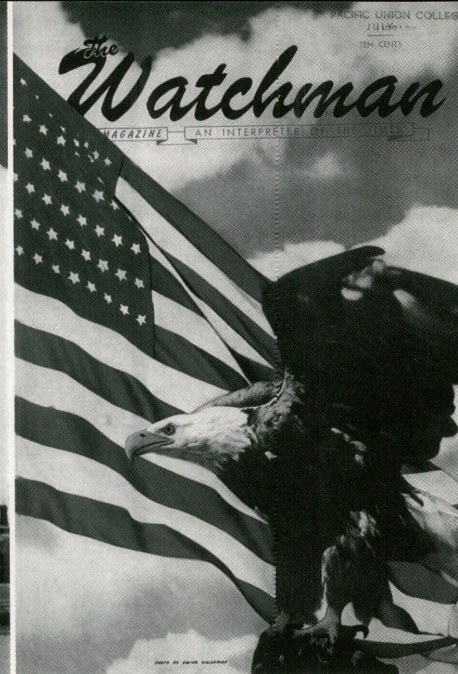
A denomination that embraces the principle of separation of church and state as one of its fundamentals, the Seventh-day Adventist world church has been characterized by remarkable uniformity in method and message, and by a sense of global solidarity of mission. One notable exception occurred during the Second World War, when nationalism and Nazi pressure changed the Church's relations with the state and disrupted the solidarity of mission between the American and the German Adventist Churches.¹

During the 1920s, Adventist publications in the United States and Germany read like mirror images of each other. Among the most recurrent themes was the looming threat of another world war, and with it the final battle in earth's history, Armageddon. Authors in both countries lay much of the blame on the Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I and in their view created more grievances than solutions. Some authors predicted that in the end controversy over the Polish Corridor would plunge the world into war. There seemed little hope of saving the peace; the only question was how long it could last. Neither the peace euphoria occasioned by the Locarno Treaty (1925), nor disarmament talks and the Kellogg-Briand Pact (1928), which signaled cooperation and outlawed war, dissuaded Adventist authors from their prediction that a major war was coming.² German and American Adventists agreed: history was nearing its climactic end.

American Adventists Anticipate War

After the Nazi revolution, American public opinion in general turned increasingly against Germany. Remarkably, however, American Adventist publications remained largely impartial. Consistent with their earlier assessment of the legacy left by the Treaty of Versailles, American Adventist authors blamed Hitler's initial provocative moves on unrealistic Allied policies of the past. "A much more rational and merciful attitude toward Berlin at the conclusion of the World War," one author observed, "would not have presented us with the German fear we have today." In the spirit of solidarity, American Adventist leaders sought to avoid anything that might compromise German brethren. After several articles critical of Nazi policies caused trouble for Adventist leaders in Germany, the General Conference adopted and enforced a policy that prevented publication of commentaries overtly critical of the Nazi regime.³

More cautiously perhaps, yet nevertheless



The covers of *Watchman Magazine*, July 1944 and July 1945.

unmistakable, American Adventist authors continued to monitor the drift toward war. None placed hope in the 1938 Munich settlement. Rather than guaranteeing peace, they believed, it only postponed war. There would be "plenty of 'nexts' after Czechoslovakia," asserted the *Signs of the Times*, among them Silesia and the Polish Corridor.⁴ Consistently skeptical in outlook, American Adventist periodicals maintained that war would soon come to Europe.

Thus, war did not take American Adventists by surprise. The major question then became whether the United States should allow itself to be drawn into another European conflict. Joining Protestant leaders in other churches, Adventists at first advocated neutrality. As the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt prepared to reinstate conscription, one writer endorsed a "Declaration Against Conscription" by civic leaders who had argued that the draft was "undemocratic because it provides equality without liberty, making the equality that of 'galley slaves,' not free men," and because it "embraces the worst features of the totalitarian regime." The writer recalled a time when the "silver tongue" of early American statesman Daniel Webster had caused the young nation to reject a similar plan:

He insisted from a study of the rise and decline of democratic governments that many of their ills were traceable to conscription and to large armies, that it was not consonant with liberty to require compulsory military service, that such service constituted "involuntary servitude which is not a penalty for a crime," against which the Constitution of the United States guaranteed them.⁵

WHILE THE CHURCH THUS SOUGHT TO SERVE AMERICA'S INTERESTS, THE WAR ALSO OFFERED OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE THE CHURCH'S OWN AGENDA.

Opposition to conscription did not mean, however, that Adventists refused to serve in the military. Originally tending toward conscientious objection, Adventists assumed a position that they defined as "conscientious cooperation." Waging war was a legitimate function of the state as ordained by God, they believed, and it was the duty of the Christian to assist. Remembering the difficulties many Adventists had experienced during the First World War because they insisted on keeping the Sabbath while in the military, the Church sought to prepare its young men for the coming war by creating the Medical Cadet Corps (MCC).⁶

In effect, an Adventist ROTC program run in close cooperation with the military, the MCC prepared Adventists to serve their country in noncombatant roles, primarily as medics. The program was meant to help young men avoid problems of conscience and, as an internal memo of the Church states, at the same time place the Church "in a very favorable light before the government." The head of the Church's National Service Commission, Carlyle B. Haynes, stressed that Adventists did not oppose war and made "no protest against war," but were proud to serve. As one historian has stated, American Adventists had found a "unique solution by viewing the ethical problems raised by war in strictly individualistic terms": collaboration in the war machine by itself posed no problems "so long as the acts that they performed within that establishment were in themselves ethically proper."⁷

In the late 1930s, especially after Hitler launched the Second World War, Adventist journals in the United States became more openly critical of the Nazi regime. H. L. Rudy, for instance, examined Hitler's anti-Christian agenda as revealed in *Mein Kampf*. In a somewhat belated 1941 article Rudy quoted at length from a 1935 letter that the Provisional Administration of the German Evangelical Church had addressed to Hitler in which it protested coercion of conscience and the fact that Hitler was revered in a form due only to God.⁸

Although voicing sympathy for the victims of tyranny and aggression, Adventist authors still questioned the wisdom of American involvement. *Watchman Magazine* expressed cynicism about generations that had died in vain and would be compelled to do so again.⁹ Some authors reminded readers of the

Church's unique prophetic calling in times of conflict.

In 1940, Louis H. Christian, a vice president of the General Conference, quoted Bishop Theophil Wurm of Germany, who shortly after the outbreak of war had called his congregation to penance and renewed commitment "to Him who through his afflictions calls us to Himself;" and to Bishop George Bell of Chichester, England, who deemed it a calamity if the church, as well, went to war. Bell saw the church as "a universal society" that "binds its members in a unity which includes the members of the nation with which we are at war," and cautioned against "the insidious effect of propaganda." L. H. Christian called on believers to be "on guard lest they imbibe the spirit of hatred and revenge that is destroying mankind."¹⁰

Even though Hitler's early victories made him appear unstoppable, indeed, bound for world domination, Adventist writers in the United States were certain that he would ultimately fail. Biblical prophecy as found in the second chapter of Daniel, they argued, foretold that no one would be able to reunite Europe. "We are going to say exactly what we have said in the past," wrote Arthur S. Maxwell, editor of *Signs of the Times*. "We refuse to retract one jot or one tittle. We believe that the prophecy in question is not only the most remarkable and the most significant to be found in all the Scriptures, but that it is absolutely authentic and reliable. Furthermore, we believe that its interpretation will never be overthrown by any sequence of events that may occur."¹¹

American Adventists and America's Cause

After the war started, the scope of topics covered in the American Adventist press changed little, except that the war itself increasingly took center stage. However, whereas the coming war had often been cast in the 1930s as Armageddon, which would usher in the Second Coming, articles during the conflict tended to



focus on its more temporal meaning and purpose.¹² Some writers portrayed it as a new version of the age-old controversy between good and evil. None expressed this view more clearly than Charles S. Longacre, religious liberty secretary of the General Conference:

Never in the history of the world has the precious heritage of liberty been placed in greater jeopardy by its foes than at the present hour. The world struggle now in progress is a conflict between two philosophies of life, and these two philosophies are as opposite each other as night is to day. They are as irreconcilable as unrighteousness is to righteousness, and as injustice is to justice, and as tyranny is to liberty. This conflict is the age-long struggle between totalitarianism and individualism, between bondage and liberty.¹³

Longacre saw totalitarianism as a revival of the “ancient order of a few men ruling all men in all things.” It had a long tradition that throughout history had appeared in many forms, ranging from the authoritarian

state to the authoritarian church. Individualism, on the other hand, was “the new order of things as set forth in the Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution of the United States, limiting the powers and functions of the civil government, and making all public officials subject to the

sovereign will of the people.”¹⁴

According to Longacre, the American system guaranteed natural and God-given rights, and the conscience of the individual was “supreme above all governmental functions and authority.” These “inalienable rights of man no government on earth” had a right to abridge or invade. Unless Americans became active citizens, the “blood-bought liberties” were “destined to

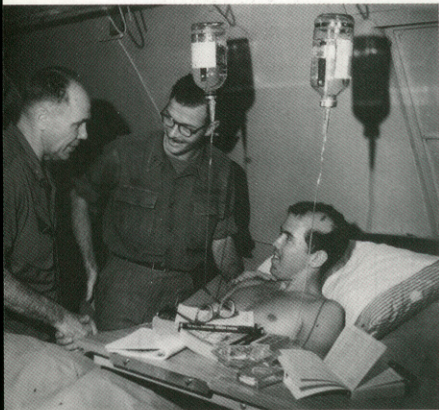


Desmond Doss, a Seventh-day Adventist medical cadet who received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his service during World War II.

perish from the earth.” Analyzing the process that had led to erosion of the constitutional principle in Europe, Longacre warned fellow Americans what would happen if “the spirit of the constitution” was lost.¹⁵

The only security of a republic lies in the love and devotion its people have in their hearts for the constitution that preserves and safeguards their liberties and their right of sovereignty. Whenever a people are willing to surrender their constitutional liberties and right of sovereignty for governmental subsidies and patronage, and prefer to enjoy material comforts and a well-provisioned bread basket rather than to be freemen in a republic, they are writing Ichabod over the temple of their freedom, and resigning their sovereignty to dictators. That is what the oppressed people of Europe did when they chose to be slaves of dictators rather than sovereigns in their own right.¹⁶

Thus, American Adventists took their position on the war and in doing so joined the Protestant mainstream. Like other American Protestants, Adventist writers argued that Protestantism was the foundation of democracy, necessary to its survival. Protestantism affirmed the sacredness of the individual, liberty of conscience, individual responsibility, and public virtue.¹⁷ In short, it was the essence of Americanism. Thus, The



Adventist chaplains visit a patient.

READERS OF GERMAN ADVENTIST JOURNALS COULD TAKE COMFORT IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT IT WAS GOD HIMSELF WHO WAS LEADING IN THIS WAR.

Americanism became a synonym for Protestantism, democracy, freedom, and even civilization. To strengthen Protestantism and resist the temptations of totalitarianism and Catholicism was a patriotic duty.

As war started in Europe, Adventists found one more reason to warn against the perils of Rome. Recalling France's shameful collapse in 1940, L. H. Christian counseled:

It is well to give attention to the forces which undermine democracy. . . . A true democracy is possible only in countries with a strong Protestant Christianity. It cannot exist in a Roman Catholic country. We see how it failed in France. The great cause of the complete debacle of France in June a year ago was the insidious, undermining influence of the papacy. It was the priests, not the generals, that caused France to lose the war. Democracy cannot exist in an atheistic country, for atheism weakens individual character. Democracy cannot exist among a pagan people. This is evidenced by the very fact that in those parts of Europe where the totalitarian state is strongest, the state has, as its source, a new paganism. Democracy is the fruit of Protestantism; and when Protestantism decays, there will be a moral collapse which will pull down democratic government.¹⁸

Thus, America's cause in the Second World War was bound up with the cause of the Church. This war was a just war, a war to defend the refuge for the oppressed that God had raised up in the time of the Pilgrim fathers. The Church must join in the struggle and mobilize the power of prayer.¹⁹ Sounding a note later heard from the Christian Coalition, L. H. Christian argued,

The present challenge of democracy is really a challenge to the church. It is a challenge to Protestant preachers everywhere. It is the challenge of the world to the gospel. . . . The challenge of a failing democracy is the challenge to every true child of God to build a strong character for Christ, to stand for honesty and self-reliance. . . . Democracy cannot be saved merely by civil law. It has its

roots in the Protestant religion, that is, in the true gospel, and it will prosper only when and where the gospel is followed.²⁰

History, said Christian, "teaches that liberty has been the exception and intolerance the rule," and he called for commitment to "the divine principles of free government as set forth so forcefully in our American constitution."²¹

Adventists in the United States joined their country's war effort with conviction. J. L. McElhany, president of the General Conference, wrote to President Franklin D. Roosevelt pledging Adventist support. Adventists presented themselves as model citizens and bought liberty bonds. The Church adopted self-censorship and avoided alarming subjects such as apocalyptic prophecies, and journals displayed patriotic symbols and pictures of soldiers in uniform, of weapons, and of battle scenes.²²

Watchman Magazine in particular was noteworthy for its support of the American cause. After January 1941, it consistently displayed patriotic symbols on its covers. In 1942, it opened its pages to J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI, who wrote a series on the subject of Americanism. In a rambling jingoistic style, Hoover's propaganda encouraged suspicion toward all except those whose "Americanism" was thoroughly established.²³

Hoover called for a patriotic "national wall which will encircle Americanism," for uniformity, and for intolerance toward anyone who questioned America's purpose.

Today is the time for an intensification of the teachings of Americanism to the rising generations. We have neglected too long the thrilling lessons found in the histories of Washington, of Jefferson, and of Lincoln, while we have a disgustingly large number of propaganda-purveyors who would educate our youth along dictatorial or communistic lines. Too many of these are today in our schools and colleges, maintained by public funds, while they attempt to pervert the teachings of democracy.²⁴



A special “freedom number” of *Watchman Magazine* in July 1944 showed Old Glory, the U.S. flag, on its front cover with the Statue of Liberty and a uniformed officer with his family against the backdrop of a church. An inset poem, entitled “My Country’s Flag,” by George Clarence Hoskin, proclaimed: “long may it wave, Bathed in the lifeblood of our hallowed dead, In glory made, the ensign of the brave”

While the Church thus sought to serve America’s interests, the war also offered it an opportunity to promote the Church’s own agenda. *Watchman Magazine* of August 1942 argued that Pearl Harbor, where “the boys in blue” were caught napping, should serve as a warning not to be unprepared for the Second Coming. Other articles promoted vegetarianism and justified a patriotic call for temperance by citing America’s need for healthy youth to serve their country. America could ill afford addiction to alcohol and tobacco while nations like Nazi Germany worked to eschew both.²⁵

What would be the war’s outcome? American Adventists never left any doubt that they believed in the eventual triumph of America and democracy. In November 1940, well before America had entered the war, the editor of *Signs of the Times*, Arthur S. Maxwell, published an article entitled, “America’s Amazing Future.” Summarizing recent tumultuous events in Europe, the author turned to the ongoing arming of the United States, which, he contended, “may be of greater significance than them all.” Given its resources and production capacity, “none can doubt that it will soon outbuild all possible rivals on land and sea.” Maxwell believed America was launched “upon the highway to world power and a destiny it never dreamed.”²⁶

Maxwell’s article reveals tension between traditional Adventist interpretation of prophecy and American patriotism. According to the Adventist reading of Revelation 13, America will play a leading role in the persecution of God’s remnant church. Maxwell predicted that “When all the armament plans have come to fruition . . . [America] will speak with all the fierceness and authority of imperial Rome.”

President Roosevelt’s appointment in December 1939 of Myron C. Taylor as his personal representative to the Vatican also gave the November 1940 issue of the *Signs of the Times* occasion to harp on fears that the

Photo: John E. Auman © 2001 Donna Auman



Hospital staff stationed on New Caledonia, May 1945.

“United States and political Protestantism are to play a prominent part in the restoration of the papacy to its former possessions and power.” The same issue also published a letter of protest to President Roosevelt.²⁷ America’s rise to world power and growing ties to the papacy appeared once again to be signs of the impending fulfillment of prophecy and the Second Coming.

Still, American Adventists served their country with undivided commitment during the Second World War. *Watchman Magazine* of July 1945 proudly summed up the Church’s policy: “On this broad platform of twofold allegiance—to God and to country—Seventh-day Adventists have gone to all the battlefronts of earth. . . . They are soldiers, soldiers of mercy, soldiers of humanity, soldiers of Christ.” Some 12,000 American Adventists served as noncombatants in the armed forces.²⁸

Many won recognition for their bravery under fire. Among them was Duane Kinman, who made national headlines as the “foxhole surgeon” and was thrice recipient of the purple heart medal. A few volunteered for combat service. Although some of these servicemen resigned their church membership, convinced that their personal commitment to unrestricted service conflicted with the traditional Adventist stance on military service, the Church proudly compiled records of patriotic service among its members and used it to promote its own cause for decades after the war.²⁹

Adventists in Nazi Germany

In Germany, the Nazi Revolution placed Seventh-day Adventists in a perilous predicament. A foreign sect that in many ways resembled Judaism, Adventists could expect little tolerance in a society based on racist-cultural nationalist principles. On November 26, 1933, the Gestapo banned the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Though the ban was rescinded two weeks later, on December 6, the Church continued to exist on the edge of legality for the duration of the Nazi regime.³⁰

German Adventist leaders took great pains to

FROM THE START, GERMAN ADVENTISTS ECHOED THE NAZI LINE THAT THE WAR HAD BEEN FORCED ON GERMANY BY JEALOUS NEIGHBORS

convince authorities of their loyalty, understanding that the new regime demanded a clear decision for or against it. Borrowing a phrase from the Nazi party platform, church leaders called on their members to manifest “positive Christianity,” which was interpreted as support for the Nazi state. Church leaders at all levels, including lay members, were expected to demonstrate the “correct” stance toward the state before they were allowed to serve. Likewise, before a candidate could be received into church membership his or her position on the Nazi state had to be “clearly established.” Although Adventists as a rule had previously abstained from political involvement, leaders now called on church members to vote for Hitler.³¹

The new course was also evident in the German Adventist press. Adventist writers openly endorsed the National Socialist state and praised its many achievements. An article entitled “*Volk and State*,” which appeared in the December 1933 issue of *Gegenwartsfragen* (Contemporary Issues, the German equivalent of *Signs of the Times*), described the *völkisch* racial state as in keeping with biblical principles.³²

In marked contrast to American Adventist journals, which portrayed a continuing drift toward war, the German Adventist press described Hitler’s foreign policy as one of peace and reconciliation to which he devoted himself “with all his strength and with genuine passion.” No matter how controversial Hitler’s foreign policy moves appeared abroad or how much they threatened to provoke international conflict, German Adventists endorsed every major one. Germany’s withdrawal from the League of Nations and from disarmament talks, the invasion of the Rhineland, the Anschluss of Austria, the Sudeten Crisis, and the invasion of Czechoslovakia—all met with Adventist applause.³³

When Germany introduced the draft on March 16, 1935, Adventist leaders called on their young men to serve, “as genuine Christians and loyal citizens” ought to do. Perhaps the most radical endorsement of military service came from Hulda Jost, head of Adventist welfare: “He who refuses to render this

service to the state acts dishonorably and places himself outside the community of his people.”³⁴

The Church compiled a number of authoritative statements that ranged from Ellen G. White to the historic Gland Resolution of 1920, which had sought to settle a denominational dispute on military service by leaving the decision up to the individual’s conscience. The resolution differentiated between military service in time of peace and in wartime without clarifying the difference.³⁵ Later, this resolution would allow for flexibility in applying the Ten Commandments during war, especially regarding Sabbath keeping.

Although it recognized the conscience of the individual, the statement was only intended for use by denominational officers and was never placed in the hands of pastors or church members, where it might have served as a basis for discussion and helped



Photo: John E. Auman © 2001 Donna Auman

Medical cadets line up in Monterey, California.

individuals make up their own minds. Such discussion might have only exposed divergent views, which could have endangered the Church. Thus, a card that the denomination issued to its draftees made no reference to the conscience clause and they were deprived of the Church’s support in matters of conscience.



Instead, Adventist leaders gave draftees advice on how to obtain permission to attend church services on the Sabbath and counsel to join the Red Cross as preparation to serve as medics. Some local congregations offered training courses in first aid. After President Paul von Hindenburg's death in 1934, German soldiers were required to take the loyalty oath to Adolf Hitler. A circular to Adventist draftees sought to remove any apprehensions about this oath by arguing that it was "constituted such that it does not bind our conscience regarding our duties toward God, and refers only to the duties within the armed forces." The circular ignored the possibility that such duties might contradict God's commandments.³⁶

Church leaders were mindful of controversy over military service during the First World War that had led to schism and creation of the Reformed Adventist Church in 1923, and they took pains to prevent a recurrence. "Be on guard against extremist elements and fanatics," a circular to ministers cautioned, "so that they can do no damage among us. Do not let them speak in the churches, but try to persuade them to a reasonable biblically based attitude toward the authorities." Church leaders understood that the Nazi state would not tolerate draft evasion and carefully distanced themselves from the reformers, who refused conscription. After Reform Adventists were banned on April 29, 1936, Adventist leaders issued directives to prevent the reformers from joining the Adventist Church.³⁷

German Adventists and the Second World War

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland and the Second World War began. From the start of the war the German Adventist press supported its nation's cause. "The dice have been cast," began one editorial by Kurt Sinz in *Der Adventbote* of November 15, 1939. God had "caused his world clock to strike," and with it "the end of the order representing the past age," the "age of the spirit," had come. Germany had been given an opportunity to prove itself.³⁸

Sinz, who evidently thought he understood the dialectical processes of history according to Hegel, explained that the "old and outdated must leave the

stage of history. Rejuvenated nations storm ahead and create a new order. It all goes according to eternal laws to fulfill the will of Providence, which is guiding history to the highest good and to a state of perfection." God had not forgotten "His Germans," as it had seemed to many in the dark years after the Treaty of Versailles and during the Weimar Republic. Now it was evident that the German God, the Lord of history, had been at work all along.³⁹

Referring to Hitler's revolution, Sinz wrote: "It was precisely in the darkest hour that the glow of dawn announced the coming of a glorious day. . . . And today, while the sun has not yet reached its zenith, we grasp the meaning of the dark times that we then could scarcely understand."⁴⁰ The reader of this article may well conclude that it was not Scripture, but war; not prophecy, but Hegel or Darwin, that revealed God's Providence. In any case, Sinz seemed certain that "it was the will of the Lord of history" that the German people be saved from the abyss; thus he had sent "a redeemer," "chosen" to lead the German people through their most difficult test.⁴¹

Readers of German Adventist journals could take comfort in knowledge that God himself was leading in this war. God had sent German forces "always just at the right time to protect and liberate" fellow Germans in foreign lands. While the war revealed God's Providence, it also revealed the character and the "genius" of the German people. Reporting on Polish atrocities against Germans, one writer, noting that these had been committed against a defenseless people, observed: "This trait is entirely alien to our own national character. If we were to wage war like this we would have to deny everything that is German by definition."⁴² Never was there any hint that Germans might have also committed excesses.

After the quick and spectacular victories in Poland, Scandinavia, and the West, German Adventist writers were elated. "We shall never forget the hour when the armistice with France was announced," wrote Sinz in July of 1940.

And who would not have been thankful with all his heart in the face of a victory the likes of which has never been recorded in our history! We have exerted ourselves, we have labored and, when it became necessity, have fought like never before. . . . And God has inclined the scales of good fortune toward us. . . . That's how it will be in the final phase of the struggle which will bring us peace with victory over our last opponent.

How beautiful is the hour of victory! We who

IN MEETING THE TOTALITARIAN DEMANDS OF THE STATE, GERMAN ADVENTISTS NOT ONLY COLLABORATED WITH THE STATE, BUT ALSO SACRIFICED CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF THE ADVENTIST MESSAGE, MOST NOTABLY THE SECOND COMING.

once were cheated out of victory and a just peace have now tasted it in calm and profound joy without excess. . . . We have yet to fight and sacrifice. . . . We are in the world to labor and to fight. And those [among us] who know of the struggle of faith know that our faith is our victory.⁴³

Sinz's dubious linkage of war with Christian faith in this allusion to 1 John 5:4, where faith is "the victory that has overcome the world," is found in other articles, as well.

Adolf Hitler, the German warlord, appeared in German Adventist journals as a man of true humanity and generosity, in contrast to leaders in other countries, especially those in "Christian" countries like Britain and America. "This is not how a dictator looks who is greedy for conquests, as the Jewish controlled world press would like to present him," argued Sinz. Hitler's compassion, he wrote, extended even to the women and children of the enemy. "We know this man well, and not for one moment can we doubt his intentions, because we are of the same soul."⁴⁴

Another writer, as he reviewed the amazing German victories over Poland, Norway, the Netherlands, and Belgium, and especially the "incomparable victory over France," claimed to "sense the footfalls of God across the world. In quiet adulation we thank God who in his wise providence has given us the *Führer*."⁴⁵

In spite of their loyal support for the Nazis, German Adventists witnessed a continuous erosion of their religious liberty. The war brought further difficulties for the Church as some members followed their own consciences and elected not to serve in the military or work on the Sabbath. Although Adventists had succeeded remarkably in winning Sabbath privileges during the early years of Nazi rule, with the coming of war the Gestapo took a very dim view of anyone unwilling to serve unconditionally, and it took the initiative to investigate.

Gestapo agents questioned pastors, conference presidents, and local elders to see if the Church censured or expelled members for working on the Sabbath. If that had been the case, such discipline would have been compelling grounds for action against the Church. In March 1940, Adolf Minck was called to Gestapo headquarters and told "in unmistakable terms

that such conduct will not be tolerated, and that the leaders of the churches, the conferences, and unions will be held accountable."⁴⁶

As a result, Church leaders instructed all pastors that "in total war there can only be total commitment and sacrifice." Alluding to problems that certain members had caused the Church, a circular of April 30, 1940, stressed the need for all ministers to "instruct our members in the duties we owe according to the Scriptures, to our nation and fatherland, as well as to the authorities." The document affirmed "on Biblical grounds" the legitimacy of service in the armed forces, and included instructions "that we perform all duties associated with it," as God had commanded. "Submit yourselves, for the Lord's sake, to every authority," it quoted from 2 Peter. The more loyally Adventists performed their duty during war, the circular argued, the more they could expect respect for conscience afterward.⁴⁷

After June 1941, when authorities banned the Church in several districts of the eastern territories, Minck sought to reassure authorities of unreserved support for the Nazis among Adventists. Church leaders, he wrote, consistently encouraged members in this basic attitude, and "church leadership deems this to be one of its most prominent duties."⁴⁸

In 1943, German forces suffered their first major reversals in Russia. Propaganda Minister Josef Goebbels issued his proclamation of total war, and the Church's leadership came forth with another circular. Performing one's duty on the Sabbath, it said, did not represent disobedience to God's law, but was actually a virtue. "Christian faith must be proven by Christian deed," it asserted. The circular argued that Sabbath service was not apostasy because under the circumstances it represented an exigency, and only total investment—even on the Sabbath—could assure victory. "Adapt yourself to the times," it quoted from Romans 12:11, a phrase from the Luther Bible not found in English versions. Church leaders sent copies of the document to Gestapo headquarters and the German Church Ministry "as proof that the [Adventist] leadership, pastors, and



members stand in loyalty by *Führer* and Reich.”⁴⁹

Although early hopes of a short war were dashed, Adventist writers continued to express confidence in the final victory, in Providence, and in the Führer. Sinz wrote that whenever the Führer spoke of his faith in Providence and the task ordained for him it was “as if the veil that surrounds current events is drawn aside and we see the mighty arm of God who governs the destiny of nations.” Already Europe’s destiny was being shaped by “rejuvenated nations” who were building a more just new order.⁵⁰

From the start, German Adventists echoed the Nazi line that jealous neighbors had forced the war on Germany; its enemies had sown the fruit of hatred. Never did the Adventist journals ask whether Germany might be waging a war of aggression. At the onset of the war they had blamed England, France, and the Treaty of Versailles, while commending Hitler on generous offers of peace.⁵¹ As the war progressed, the journals depicted the war as a product of two ideologies: the old and corrupt order of the “moneybags,” which was based on materialism, against the new order, based on idealism. *Gute Gesundheit* (*Good Health*) echoed this line in December 1941:

Surely, every German has grasped the meaning of this conflict. . . . For this struggle is the wrestling of two world views to the bitter end. Idealism in the form of German socialism is opposed to the materialism of a world order which is about to fall. . . . It is not the English moneybags, nor is it Bolshevism, conceived as it was by the Jews; it is the German who in the future will determine what Europe will be like. . . . The English Shylocks and bourse jobbers have ignited the fires of war against our German socialism. And it is for this ideal that we will commit ourselves to toil a new every day. . . . Each sacrifice reminds us of the community of the German *Volk*, and binds us to it anew. Our faith in its mission makes us strong. And this faith will blaze a trail for the victorious flags of our soldiers.⁵²

In 1941, the denominational press closed down, allegedly to conserve resources, and Adventist journalism

all but came to an end in Germany. The two notable exceptions were *Gute Gesundheit* and *Gegenwartsfragen*, which by this time had actually ceased being religious journals. Two articles from *Gegenwartsfragen* illustrate its version of the Adventist Christian message.

One piece appeared in the August/September 1943 issue. Entitled, “Between the Nations,” it blamed “the Jew” for the sacrifices in property and blood brought about by the war. “Today no one can deny the controlling role that the Jew has played in the [First] World War, the revolt that followed it, and the economic woes of nations, all of which were designed to increase his wealth. The same goes for the corruption of our morals until the turnaround in 1933. Jewry and liberalism had united in a war against decency and peace.”

“The Jew” had also corrupted the German spirit. “Today almost everybody knows that the Jew has not only endangered external security, but has imperiled and harmed our soul, as well. While it happened it was hardly noticed, and yet we have suffered harm the longer the more.” Recalling the “corruption” of German culture during the Weimar Republic, the author observed:

What did those images look like that they called art! What did radio and film present us with; what strange concoctions did they serve us on stage; what screaming, distorted “music” was then adored! And what literature! The Jews, “the lords of culture,” were on their way to transform themselves from a *Volk* between nations into their masters. And the Jew, who is devoid of all morality, nearly succeeded in making world powers into Jewish strongholds. It was rather late when those who still had healthy [pure] blood were able to stop the pernicious Jewish flood.

The author called on readers “never to grow tired in the struggle against the enemy of our race who lives among the nations.”⁵³ This statement should not be taken as a measure of widespread anti-Semitism among German Adventists, yet it should be understood as arising from a climate in which the Church took steps to ensure banishment for Adventists of Jewish descent to guard against suspicions of disloyalty among Nazis. In some instances, church members were even forbidden from maintaining contact with those banished members. Although individual Adventists are known to have sheltered and assisted Jews, they acted as individuals who followed their own consciences against denominational policy.⁵⁴

The other example from *Gegenwartsfragen*, entitled

THE CHURCH'S COLLABORATION WITH THE STATE IN BOTH COUNTRIES RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INTEGRITY AND ADEQUACY OF THE CHURCH'S POLICY ON RELATIONS WITH THE STATE.

"Loving and Fighting," appeared in the August/September 1944 issue and discussed the proper motivation for war. The plutocrats, the writer argued, fought for wealth and power, whereas the Bolsheviks were "motivated by hatred for everything that is superior to their Asiatic ways." In contrast, Germans fought for love of their *Volk*, whose life depended on "blood and space."

In a peculiar dialectic, the writer sought to justify hatred of the enemy as a virtue. If, he argued, war was the father of all things, "then love shines as the mother of all things. Father and mother belong together for the sake of preservation and nurture of life. No life is imaginable without the eternal interaction between the masculine and the feminine, between war and love." Love, the writer reasoned, was tied to hatred, for true love hated the enemy of the object of his love. Thus, hatred functioned as defense of one's love. He who fought, yet "his fighting is not sustained by burning love, fights like a brute."

According to the author, the measure of one's love was the willingness to invest oneself to the point of self-sacrifice. In that case, a soldier's "bitter death" was nevertheless "great and beautiful since it is the crowning of his love." For the sake of love "the soldier must fight mercilessly and, yes, must be able to hate with abysmal hatred everything that wants to destroy the object of his love." Every German, the writer concluded, ought to find the very thought "unbearable that this *Volk*, deprived of its liberty, would be enslaved and destroyed by foreign tyrants, and its soil in the claws of Jewish exploiters and Asiatic brutes."⁵⁵

German Adventists served loyally in the armed forces. A report of January 1944 listed 6,687 in the armed forces, with 871 killed or missing in action.⁵⁶ Although some served as medics and doctors (31!), most served in other capacities and many held advanced ranks. The report noted that many had won awards for bravery, among them 567 with the Iron Cross Second Class (EK-II), 79 with Iron Cross First Class (EK-I), and 2 with the coveted oak leaves for the Iron Cross. One Adventist was a member of a special SS unit that rescued Italian dictator Benito Mussolini.

Church leaders claimed this record offered evidence "that the pastors and members of our Church stand loyally by their *Volk* and fatherland as well at its leader-

ship, ready to sacrifice life and possessions." Altogether, some 1,269 German Adventists lost their lives as a result of the war. As Adolf Minck wrote in a letter to the German Church Ministry, Adventists had "sacrificed husbands and sons on the altar of the fatherland. Resignedly and with pride they accept their lot."⁵⁷

Assessment

Adventists in America and Germany resembled each other by backing their respective national causes during the Second World War, but there were several notable differences that can be explained largely in terms of political environment.

In the United States, Adventists resembled other Christians who opted for "a cautious patriotism," one that transcended the conflict instead of yielding to hatred.⁵⁸ Their interpretation of the war as part of the age-old conflict between God-given liberty and authoritarian control was in keeping with their traditional view of America as a Protestant refuge. Departing from the pacifist principles, to which they had clung during the First World War, American Adventists became eager to prove their patriotism by active participation in the war effort.

The Church's collaboration with the state through the MCC and the military chaplaincy also marked a departure from its traditional policy of separation of church and state.⁵⁹ Ever since the Second World War, God-and-country patriotism has been a component of American Adventist culture—through the wars in Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, and Afghanistan.

While meeting the Nazi's totalitarian demands, German Adventists not only collaborated with the state, but also sacrificed critical elements of the Adventist message, most notably belief in the Second Coming. However, the chief difference between American and German Adventists lay in the extent to which German leaders lent their support and their press not only to their national cause, but also to a spirit of hatred and to the war itself. One year into the First World War, Adventist leaders in Germany had urged



caution lest nationalist hatred and war sentiments enter into the Church's ministry.⁶⁰ No such voice of caution was heard in German Adventism during the Second World War.

Lest we judge too harshly, let us remember that the Church in Germany faced a terrible choice. The question of disloyalty to the Third Reich jeopardized not only the Church's publishing work, but also most likely its existence as a corporate body. Moreover, Adventist support for the new regime was not entirely voluntary. Nazi editorial policy demanded that all issues with the potential to "disturb the peace" or undermine popular confidence in the government be avoided. Over time, Adventist publications in Germany became an extension of the Nazi press as editors were forced to accept articles from the Nazi press agency. In this way, the Adventist Church became an auxiliary to Nazi propaganda, deceiving its members about the true nature of one of the most demonic systems in history.

After the war, Adolf Minck defended his church against charges of collaboration and apostasy, protesting that only a policy of flexibility could have saved the Church. Rather than apostatizing, he argued, the German Church had merely "detoured" around an obstacle. He believed God had given the Church wisdom to steer the right course to preserve it intact and protect its members from persecution. "No widows and orphans accuse us today" because they lost husband or father, Minck asserted. "It would have not have been difficult to make martyrs of the 500 ministers and 43,000 members. . . . More than once, a mere shrug of the shoulder would have been enough and the entire denomination would have been outlawed and the work smashed."⁶¹

Nor were German Adventists unique. Other small denominations in Germany, among them Methodists and Baptists, followed a similar course.⁶² By contrast, at least some leaders of the established churches, both Catholic and Protestant, found the courage to sound a prophetic voice. To be sure, leaders of the established churches had the advantage of speaking from a position of strength with little fear of placing their members in jeopardy.

However, the need for survival does not fully explain the Church's endorsement of the Nazi state and Hitler's war. Adventist support for the war as

expressed in the press was no mere show to impress Nazi authorities, for internal church documents reflect a similar spirit among several church leaders. "For us at home it is an exhilarating feeling to know that God has granted victory to German arms on all fronts," wrote Michael Budnick, president of the East German Union and a member of the Nazi Party, to fellow gospel workers who served in the armed forces. "We are especially grateful to our *Führer*, but also to all combat soldiers and thus also to you, dear brethren."⁶³

The return of the Memel and other eastern territories to German jurisdiction caused jubilation among Adventist leaders in Berlin, who interrupted a committee meeting to celebrate. "By divine providence and the courageous acts of our *Führer* and Reich Chancellor an old wrong has been righted," wrote Budnick as he welcomed gospel workers in Posen and West Prussia and expressed appreciation for their past loyalty to Germany: "We thank you for your manly and loyal advocacy of German interests."⁶⁴

Adventist Church leaders voiced their support for German policy, prayed for German arms, and expressed pride in the contribution of Adventists in the armed forces. They systematically collected statistics on members and pastors who served in the armed forces, noting their ranks, promotions, awards for bravery, as well as war casualties. These statistics were "very valuable, especially in negotiations with authorities."⁶⁵ From outrage over the injustices of the Treaty of Versailles to the victories of Nazi armies in the Second World War, their nationalist sentiments persisted undiminished, even under a criminal government.

It is surprising that events caught German Adventists utterly unprepared given their preoccupation with interpretation of prophecy, signs of the times, and constant warnings to be ready for the time of troubles. How was it that leaders of a church that had roots in the United States could thus fall prey to German nationalism?

Like other denominations that went to Germany from America, members of the Adventist Church had suffered much discrimination and had to prove their Germanness in an increasingly nationalistic society. The father of German Adventism, Ludwig R. Conradi, a U.S. immigrant who returned to his native country, sought to give the Church a German image by stressing the German roots of Adventism while de-emphasizing the writings of the Church's prophet, Ellen G. White.⁶⁶ As their sense of German identity grew, so did their susceptibility to the normative forces of German society in general, and to nationalist sentiments in particular.

WHENEVER A PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO SURRENDER THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTIES AND RIGHT OF SOVEREIGNTY FOR GOVERNMENTAL SUBSIDIES AND PATRONAGE . . . THEY ARE WRITING ICHABOD OVER THE TEMPLE OF THEIR FREEDOM, AND RESIGNING THEIR SOVEREIGNTY TO DICTATORS.

effectiveness of these normative forces can be seen particularly in articles that express virulent anti-Semitism, discuss the meaning of the war as a conflict between German ideology and materialism, or explore the subject of war as a revelation of God's Providence in their nation's history. The latter are reminiscent of the worst perversions of the gospel in the time of the First World War and reflect the thought of fashionable German Protestant theologians of the early twentieth century.⁶⁷

"Christians in Germany will face the terrible alternative," Dietrich Bonhoeffer had written to Reinhold Niebuhr in 1939, "of either willing the defeat of their nation in order that Christian civilization may survive, or willing the victory of their nation and thereby destroying our civilization."⁶⁸ It seems that German Adventists knew of no such choice. Otherworldly, politically illiterate, and naive, they nevertheless had been shaped by the normative forces of German culture. Except for a few individuals who paid with their lives for following conscience, ultimate sacrifice of Germany's wartime Adventists was not for the heavenly kingdom, and not for the Church's unique prophetic mission of reconciliation.

The Church's collaboration with the state in Germany and the United States raises questions about the integrity and adequacy of the Church's policy on relations with the state. In Germany, at least, it seemed appropriate simply to quote Romans 13:1, "be subject to all authority," conclude that Hitler had been ordained of God, and abdicate all personal responsibility.

A recent survey of the Adventist Church's relations with governments around the world suggests that conformity and collaboration have since become policy.⁶⁹ A policy that simply commits the Church to conformity with whatever regime is in power is unlikely to permit it to raise its prophetic voice and inspire resistance to evil.

Notes and References

1. With some 43,000 members, the German Adventist Church was the largest outside North America.

2. Main topics of both presses included the rising power of the Papacy, the League of Nations, calendar reform, the yellow peril, resurgent Islam, and Bolshevism as milestones in the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. "For Germany to be cut off from East Prussia is like the U.S. being cut off from New England," argued one

American Adventist, noting the historic importance of Prussia in Germany's rebirth. Russell Quinn, "The Polish Corridor," *Signs of the Times*, Nov. 8, 1932, 13. See also, William G. Wirth, "Germany and Her Neighbors: A Review of the Present Political Situation in Europe," *Watchman Magazine*, May 1935, 3. On Germany's rearmament, see Frederick Lee, "Our Warlike World," *Signs of the Times*, Aug. 30, 1932, 9.

3. Merlin L. Neff, "We Learned Nothing from the War," *Signs of the Times*, Dec. 5, 1933, 3. In regard to church policy, see especially two documents in the General Conference Archives (hereafter GC), RG 21/1939: J. L. McElhany to J. H. Cochran, Mar. 10, 1938, which requested that articles in the *Signs of the Times* critical of Nazi Germany be withheld; and circular by McElhany, Mar. 14, 1938, which discusses *The New Caesars*, by Gwynne Dalrymple. Pacific Press had published the book in 1938 for missionary outreach in the United States, but withdrew and destroyed it although already printed.

An example of cautious reporting is F. Chester Carrier, "The Tragedy of the Jews," *Signs of the Times*, Aug. 29, 1939, 8. Although protesting the wave of anti-Semitic "outrages," such as the destruction of synagogues and Jewish businesses, the article does not mention Nazism or Germany by name. In part, the article seems intended to call on Jews to accept Christ, and thus end their curse. Only rarely was a voice of sympathy raised for European Jews. For an example, see Frederick Gilbert, "The First Jewish Congress," *Signs of the Times*, Nov. 24, 1936, 15.

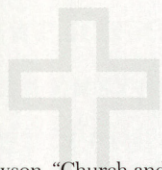
4. Reviewing the new phenomenon of European dictatorships, one writer concluded that aggression was inherent in such systems and made war necessary. He reasoned that since none of these dictators had historic roots, and since the legitimacy of dictatorship depended on popular enthusiasm, "each of them must justify itself by a continued series of popular and impressive achievements. To maintain their position, each must go on from triumph to triumph." "Catechism on Europe (II)," *Signs of the Times*, May 5, 1936, 3. See also, "War Postponed," *ibid.*, Oct. 18, 1938, 2; and Robert Pierson, "After Czechoslovakia, What?" *Watchman Magazine*, Jan. 1939.

5. "Shall We Have Conscripted?" *Watchman Magazine*, Sept. 1940.

6. *Ibid.*, 410. See also, Ronald Lawson, "Church and State at Home and Abroad: The Evolution of Seventh-day Adventist Relations with Governments," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (summer 1996), 290-91. Some 186 American Adventists were either court-martialed or served prison sentences during the First World War, and thirty-five were still imprisoned after the end of the war for either refusing to work on the Sabbath or turning down military service altogether. Douglas Morgan, "The Remnant and the Republic: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Public Order" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1992), 404-5.

7. F. G. Ashbaugh to H. T. Elliott, Feb. 23, 1937, GC, RG21/1937-A; Morgan, "Remnant and Republic," 411; Douglas Morgan, *Adventism and the American Republic: The Public Involvement of a Major Apocalyptic Movement* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), 94-95. Some members criticized the denomination for





becoming part of the war machine. Lawson, "Church and State," 291.

8. H. L. Rudy, "Will Totalitarianism Crush Christianity?" *Watchman Magazine*, Mar. 1941, 10.

9. Andrew West, "The Unknown Soldier," *ibid.*, Oct. 1, 1940, 5.

10. Louis H. Christian, "Christians and War," *Signs of the Times*, May 7, 1940, 4.

11. Arthur S. Maxwell, "Will One Power Rule the World?" *Signs of the Times*, special prophetic issue, July 2, 1940, 2. Circulation of this issue reached some 375,000 copies. See also *ibid.*, "Interest in Prophecy," Sept. 3, 1940, 13.

12. In response to inquiries by readers, *Watchman Magazine* explained that this war was probably not the final one, Armageddon. "Is This War Armageddon?" Apr. 1944. Also, see the editorial in *Review and Herald*, Apr. 4, 1943.

13. Charles S. Longacre, "The Peril to Liberty," *Signs of the Times*, Apr. 1, 1941, 2-3.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*

17. Gerald L. Sittser, *A Cautious Patriotism: The American Churches and the Second World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 100-109.

18. L. H. Christian, "The Challenge of the Hour," *Signs of the Times*, Jan. 20, 1942.

19. John van Ginhoven, "We Shall Not Fail," *Youth's Instructor*, July 1945, 3. "Why be satisfied with only one day?" was the response of one Adventist publication to Roosevelt's call for a day of prayer. George Baehr and W. W. Bauer, *If Bombs Fall* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1942), 94-95.

20. "The Challenge of the Hour: Waning Democracy Demands New Loyalty," *Signs of the Times*, Jan. 20, 1942, 2-3.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Morgan, "Remnant and Republic," 411-12.

23. "What is Americanism?" June 1942, 3; "The Test of Americanism," July 1942, 3; "The Fortress of Liberty," Aug. 1942, 5; "The Spy, the Saboteur, the Subverter," Sept. 1942, 3, 5; "America, Freedom's Bulwark Threatened!" Oct. 1942, 3, 12; "America, Freedom's Bulwark," Nov. 1942, 3, 11. The quote is taken from the Oct. issue.

24. Hoover, "America, Freedom's Bulwark Threatened!" 3.

25. On Pearl Harbor, see Roy F. Cottrell, "In Such an Hour," *Watchman Magazine*, Aug. 1942, 12. On temperance, see Daniel H. Kress, "Building Men for Defense," *ibid.*, 14. On vegetarianism, see "Wartime Foods—Is Meat Necessary?" *ibid.*, June 1941.

26. Pages 2-3.

27. Charles S. Longacre, "President, Pope, and Prophecy," *Signs of the Times*, Feb. 13, 1940, 3, 15.

28. *Ibid.*, 12; Lawson, "Church and State," 291.

29. Victor Armstrong, for example, became a combat pilot who served in the Second World War, in Korea, and in Vietnam. Armstrong, who eventually advanced to the rank of general, was the creator of Medevac, and he served as a helicopter pilot for President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Other notable servicemen include Desmond Doss, who received the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1945. In regard to Kinman, see Terrie Aamodt, *Bold Venture: A History of Walla Walla College* (College Place, Wash.: Walla Walla College, 1992), 121. For an in depth study on the evolution of the Church's position on service in the military and on war, as well as on relations with the United States government, see Morgan, *Adventism and the American Republic*, 89-95.

30. For more information on events surrounding the ban, see

Photo: John E. Auman © 2001 Dornia Auman



Medical cadets uniforms included gas masks.

Roland Blaich, "Religion Under National Socialism: The Case of the German Adventist Church," *Central European History* 26 (1993), 259-62.

31. Circular, Rhenish Conference, Nov. 28, 1934, Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf, RW 58/10820, no. 106.

32. *Der Adventbote* (hereafter AB), Aug. 15, 1933.

33. *Ibid.* Austrian Adventist leaders rejoiced that God in his providence had chosen Adolf Hitler to be the "liberator of Austria," exceeding their fondest hopes. *Der Adventbote* claimed that Sudetenland was "German to the bone," and the president of the East German Union Conference, Michael Budnick, welcomed the new church members in Bohemia with words of pride and gratitude for their "unwavering endurance and the sacrifices [they had] made for the cause of unification with the greater German Reich." Circular of East German Union, Nov. 21, 1938.

Bundesarchiv, Abteilungen Potsdam (hereafter BA Potsdam) RKM 51.01/23388, no. 00034. On Austrian reaction to the Anschluss, AB, Apr. 15, 1938, 126. On Sudetenland, *ibid.*, June 1, 1939, 162.

34. "Was tun die Adventisten in der Wohlfahrtspflege," Jahresbericht für 1935, 12.

35. Minutes, East German Union Committee, Mar. 12-15, 1935. Archives for European Adventist History (hereafter AEA), U1-2, no. 0195. English translation of statement in GC, RG21/1935—Central Europe. Adolf Minck, president of the German Adventist Church, felt that this statement was "confirmed by the thousands of men of our denomination who have served in the armed forces in war and peace." Minck to G. W. Schubert, Jan. 4, 1937. AEA, MED/Hanover. For a more detailed treatise on the draft issue, see Johannes Hartlapp, "Military Service," (master's thesis, Newbold College, 1994), 117-24.

36. Circular, Hanover Conference, Mar. 20, 1935, AEA, MED/Hanover Vereinigung. On the oath, see Emil Gugel, "An die zum Heeresdienst Einberufenen," circular of Oct. 25, 1935, AEA, U 1-2, no. 0114.

37. Circular of Hanover Conference, Mar. 20, 1935, AEA, MED/Hannover; Decision No. 454, Central European Division; circular to conference workers, Hanover Conference, July 23, 1936, AEA, ungeordnet 1933-39. Also see, Jost to Thomalla, Aug. 15, 1936, GC, RG21/1936—Central Europe. According to a Hanover Conference circular of July 2, 1936, Reform Adventists considered the Hitler salute and the swastika the "mark of the Beast." AEA, ungeordnet 1933-39.

38. Kurt Sinz, "Im Strom der Zeit," AB, Nov. 15, 1939.

39. *Ibid.*

40. "Nicht vergeblich!" *Gegenwartsfragen* (hereafter GF), Jan./Mar. 1940, 7.

41. "Im Strom der Zeit," AB, Apr. 15, 1940, 1.

42. AB, Mar. 15, 1940, 41; H. Ruff, "Eiserne Wirklichkeit: Ein Brief ins Feld," *ibid.*, 4.

43. "Im Strom der Zeit," AB, July 15, 1940, 1.

44. "Im Strom der Zeit," AB, Aug. 15, 1940, 1.

45. Otto Brozio, "Was tun die Adventisten in der Wohlfahrtspflege," Tätigkeitsbericht 1939/1940, 3. Brozio was director of Adventist Welfare.

46. G. W. Schubert to the General Conference Committee, Feb. 7, 1937. GC, RG 21/1937—Central Europe. For the Gestapo visit, see Circular to the Conference Presidents of the East German Union, Mar. 27, 1940, AEA, U/1-2, no. 0250.

47. Circular to the conference presidents of the East German Union, Mar. 27, 1940, AEA, U/1-2, no. 0250; circular, signed by Adolf Minck, in GC, RG 21/Documents: 1920s-1950s—Central and Northern Europe.

48. Minck to Gauleiter Danzig Westpreussen, June 24, 1941. Copies to Church Ministry and Reich Security Main Office, BA Potsdam, RKM 51.01/23388, no. 00268-69.

49. Circular of Feb. 19, 1943, BA Potsdam, RKM 51.01/23388, no. 00320. See also, Minck's May 2, 1943, letter to the Church Ministry (Haugg), BA Potsdam, RKM 51.01/23388, no. 00321. On the Sabbath question, a circular by the South German Union to conference presidents argued: "Since the warrior at the front does not have a Sabbath, the warrior on the home front should not demand one, either. Feb. 4, 1943. AEA, V 1-1, no. 0154.

50. "Im Strom der Zeit," *AB*, Jan. 15, 1941; July 1, 1940.

51. *AB*, Feb. 1, 1940, 13; Mar. 15, 1940, 41; "Im Strom der Zeit," *ibid*, Sept. 15, 1940, 1.

52. L. E., "The Soldier at the Front Looks for your Sacrifice." (Possibly supplied by the Propaganda Ministry.)

53. The quotation is taken from D. [Daniel, the editor?] of *GF*.

54. See Budnick to W. K. Ising, July 25, 1947, GC, RG 21/Documents: 1920s-1950s-Central and Northern Europe. The case of a member of the Berlin Conference who wanted to assist a Jewish family illustrates denominational policy. The Conference warned him not to expect any support if he got into trouble. Cited in Hartlapp, "Military Service," 75. For examples of Jewish Adventists in distress, see Daniel Heinz, "Schmerzliche Erinnerungen: Adventisten und Juden im Dritten Reich," *Adventecho*, Apr. 30, 2001, 15-17.

55. The quotations appear on page 27. The preceding issue of the journal featured a boxed quote: "For us Germans there is no greater example than that of those last soldiers who, out of love for their brothers in arms, have suffered the death of a soldier."

56. On loyalty and the statistics: Minck report to German Church Ministry, Apr. 7, 1944, BA Potsdam, RKM 51.01/23388, nos. 00354 and 00360.

57. Hartlapp, "Military Service," 132 n. 3. According to an initial postwar estimate, the number of Adventist military casualties exceeded 3,000, along with some 50 pastors. Eberhard Fischdick, *Helfende Hände: Die Geschichte des Advent-Wohlfahrtswerkes in Deutschland* (Darmstadt: Advent-Wohlfahrtswerk E.V., 1988), 71. Mink's letter, dated Nov. 5, 1943, can be found in BA Potsdam, RKM 51.01/23388, no. 00346.

58. See Sittser, *Cautious Patriotism*, 114-24.

59. Morgan, "Remnant and Republic," 417.

60. Protocol of Committee, East German Union, Friedensau, Aug. 19-20, 1915, AEA, U/1-2, no. 0001.

61. Blaich, "Religion Under National Socialism," 276.

62. On Methodists, see Roland Blaich, "A Tale of Two Leaders: German Methodists and the Nazi State," *Church History* (June 2001): 1-27. On Baptists, see Andrea Strübind, *Die unfreie Freikirche: Der Bund der Baptistengemeinden im "Dritten Reich"* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991).

63. Circular to gospel workers of the East German Union in the armed forces, June 24, 1940, AEA, U/1-2, no. 0251. Budnick wrote similarly to his gospel workers on the home front. Mitteilung für Evangeliumsarbeiter des ODV, no. 3, 1940, AEA, U/1-2, no. 0302.

64. Oct. 20, 1939, AEA, U/1-2, no. 0248.

65. An example is a circular from Budnick to conference presidents of the East German Union, Sept. 5, 1941, AEA, U/1-2, no. 0257.

66. On Conradi's concept of a German Adventism, see Daniel Heinz, *Ludwig Richard Conradi: Missionar der Siebenten-Tags-*

Photo: Courtesy of General Conference Office of Archives and Statistics



Chaplains at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, meet with Elder E.E. Cleveland.

Adventisten in Europa (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1987), 56. Conradi pursued his goal of building an indigenous church to the point of establishing a European General Conference in Hamburg in 1901. Daniel Heinz, *Church, State, and Religious Dissent* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1993), 42-43.

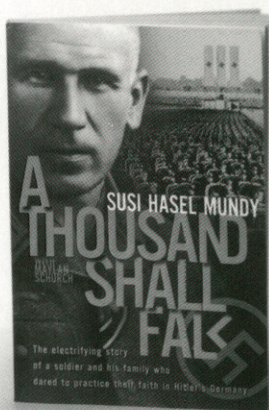
67. Wilhelm Pressel, *Die Kriegspredigt 1914-1918 in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1967), 144-59. See also, the excellent survey of German war theology by John A. Moses, "Justifying War as the Will of God: German Theology On the Eve of the First World War," *Colloquium* 31 (1999), 3-20.

68. Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Man of Vision, Man of Courage* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 559.

69. The German church leaders' view of the state was naive and did not consider the possibility of a criminal government. When that possibility was indeed raised, they argued that when Paul wrote his injunction to submit to the authorities Rome was governed by a monster, Nero. How much more should they obey Hitler? "Seid untertan aller Obrigkeit," *AB*, Feb. 15, 1934. In regard to recent policy, see Lawson, "Church and State."

Roland Blaich is emeritus professor of history at Walla Walla College. He is a native of Germany. Blairo@olympen.com





SERVING HITLER WITH A WOODEN GUN

A Thousand Shall Fall. By Susi Hasel Mundy.
Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 2001.

Reviewed by Janet S. Borisevich

Mention the name Hasel in Adventist circles and most people think of Gerhard Hasel, the former dean of the seminary at Andrews University and author of fourteen books. But it is his sister, Susi, who has written the best seller *A Thousand Shall Fall*, released early in 2001 and already into its third printing.

This story of the Hasels, a German family, during World War II could serve as a corresponding bookend to Desmond Doss's American story, *The Unlikeliest Hero*. Both books are page-turning accounts of Seventh-day Adventists who remained loyal to their faith, their families, and their respective countries during World War II. Mundy's depictions of her father's and mother's respective journeys in their day-to-day lives during the war provide ample evidence of God's direct guidance and intervention.

Miracle after miracle occurs in the pages of the book, as well as in Mundy's account of how the writing of the book occurred. In 1970, after telling her family's story many times, Mundy decided to put an account on paper. The next year, while visiting her parents in Germany, she began collecting their memories both in writing and on tape, reading books about the Hitler era, and preparing to write. But every time she tried

to write, she couldn't.

By 1998, Mundy had collected and read all she could for her story, so she sat down to write, but, once again, writer's block plagued her. She was convinced that someone else should do the writing. One Sabbath morning soon after, she heard that the editor of the *Adventist Review* was visiting her church, so she decided to talk to him. Remarkably, that very morning this editor had prayed that somehow he would find someone to write the story Mundy had been hoping to write! Amazed when Mundy approached him with her idea for a book, he knew he had received the answer to his prayer. "We want the book!" was his immediate response.

Mundy was under pressure to write. Still, nothing she did worked. After asking several experienced authors—who were all too busy to take on another project—she contacted Pastor Maylan Schurch, who had authored or coauthored at least a dozen

books. After Mundy met and discussed the book with Schurch, he told her that she was still the one to write the book but that he would be happy to look it over after she was done. He told her simply to write the story in the third person and to include as many sensory details as possible.

Schurch's advice not to worry about style freed Mundy from the writer's block that had beset her previously, and suddenly she was writing smoothly and effortlessly. After about six months, Mundy completed writing her book, which she sent to Schurch. What surprised her was that he changed almost nothing, except for a few minor adjustments here and there. The value of Schurch's initial guidance, along with his encouragement throughout that half-year period of writing, inspired her to accomplish something she never dreamed she could do.

Mundy uses lively dialog to recreate her family's experiences. "The Bible is all lies! God doesn't protect us. . . . He doesn't care what happens to us. We might as well not pray any more." These words spill from seven-year-old Gerhard Hasel, who has believed that God will protect his family and other believers from harm, until, one day, most of the Adventists in

Darmstadt are killed in a bombing raid. His mother, Helene, replies, "You have learned an important lesson today. Pain and tragedy can come to anybody, good and bad alike. The important thing is to believe that God loves us no matter what happens. As long as we are His children, it doesn't matter if we live or die because in the end, we will live with Him in heaven."

"Please be with us, Father. . . . Help me to be true to my faith, even in the army. Help me so that I will not have to kill anyone." This is the prayer of Franz Hasel, the forty-year-old literature evangelist who departs from his wife and three children at the start of World War II. Although a pacifist, Franz is drafted and about to enter into the world of Hitler's prestigious Company 699, assigned the task of building bridges each time Hitler made his next move. The concepts



Helen Hasel before the war.

mentioned in his prayer—believing in God's presence on a personal level, being true to one's faith no matter what, being determined not to kill, and trusting that both self and family will be kept safe—all reveal the major themes of this stirring story of unflinching courage and spiritual fortitude.

Although suspected of being a disguised Jew because of his

Sabbath-keeping and refusal to consume pork, Franz is somehow always able to follow his principles. In spite of often being called "carrot eater" and "Bible reader" by his superiors and some of his comrades, he soon earns the Maltese Cross because of his "good moral influence on the men in the entire company." Franz is promoted, receiving new and unexpected benefits, such as being relieved of all outdoor work in the cold.

Having natural marksmanship skills, Franz does not trust himself with a weapon. As a way of showing God that he is serious about not wanting to kill any human, he disposes of his revolver and arms himself with a piece of wood camouflaged as a gun, putting his life totally in God's hands. His sergeant notices that he is the only man in their company who does not get so much as a scratch or a bruise. The bullets always seem to miss Franz. His sergeant declares, "From now on, you and I will share the same quarters! You are going to be my guardian angel!"

Mundy also describes scenes from a child's perspective: what it was like for her and her siblings to endure sudden Nazi inspections, shattering air raids, and desperate escapes from their home, all of which stole a portion of their childhood and quickened their years of growing up.

Throughout the book, explicit illustrations are given of how war often brings out the worst or the best in people. Just after the war, Franz tells one of his former oppressive officers, "Because of my Christian beliefs, you have wanted to do away with me all during the war. Now those same Christian beliefs are going to be your salvation because I am not going to turn you in for war crimes."

Miracle after miracle is described



Helen Hasel after the war.

from beginning to end. At the end of the war, when they return to their city of Frankfurt, the Hasels discover that their home is still standing amidst the destruction. Also, of the original 1,200 in Company 699, only seven survive—three of whom were not wounded; Franz Hasel, the man with the wooden pistol, is one of these three.

Mundy declares that the experience of writing *A Thousand Shall Fall* has given her a new sense of awe in witnessing firsthand how God works. It has also taught her how to commit herself totally to God, which has given her great satisfaction and peace in knowing that God has allowed her to contribute to the publishing work in a way that she initially did not expect. It is clear to Mundy that God in his great wisdom knew that the timing of her book was not meant to be written in those earlier years. It is a book for "such a time as this."

Janet S. Borisevich is an associate professor of English at Pacific Union College. Her most recent linguistic research, conducted at Northern Arizona University, compares and contrasts the language used by physicians in the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, showing how and why the language of medical doctors changed over a span of 350 years. jborisevich@puc.edu

THE CASE FOR SELECTIVE NONPACIFISM

Reprinted from *Spectrum* 1.1 (winter 1969): 41-44.

By Charles Scriven

How shall the Christian relate to war? Selective nonpacifism, in my opinion, is the only consistent stance. By selective nonpacifism I mean that some wars will be deemed unjust and the Christian will conscientiously refuse to fight in them. I mean, furthermore, that some wars will be deemed just, and the Christian will conscientiously determine to fight in them.

This position implies a rejection of pure pacifism and of so-called “conscientious cooperation,” as traditionally advocated by Adventists. It is taken in full awareness that present laws in the United States are unsympathetic toward selective nonpacifism. I hold that these laws ought to be changed—a matter to which I will give brief attention later.

If selective nonpacifism is the only consistent stance for the Christian, how can its implications be squared with agape, or Christian love? As will be seen, it is precisely because of Christian love that pacifism and “conscientious cooperation” must be rejected.

Christian love manifests itself in deep and impartial concern for the well-being of all people. Ideally, it does not retaliate and it does not mistreat even an enemy. In the context of a fallen world, however, we are not in an ideal situation. Sometimes, for example, an imperative to restrain from killing may conflict with an imperative to preserve life. When one is faced with such conflicting ethical alternatives, actions that are compatible with ideal Christian love will be impossible. We must then choose in faith the way that seems most nearly to correspond with ideal Christian love. The character of our world is such that, paradoxical as it may seem, refusal to kill, in some contexts, may be the breaking of the sixth commandment and a betrayal of Christian love.

Selective nonpacifism rests on the theory of the just war, hinted at in Plato and formulated in

PEACEMAKING INSTEAD OF WARMAKING 2002

By Charles Scriven

Thirty years ago, thanks to great seminary teachers, I was waking up. I could see that Christian existence means taking responsibility for the world, not running from it as mid-twentieth century Adventism was inclined to do. But judging from the symposium reprinted here, I was still groggy. I did not see, or see clearly, that when Christians take responsibility for the world, they are still Christians, still followers of Jesus, still beholden to the Sermon on the Mount.

My contribution repeatedly used “Christian” as an adjective, but made no reference to Christ. In fact, only Emmanuel Fenz, the apologist for nonviolence, had the courage to invoke the story—and example—of Jesus. This largely explains why his remarks are the most illuminating.

I defended “selective nonpacifism,” a then-fashionable moniker for just war theory. I now realize that my defense was the standard Constantinian line. It was also the standard liberal orthodoxy. It was also dead wrong. Dead wrong except for its spirit of political engagement—on that score what I wrote was in the neighborhood, at least, of the target.

I am more sympathetic to Donald McAdams’s defense of uniformed noncombatancy than I was thirty years ago. Fenz the pacifist acknowledges that in a highly interconnected political and economic system everyone, pacifist or not, has dirty hands—has some part, that is, in the system’s misadventures. If everyone is compromised and no one antiseptically pure, then the difference between pulling triggers and healing wounds seems quite substantial. Uniformed medics who refuse the military’s weapons defy convention, and even if they assist soldiers back to their posts, that defiance is significant.

Still, the uniformed medic collaborates with a power structure that embraces killing in order to

fend off competitors. The uniformed medic (who is Christian) thus obscures the ideal of the church as a peacemaking minority, a people who refuse the narrow loyalty of violence and practice instead the universal loyalty of prayer, forgiveness, and love. In a word, the uniformed medic is Constantinian.

Constantine, the Roman emperor, has come to symbolize the "realism" that makes it necessary for Christians to forswear the Sermon on the Mount, or at least rationalize it into irrelevance. Fenz took issue with this realism, and with the just war theory that made it respectable. I now stand with him.

From the standpoint of war-making-as-usual, the constraints in just war theory did have a civilizing influence. As sociologist and historian Rodney Stark has said, before Christ "conquerors butchered people for the hell of it."¹ Still, a community that keeps the commandments of God and has the faith of Jesus must break rank with Constantine for a calling more radical than his. It must seek a form of citizenship that honors the one human being who, as the letter to the Hebrews puts it, is the "exact imprint of God's very being."

Fenz did not say how his vision opens doors for transformation. He did not say how a church that renounces war-making may blaze the trail to peace, or *shalom*—to that overall well-being and prosperity; in other words, that is the centerpiece of the biblical vision. His remarks fell short, then, with respect to the church's role as salt and light to the world, as the

abettor of a wholesome society.

But thirty years ago virtually no one had heard of the Mennonite genius, John Howard Yoder. So virtually no one was focusing on how a faithful minority ready to think and act ahead of the majority can, by its example, shape a new humanity.

The late Yoder was a child of the same Radical Reformation that is the background of Adventism. Now, thanks to his insight and influence, we can focus with new confidence on the social and political relevance of faithfulness to Christ. And if we ask how schools and hospitals, or democracy, human rights, and health consciousness, came into being, we'll see that his point about the creative impact of social minorities is hard to gainsay.

As for the creative impact of a church that renounces war, people will line up to try. Most Christians want desperately to refute the idea. I was in their number once. Now my throwaway lines run in the direction of this one: If violence were the answer, the Middle East would be paradise.

Notes and References

1. Quoted in *Newsweek*, Mar. 3, 1999.

Charles Scriven is the president of Kettering Medical College in Dayton, Ohio. In 1969, when the first issue of *Spectrum* was published, he was a ministerial intern at Lewiston, Idaho. Charles.Scriven@kmcnetwork.org

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Christian terms by Ambrose and by Augustine in greater detail. The advancing technology of warfare has stimulated continuing discussion and adaptation of the just war theory. Contemporary ethicists who advocate just war would agree, in the main, that such a war must—

1. Have as its goal the restoration of peace and realization of justice.
2. Mount destructive power equal only to the task of destroying the power of the oppressor. This destructive power must, insofar as is possible, refrain from devastation of civil populations, and must never involve malicious atrocities or reprisals.
3. Be a limited war. Unlimited warfare is never just, because today in unlimited warfare the distinction between victory and defeat would be so blurred

as to be unrecognizable; indeed, there would be victory for neither side and defeat for all.

4. Have no absolute ends, but be only an instrument of specific national policy.
5. Have reasonable chance of victory, so that futile destruction of life is not inevitable from the outset.
6. Be conducted in an attitude of Christian love.¹

The purpose of the just war theory is to affirm that the Christian, in a world of conflicting ethical alternatives, must pursue the best of these alternatives. Where war is the best alternative, a man is ethically compelled to participate. The decision to do so will never be easy, of course, because there will be no war where the strategy and motives of any side will fit perfectly the specifications of the just war theory.

Selective Nonpacifism CONTINUED ON PAGE 56

What may be said of pacifism? The Christian pacifist contends that his stance is a witness, that it is the only way to avoid compromise of Christian principle. He is fearful, as Roland Bainton puts it, "that, if in withstanding the beast he descend to the methods of the beast, he will himself become the beast, and though the field be won the cause will be lost."² Pacifists assume that participation in war is sin, in every case, and point out that sin is never permissible even in pursuit of justice. To seek the relative good, they say, may be to forfeit the absolute.

They deny that withdrawal from the course of the country is irresponsible or cowardly and point out that protection, even of one's own family, cannot be the ultimate concern. And any good that may be accomplished by military intervention needs to be set over against the damage inflicted.

I would agree that it is not necessarily cowardice to dissent from the course of one's nation. Protection, even of one's own family, is indeed not the ultimate. And war surely demands weighing probable accomplishment against probable infliction of damage.

I take issue, however, with the pacifist's insistence that nonpacifism is always a turning away from the principle of Christian love. I would argue that the pacifist misunderstands Christian love because his view of it leaves it incapable of grappling with the common problems of a fallen world. By his abstention, he becomes irrelevant; by his unwillingness to destroy the oppressor, he forsakes the oppressed.

Isn't a correct understanding of Christian love the most compelling argument for selective nonpacifism? After all, the Christian's concern for the well-being of all people requires, where there are conflicting ethical alternatives, that he choose the way that contributes the most to human happiness for all men. Where this concern calls for violent action against an unjust aggressor, the Christian, in response to the demands of love, must fight.

Adventists have traditionally opted for what is called "conscientious cooperation." My objection to it is that it rides the fence. Indiscriminate noncombatancy simply avoids some important ethical issues such as whether a war is just or not. The conscientious cooperator fancies that he is doing all that is required of him simply by (a) heeding the call of his country, no matter what war it has gotten itself into, and (b) refusing to kill the enemy.

In a just war, the only consistent action is that action which seeks the quickest possible termination of enemy aggression. Presumably, killing is involved here. In unjust war, the Christian ought not to partici-

pate in the military at all.

At present, the laws of the United States rule out selective nonpacifism. In order to be excused from participation in a war, according to the Universal Military Training and Service Act, one must be "opposed to participation in war in any form."³

These draft laws ought to be reformed so that selective conscientious objection to particular wars can be a legal option. It seems only reasonable that a man ought to have the right to decide whether in good conscience he can participate in a war.

But would this not open the way for anarchy? Not if an adequate test of the seriousness of a candidate for exemption from a particular war were introduced. He should be required to defend his position, and he should participate in alternative civilian work during the years of his obligation to the country.

Such a law would have the advantage of creating a demand for improved political discourse in America. The government would benefit from the arguments of conscientious objectors and would be forced to counter with arguments of its own.⁴

How, then, shall the Christian relate to war? First, he should go through the agony—for agony it will always be—of deciding whether war, as a response to some threatening evil, is justifiable or not. If it is, he should fight in that war in response to the demands of Christian love. If the war is unjust, he should refuse to fight.

Because United States law does not now provide for conscientious objection to particular wars, the most immediate concern of the church should be agitation for a law which would do so. Expertly written, such a law could avoid "the excessive individualism of anarchy" and destroy "governmental tyranny over conscience."⁵

Notes and References

1. I have compiled this list from material in the following works: Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), and Paul Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1961).

2. Bainton, op. cit., p. 249.

3. Ralph Potter, *Conscientious Objection to Particular Wars* (unpublished essay, Harvard Divinity School, 1966), p. 2.

4. Potter, op. cit., p. 46.

5. Ibid., p. 39.

Charles Scriven is the president of Kettering Medical College in Dayton, Ohio. In 1969, when the first issue of *Spectrum* was published, he was a ministerial intern at Lewiston, Idaho. Charles.Scriven@kmcnetwork.org

A DEFENSE OF THE ADVENTIST POSITION

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Donald R. McAdams

Seventh-day Adventists abhor all war. War causes great human suffering and interferes with our primary objective of preparing ourselves for the world to come and carrying the gospel to this generation. But war exists, and we cannot avoid it. Men have been fighting since the beginning of time; they will be fighting when the Lord returns.

How, then, should the Christian relate to war? Certainly he should avoid it if avoidance is possible. The early Christians took no part in war. As long as they were a minority of the Roman Empire, this position was tenable. But when the Roman Empire became Christian (one may assume the Romans were not true Christians, but many thousands must have been sincere believers), Romans had to fight to protect themselves from the barbarian hordes.

From the fall of the ancient world until the present, the states of western Europe have called themselves Christian; but Christian nations, as other nations, have to be defended. The medieval Christian states had two alternatives: defend themselves or, barring the direct intervention of God on their behalf, be gobbled up by their less Christian neighbors. The logic of the situation forced the feudal states of Europe to accept war. Even the Catholic Church reconciled itself to reality by condoning just wars. In the feudal wars that followed, both sides claimed that justice resided with them. Faced with the dilemma of not fighting and being destroyed, or of fighting with no assurance that the cause was just, each side assured itself that its side was just.

Fortunately, because war was fought by the few, most medieval Christians could avoid the question of the justness of war. Feudal society was protected by heavily armored knights. Armies of as much as a thousand men were rare, and the heavy armor kept the casualties at a minimum. The great majority of the people took no part in war.

Armies grew in size as Europe entered the modern era, but they were still comparatively small. The

IN SUPPORT OF INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE, 2002

By Donald R. McAdams

Much has changed since I wrote "A Defense of the Adventist Position" for the winter 1969 issue of *Spectrum*. But upon reflection, I am of the same opinion. I believe the Adventist Church should advise young Adventists who are drafted into military service to request noncombatant roles. It should also provide support to those young men and women who choose to bear arms and those who refuse any form of military service.

The issue is moot for Adventists in America. The United States has an all-volunteer army. But the Church must have a policy that serves Adventists everywhere. For the reasons I put forward over thirty years ago, I believe the Adventist position is sound.

I should add that if I were a young man facing conscription into the U. S. military in 2002, I would most likely accept a combatant role. No nation is without fault. America's heart is not totally pure, and America's hands are not totally clean. One can find much to criticize in the foreign policy and military actions of successive American administrations.

Nevertheless, throughout my lifetime, the United States has been a force for good in the world and has stood against evil. And we have handled our power with more restraint than any great power since the creation of nation-states.

Donald R. McAdams is executive director of the Center for Reform of the School System in Houston, Texas.
Mcadams@crss.org

majority of the people could still avoid the crucial problem of how to relate to war. Then in 1517 the Protestant Reformation shattered the superficial religious harmony of Europe. The next century and a half witnessed bitter religious wars. Protestants and Catholics alike fought not only for what they thought was right but for what they knew was just. In doing so they devastated Europe. With entire populations taking part in what they regarded as a just war, the civilization of Europe was almost destroyed.

Fortunately, with the subsiding of religious passions

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in the late seventeenth century and with the growth of the enlightened skepticism of the Age of Reason, war became once more a problem that most people could ignore. Throughout most of the eighteenth century, war was the sport of kings, fought for dynastic goals. Civilian populations were disturbed as little as possible.¹ Citizens from belligerent states could travel freely between countries, and only the scum of society was impressed into military service. Frederick the Great regarded the conscription of artisans as an abuse that no monarch in his right senses would countenance. War was played for small stakes, and theorists thought it right that not justice nor right nor any of the great passions that move people should ever be mixed up with war.²

Morally, war waged from political motives is profoundly shocking. Human conscience cannot condone war, with its waste and misery, except in sheer self-defense or in pursuit of some transcendent moral or social good. War in the eighteenth century, however, was war that killed few; hence most citizens could ignore it. As Edward Gibbon wrote: "The European forces are exercised by temperate and undecisive contests."³

Two forces upset this gentlemanly balance of power and reintroduced human passions: democracy and the industrial revolution. In the War for American Independence and then especially in the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, nationalism became the great inspiration for war, and citizen armies now numbered in hundreds of thousands instead of in tens of thousands. Passion was reintroduced into war. The Comte de Mirabeau warned the French National Assembly in 1790 that a representative parliamentary body was likely to prove more bellicose than a monarch.⁴ It was.

The American Civil War and Bismarck's three Prussian wars of aggrandizement added industrialization to democracy as the great force changing the nature of war. War was transformed more than contemporaries realized. The relatively small wars fought in the late nineteenth century did not afford insight into the new nature of warfare. However, with the Great War of 1914-1918 the world finally realized that a new era in warfare had arrived.

The new weapons—machine guns, tanks, airplanes, submarines, gas—and the use of mass armies increased the casualties to unbelievable percentages. Whereas from the twelfth century to the seventeenth century the casualties of war were from 2.5 to 5.9 percent of the strength of armies, in World War One they soared to 38.9 percent of armies that were much increased in size in relation to population.⁵ Industrialization had given

man the weapons of mass destruction; nationalism had given him the desire to use them to annihilate the enemy. In this first modern total war, nine million soldiers were killed, and ten million civilians lay dead.⁶ Civilian populations not only suffered greatly; they also contributed greatly to the war efforts of their countries. With total war, workers were needed for munitions factories and the other jobs necessary to enable industrial states to function. Propaganda on both sides kept citizens inflamed. With this war, wrote a contemporary observer, "war had passed out of the phase of a mere battle. It is now a contest between the will and determination of whole nations to continue a life-and-death struggle in which 'battle' takes a very small part."⁷

All that has been said about World War One was doubly true about World War Two. In this most bloody of human conflicts, fifty-five million human beings were killed as a direct consequence of war.⁸ Civilians suffered terribly, and their importance to the war efforts of their countries increased.

During the Battle of Britain in the autumn of 1940, the morale of the civilian population was as important as the strength of the military forces. In the Soviet Union, having babies contributed to the war effort. Stalin established a fertility prize, the Order of Motherly Glory, for those who bore more than seven children.⁹

As a member of twentieth century society, can the Adventist disassociate himself from this kind of total war? If he refuses to serve in the military forces or to work in any industry related to the war effort, still he supports the military actions of his country, for modern corporations are so diversified that a business machine company or a paper manufacturer may produce the materiel of war. If these jobs could be avoided, one would still contribute to the country's war effort by work in services important to the state, for any educational, medical, or industrial worker helps make the country strong. The United States government recognizes this and gives scholarships called National Defense Fellowships to train literary critics and historians as well as scientists; all contribute to the national strength. If one makes his living painting designs on china, nearly fifty percent of his taxes support our country's military forces. In an age of total war, the only way one can keep from assisting the war effort is by emigrating. And where can he go? War is endemic in the modern world, and even neutral states maintain strong military forces.

The problem is no less complex in the armed forces themselves. The army medic, treating wounded soldiers so they can fight again, contributes to the military strength of his country. So do we all, unless we are hippies.

This is the dilemma of the American Adventist today. He abhors war, but willy-nilly he participates in his country's military efforts. If he must participate, let it be in a humane and compassionate way. Thus the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists recommends, but does not insist, on 1-A-O status for Adventist young men. Those who serve in this noncombatant way serve their country, and they do so with compassion and healing.

One last point. If the citizen cannot help contributing to war effort, why not bear arms? As a citizen of a state, the Adventist, as do all other citizens, receives the benefits of citizenship; he receives the protection of the law and protection from foreign aggression. He should render Caesar's due. Why not bear his share of the obligations of citizenship and do his share of the dirty work of killing? Perhaps if the cause were just, he would. Men of ancient Israel killed in defense of their country, and God was with them. If God commanded today, Adventists would fight also. Even without God's command, we would fight to protect our families from individual acts of violence. But without divine revelation one cannot determine if any country fights a just war.

The diplomacy of our day is so complex that justness is seldom, if ever, on one side. And if it were, we would not know it. For example, if the Pueblo crisis had led to war, which side would have been fighting a just war? Even the guilt of Germany in World War Two can be disputed. (Although that is a historical argument beyond our interest here, the Versailles Treaty and the depression of the 1930's can be used to indicate that Germany was not alone responsible for World War Two.)

A further complication would concern allies. Would it be just to help an ally in a just war? What would one do if during a just war for the defense of an ally the objectives of the war changed and the ally began to fight for personal gain? The difficulties are beyond the competence of the individual citizen. If the individual decided to participate in just wars, he would do so in ignorance of their justness. Nationalistic propaganda convinces all people that they fight for what is just and necessary. Adventist young men from different countries would find themselves killing one another in the name of justice.

The Adventist position is a compromise position. Like most compromises, it is a middle ground open to attack from both sides. If carried to its logical conclusions, the position is even absurd: A country that was one hundred percent Adventist would be defenseless and soon nonexistent. Nevertheless, the position is one that has the virtue of working. We are, and always will be, a small minority of this country. We do owe something to our country for the benefits of citizenship, and we must contribute

whether we like it or not. As a medic, the young man can render willingly to his country, in the compassionate relief of suffering, the allegiance he must give. On the other hand, he need not fear that he will kill unjustly under the hypnotic irrationality of a nationalism that justifies every act of its own country. Because the transformation of war under the impact of democracy and industrialization makes complete conscientious objection impossible, and because the confusion of modern diplomacy makes discovery of the justness of a war equally impossible, the Adventist position is a compromise that works.

Obviously not all Adventist young men will agree with this position. Some will prefer to support with arms what they consider a just war. For these there is no problem. The state does not question the motives of those who serve as combatants. Other Adventists will refuse military service of any kind, preferring social or hospital work here to what they consider the greater evil of noncombatant military duty. The Selective Service laws have made provision for such men. They can serve their country as civilians. To do so they need the support of their church.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church should continue to support those young men who accept noncombatant roles in military service, in accordance with the guidance of the General Conference. The Church should also, recognizing diversity, give encouragement and support to the complete conscientious objector. We are living in an age when the demands of conscience are recognized by government and society, and we no longer need to convince the state of our loyalty. It is commendable that our church gives guidance to our young men. It is necessary that we support those whose consciences lead them in a different path.

References and Notes

1. The following survey of war in the eighteenth century and its transformation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is taken from Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* (volume four of ten volumes. London: Oxford University Press, 1934-1954), pp. 141-156.
2. G. Ferrero, *Peace and War* (translated by Bertha Pritchard. London: MacMillan and Company, Limited, 1933), p. 7.
3. Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (volume four of seven volumes. London: Methuen and Company; New York: MacMillan and Company, Limited, 1896-1902), p. 166.
4. Mirabeau in the French National Assembly on May 20, 1790.
5. P. Sorokin, *Man and Society in Calamity: The Effects of War, Revolution, Famine, Pestilence Upon Human Mind, Behavior, Social Organization and Cultural Life* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1942), p. 92.
6. Perhaps twenty-two million were wounded.
7. Quoted in F. P. Chambers, *The War Behind the War, 1914-1918: A History of the Political and Civilian Fronts* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939), p. 473.
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THE CASE FOR CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

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By Emanuel G. Fenz

A Christian attempting to discover Christ's teaching on war faces historical and theological confusion. On the one hand, the Scriptures enjoin him to love his enemies (Matthew 5:44), to establish peace with all men (Hebrews 12:14), not to avenge himself, for vengeance is the Lord's (Romans 12:19), and not to kill (Romans 13:9). On the other hand, he is confronted with the fact that for at least seventeen centuries most Christians have taken active part in their nations' wars, often fighting against each other.

Seventh-day Adventists have seemingly resolved this problem by taking a noncombatant position, on the ground that by so doing they are following the example of Christ in not taking human life, but rather rendering all possible service to save it. Does the Seventh-day Adventist Church, when it takes this position, really follow the example of Christ? Or is this position inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel, the writings of the apostles and disciples, and examples drawn from the history of the Christian Church?

From apostolic times to the decade A.D. 170-180, no evidence has been uncovered that Christians participated in military service.¹ The Christian community, in fact, was condemned for its unwillingness to support actively the wars of the Roman Empire. In A.D. 173 the Roman Celsus, a pagan, addressed the Christian community as follows: "If all men were to do the same as you, there would be nothing to prevent the king from being left in utter solitude and desertion, and the forces of the empire would fall into the hands of the wildest and most lawless barbarians."

In describing the Christian position, Athenagoras, a leading Christian contemporary of Celsus, stated that Christians "do not strike back, do not go to law when robbed; they give to them that ask of them and love their neighbors as themselves."

Justin Martyr, another outstanding Christian leader of this period, wrote: "We who are filled with war and

mutual slaughter and every wickedness have each of us in all the world changed our weapons of war. . . . [We have changed our] swords into plows and spears into farming tools," and "we who formerly murdered one another now not only do not make war upon our enemies, but we gladly die confessing Christ."

Church father Clement of Alexandria, who lived early in the third century, described the Christian community as "an army which sheds no blood." "In peace, not in war, are we trained." "If you enroll as one of God's people, heaven is your country and God your lawgiver. And what are His laws? . . . Thou shalt not kill. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. To him that striketh thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other."

Lactantius, writing in A.D. 304-305, maintained: "God in prohibiting killing discountenances not only brigandage, which is contrary to human laws, but also that which man regards as legal. Participation in warfare therefore will not be legitimate to a just man whose military service is justice itself."

It is to the latter part of the second century that archeologists trace tombstones that identify Roman Christians who were soldiers—probably men who remained in the service after having been converted to Christianity. The canons of Hippolytus, which date back to the early third century, obviously refer to this situation when they state that "a soldier of the civil authority must be taught not to kill men and to refuse so if he is commanded." Martin of Tours clearly points out the conflict that Christians seem to have experienced during this period. Having been converted, he remained in the army for two years. When an actual battle was imminent, he turned in his resignation.

Not until 314 did the Church, at the Council of Aries, approve of Christians serving in the army. Still the question of actual killing by Christians remained unresolved. Not until the latter part of the fourth century did theologians begin to discuss the "just war" theory. St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, both church fathers, continued to emphasize the primacy of love, even stating that Christians as individuals had no right to self-defense. Borrowing from Stoicism and the Old Testament, they did find it permissible, nevertheless, to participate in communal defense even to the point of bloodshed. The only requirement was that the war must be just.

According to the just war theory, a war had to be declared by a just authority, for a just cause, had to use just means, and had to have reasonable expectations of success. A further requirement was that the lives of noncombatants had to be spared and that the means employed were to be no more oppressive than the evil remedied. Thus, it

seems that Christians who lived during the first three centuries of the Christian era followed a consistent policy of opposition to war and military service and that only in later years did they begin to formulate the just war theory. The theorizing which began as a rationalization aimed at justifying wars in defense of Christianity against paganism, ended in justifying wars of self-defense as well as wars of aggression.

Throughout the ages, nevertheless, there remained small groups of Christians who were unable to justify taking an active part in the wars of their countries. During the early Middle Ages, pacifism continued to be practiced by the Christian clergy and by various monastic orders, and in later years by small sectarian groups. Early in the thirteenth century a group of Waldensians made its return to the Church dependent upon a number of concessions, one of which was exemption from military service. Also, Wycliffe held that the highest Christian ideal required complete abstention from war, even though he admitted that war might be waged for the love of God or to correct people. Peter Chelciky, outstanding leader of the pacifist branch of the Hussite movement, maintained that Christ's law was the law of love, that the Christian's weapons were spiritual only, that his mission was to redeem souls, not to destroy bodies, and that Christians should therefore refuse military service.

During the Reformation and the period of post-Reformation, the sects continued the opposition of Christians to war. Among these, the Anabaptists (Mennonites and Hutterites) during the sixteenth century, the Quakers during the seventeenth, the Brethren in the eighteenth, and the Jehovah's Witnesses in the nineteenth century consistently opposed all wars and refused to become active participants in wars.

On the other hand, the larger Protestant bodies, generally following the Catholic tradition, found it morally justifiable to engage in warfare as long as they were able to rationalize the justness of specific wars. This view enabled the Kaiser's armies to march enthusiastically onto the battlefields, having been told that they were fighting for God, the Kaiser, and the Fatherland (*Für Gott, Kaiser, und Vaterland*). This view, further, enabled Hitler's Gestapo to select as its motto *Gott mit uns*, "God with us."

And while young Germans were fighting for God, the Kaiser, and the Fatherland, Reverend A. F. Winnington-Ingram, the Bishop of London, exhorted young Englishmen "to kill Germans—to kill them not for the sake of killing but to save the world, to kill the good as well as the bad, to kill the young as well as the old, to kill those who have shown kindness to our wounded as well as those fiends who crucified the Canadian Sergeant.

As I have said a thousand times, I look upon it as a war of purity; I look upon every one who dies in it as a martyr."²

More recently, many Christians were somewhat perplexed when they heard Cardinal Spellman of New York proclaim, during a visit to South Vietnam, that American troops there are "the defense, protection, and salvation not only of our country but, I believe, of civilization itself."³

Where do such statements leave us? Where should we stand in this matter of war, defensive or offensive, declared or undeclared? Should we make a distinction between a moral and an immoral war, a just or an unjust war? Or should we support or oppose all wars on principle? Personally, I believe that there are four choices an individual can make when he is confronted with the problem of war.

1. He can either support or take an active part in war on the grounds that as a citizen of a country he is obligated to serve in its armed forces.
2. He can support and take an active part in war as long as the war seems to him to be a just war, but oppose it as soon as in good conscience he feels that the war has become immoral and unjust.
3. He can support and take an active part in war in noncombatant capacity, civil or military, in or out of uniform, and contribute thereby to saving lives.
4. He can oppose all wars on the grounds that war is unchristian, entirely opposed to and foreign to the doctrine of Christ. He thereby refuses to serve his country even in noncombatant capacity, because by doing so he would aid and abet his country, in a sense, in the destruction of human life.

Let us now briefly analyze each of these alternatives.

The first choice really need not detain us, since most Seventh-day Adventists would probably object to indiscriminate participation in war. I am certain that most of us would object to following orders blindly, since we believe that a man is responsible for the actions of his life, a sentiment which was given a certain legal standing perhaps most dramatically at the Nuremberg trials. Adolf Eichmann, credited as the author of the "final solution," did not accept this position when he declared that in exterminating Jews he was only following the orders of his government.

The second choice could be defended on the grounds that the Old Testament is full of just wars, that killing of the unjust seems to have been favored by God and that even in the New Testament there are a number of texts (Revelation 13:10, for example) that seem to imply that under certain conditions killing is justified. The

problem with this position is that, even though there may be some justification for believing that a Christian may take an active part in a just war, modern wars cannot be considered morally justifiable, because they bring death to vast numbers of people indiscriminately, even if one allows for the high motivation and the "good intention" of a government. Also, because modern diplomacy is complicated, it is extremely difficult to ascertain at the outset of a war the responsibilities for its outbreak.⁴

The third choice is the one officially taken by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. On the surface this appears to be the best choice, since no one can really object to the saving of life, even when this saving takes place on the battlefield. From the Christian standpoint, a close examination will nevertheless show that this position is not really a valid one. The United States Field Manual states specifically that the primary duty of medical troops, as well as all other troops, is to contribute their utmost to the success of the command of which they are a part. Now I would find it difficult to visualize a German Christian in Hitler's army contributing his utmost to the success of the command under which he was fighting. I would find it just as difficult to justify a Christian medical doctor's acceptance of a full-time position at a brothel if he accepted that position with the understanding that his main function there would be to cure his patients of venereal disease so that they could get back to their "jobs" as soon as possible. What do our medics sent to the battlefield do but bring healing to our wounded in order to get them back into action—to enable them, that is, to kill, since killing is the soldier's main purpose?

The fourth position is probably the only one that affords a Christian conscience relative safety. Of course, it may be argued that one contributes indirectly to his country's military effort even by engaging in civilian work. Maybe we could learn something from the example set by Thomas Lurting, a Quaker, who, having been impressed on a man-of-war, refused to engage in military and nonmilitary service on the ship itself, but agreed to load grain into warships, on the ground that he had been commanded to love his enemies. Though there may be a touch of legalism in the stand Lurting took, as Roland Bainton points out, nevertheless it has to be recognized that he was trying to obey his conscience and that he succeeded in doing this by drawing a line between direct contribution to war with humanitarianism and direct humanitarianism with an incidental assistance to war.⁶

Conscientious objection to military conscription in the United States today is governed by the Military Selective Service Act of 1967. This Act specifically states in Section

6 (j) that no person will "be subject to combatant training and service in the armed forces of the United States who, for reason of religious training or belief, is conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form." The Act does not exempt from such training and service persons who, because of "essentially political, sociological or philosophical views, or a merely personal moral code," object to serving in the armed forces. The problems that modern warfare has brought to the consciences of Christians are tremendous. Realizing this fact, many Christian churches in recent years have tried to come to grips with the problem of war and conscientious objection.⁷ Wishing to allow full freedom of conscience to their members, they have reevaluated their positions and have gone on record as recognizing the principle of the moral right of conscientious objection. They have also resolved to give assistance and full moral and spiritual support to their members who follow the voice of conscience either by participating or by refusing to participate in war or in training for war.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church acknowledged the right of its members to live by the dictates of their consciences when it decided that participation or refusal to participate in war should not affect church membership. I firmly believe, therefore, that the Church should face the consequences of this stand by extending its full support to all its members who, wishing to follow the dictates of their conscience, decide either to participate or to refuse to take an active part in their nation's wars.

References and Notes

1. The historical documentation quoted in this article was drawn from Roland Bainton's excellent study, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace. A Historical Survey and Critical Reevaluation* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960).

2. *Ibid.*, p. 207. The reference to the crucifixion of a Canadian sergeant was a fabricated atrocity story circulated by the Allies during World War One.

3. *New York Times*, December 26, 1966.

4. A good case for selective pacifism is made by Carl Cohen, "Case for Selective Pacifism," *The Nation* 207, 11-15 (July 8, 1968).

5. Edgar L. Jones, "One War Is Enough," *Atlantic Monthly* 177, 48-53 (1946).

6. Bainton, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

7. Among the larger religious bodies which have recently come out in support of conscientious objection are the Lutheran Church in America, the American Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Church of the Nazarene, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Methodist Church, the United Presbyterian Church in U.S.A., and the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches.

Emanuel G. Fenz's career in higher education included positions at the University of Colorado, Purdue University, and the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where today there is a scholarship named in his honor for international studies.



WAR, FATE, FREEDOM, REMNANT

By Ronald E. Osborn

Homer understood the logic of violence. In the *Iliad*, his epic retelling of the fall of Troy, every emotional, physical, and psychological dynamic of force is carefully and critically weighed. Every aspect of the human personality is submitted to the harsh rigors of close combat. Every ethical reserve is tested in the pitch of battle. Here, amid the crush of flesh and iron, ideals and abstractions are shattered in an ultimate realism. Lofty sentiments are unraveled by the elemental impulse for self-preservation. Moral pretensions and pieties are stripped bare by death feeding at the altar of war.

The final vision of the poem, however, is not a celebration of this stark arena, or, as some have believed, of the soul of the warrior. It is, rather, an understanding that all who engage in violence are mutilated by it; that one cannot wield might without becoming its slave; that those who live by the sword shall die by the sword.

We discover that this greatest of all war epics is in fact an antiwar epic, not through any systematic exposition or declaration, but through a striking accumulation of detail. First, there is the fact that the entire conflict is waged for the sake of a symbol, Helen, rather than any objective purpose or moral necessity. Capricious gods—acting through their ciphers, the ruling elites—stir the masses of ordinary people into a positive desire to kill *and be killed*. The gods must continually prime these men for battle through high-sounding rhetoric, through oracles and omens and promises of glory and success.

Yet the impulse to wage war defies any logic or reason external to the war itself. When left to their own intuitions, the common soldiers declare that their only desire is to abandon the campaign and set sail for home. At the gates of Troy, we thus find ourselves in an ethical void in which violence serves as its own justifier. “You must fight on,” the gods command, “for if you make peace you will offend the dead.” It is slaughter, in other words, that necessitates more slaughter.

Against the desire of the gods to maximize destruction is the suffering of the innocent, as when the aging King Priam gives the following grim account of what war can only mean for the vast majority of human beings:

I have looked upon evils
and seen my sons destroyed and my daughters
dragged away captive
and the chambers of marriage wrecked and the
innocent children taken
and dashed on the ground in the hatefulness of war,
and the wives
of my sons dragged off by the accursed hands of
the Achaians
and myself last of all, my dogs in front of my doorway
will rip me raw¹

The victims of war, Priam bears witness, are not the soldiers, whose deaths will be celebrated with songs and wreaths, but women, children, and the elderly. This, of course, comes as no new fact to anyone. But Priam's words are particularly penetrating and revelatory, for Priam is a Trojan, a foe of Homer's people. The foundational text in the Greek self-understanding subversively invites us to contemplate how violence bears on the weakest members of society and even on the enemy. It is as though the Hebrew Bible included descriptions of how YHWH's holy wars might have felt for a Philistine child.

Most subversive of all, however, is the way in which the *Iliad* plays havoc with the underlying assumption of what would later be known as the "Just War" tradition, namely, the assumption of reason. All Just War theories rest upon the idea that violence can somehow be contained within established rules of prudence and proportionality. But if violence serves as its own justifier, and if the suffering of the innocent is not enough to deter an initial act of aggression, there is no possible limit that can be placed on any war waged for "a just cause."

In Homer, this truth emerges through the unraveling of a treaty offering a modicum of ethical constraint within the conflict. Early in the poem, the Greeks and Trojans make a pact allowing both sides to collect and burn their dead without hindrance or threat of attack. The agreement, while not affecting the actual prosecution of the war, seeks to place the struggle within the framework of social and religious convention. It aims to humanize and dignify the bloodshed through shared values of reason and restraint.

Unfortunately, maintaining one's reason while drenched in human blood is a tenuous affair. As the war intensifies, the combatants kill with increasing savagery until at last they are seen gleefully mutilating dead corpses. "Tell haughty Ilioneus' father and mother, from me, that they can weep for him in their

halls," cries Peneleos to the Trojans while holding up the fallen soldier's eyeball on the point of his spear.

When the Greek hero Patrokolos is slain at the end of book sixteen the unstoppable drift toward total war, in which no rules or conventions apply, is finally realized. The two sides engage in a battle of unprecedented fury and destruction for the entirely irrational purpose of seizing Patrokolos' dead body—the Trojans to further mutilate it and then feed it to wild dogs, the Greeks to prevent this humiliation at whatever cost. The idea that war might somehow be mediated by reasonable agreements and religious scruples, such as those governing the burial of the dead, has been reduced to a shambles by the internal dynamics of war and the logic of violence itself.

Once this fact of war is understood, all of our long-cherished rationalizations for violence are quickly exposed as mere enervating chimeras. As goes the venerable Patrokolos, so goes the tradition of "Just Warfare."

The failure of the tradition is not that it is abstractly or theoretically false, but that it ignores what actually happens when humans engage in violence. Philosopher and Christian mystic Simone Weil had a clearer view of the human animal. In "The *Iliad*, Poem of Might," her celebrated essay written at the onset of World War II, she saw that an excessive use of violence is almost never a political ideal, yet its temptation almost always proves irresistible—against all reason or moral restraint.

"A moderate use of might, by which man may escape being caught in the machinery of its vicious cycle, would demand a more than human virtue, one no less rare than a constant dignity in weakness," she wrote. As a consequence, "war wipes out every conception of a goal, even all thoughts concerning the goals of war."² Such a moral and spiritual void will, of course, be filled by politicians, militarists, and theologians with symbols and myths, but Weil understood that there is ultimately only one impulse strong enough to sustain wars among nations: the insatiable demand for power at any cost.

These insights are, I realize, difficult to grasp within the present national echo chamber of war enthusiasm. But for anyone interested in the truth, they can be easily tested against the weight of history. Let us consider how prophetic Weil's thoughts about force proved in a war that most people agree was fought for a just cause if ever there was one.³

On September 11, 1944, Allied forces conducted a bombing raid on the city of Darmstadt, Germany. The incendiary bombs used in the attack came together in a conflagration so intense it created a firestorm almost

one mile high. At its center the temperature was approximately 2000° F, and it sucked the oxygen out of the air with the force of a hurricane. People hiding in underground shelters died primarily from suffocation. People fleeing through the streets found that the surfaces of the roads had melted, creating a trap of molten asphalt that stuck to their feet and then hands as they tried to break free. They died screaming on their hands and knees, the fire turning them into so many human candles. Almost twelve thousand non-combatants were killed that night in Darmstadt alone.

Yet Darmstadt was only one city among many in a relentless Allied campaign. Anne-Lies Schmidt described

they would not target civilian populations. It was understood that bombing military factories and installations would result in unavoidable civilian casualties. But the policy of minimizing deaths among noncombatants was widely supported by both politicians and the public on religious and ethical grounds.

This course continued until August 24, 1940, when Luftwaffe bombs, intended for an oil storage depot, fell on London's East End. Winston Churchill, overruling the Royal Air Force, ordered a bombing raid on Berlin the next day. Germany responded by unleashing the blitz over London. Still, for some months the RAF insisted that the ban against killing civilians was still in effect.

CIVILIAN MORALE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS— TERRORISM TO BE PRECISE—DICTATED WHERE THE ATOMIC BOMBS WOULD FALL.



the aftermath of a similar attack on Hamburg, code named "Operation Gomorrah," more than one year before:

Women and children were so charred as to be unrecognizable; those that had died through lack of oxygen were half charred and recognizable. Their brains tumbled from their burst temples and their insides from the soft parts under their ribs. How terribly must these people have died. The smallest children lay like fried eels on the pavement. Even in death they showed signs of how they must have suffered—their hands and arms stretched out as if to protect themselves from the pitiless heat.⁴

That single raid on Hamburg killed approximately forty thousand civilians, including both of Schmidt's parents. In total, it is estimated that more than half a million German civilians were killed as a direct result of British and American bombing.

What must be absolutely clear about these deaths is the well-documented but largely ignored fact that *they were absolutely intentional*. These were not unfortunate casualties in a campaign against German military targets: from as early as July, 1943, on, *they were the targets*. The saturation bombing of German cities did not include the burning of children as an unavoidable "double effect" of "Just War"; burning children was the precise strategy of Allied planners.

It did not begin this way. At the start of the Battle of Britain in 1939, leaders on both sides declared that

There was a lingering sense of moral compunction among the Allied forces that the dynamics of violence had not yet fully eroded. This would change.

First, because it was too risky to bomb by day, the Allies decided that bombing should be done only at night. This, however, made precision bombing impossible and proved militarily unsuccessful since targets were often missed. Realizing that their efforts to strike only military targets by cover of darkness were not working, the RAF therefore shifted to a policy of "area bombing"; the destruction of whole neighborhoods was now permitted, providing there was a single military target within a given neighborhood.

But by 1942, with the war dragging on and casualties mounting, the Allies decided that even this was not enough. Abandoning any pretense of ethical standards, they adopted a more "realistic" policy once and for all: indiscriminate "obliteration bombing" of entire cities. The explanation given for the new phase in the Allied campaign was twofold: first, it would ensure absolute success against military targets; more importantly and explicitly, it would "destroy enemy morale." Chivalric distinctions between civilians and combatants were no longer practicable. The morality of "total war" was tautologically justified by the necessity of "victory at any cost."

So began the routine bombardment of noncombatants. Yet soon Churchill was calling for still greater



innovations in violence. "I should be prepared to do anything that might hit the Germans in a murderous place," he wrote to his Chiefs of Staff in July, 1944:

I may certainly have to ask you to support me in using poison gas. We could drench the cities of the Ruhr and many other cities in Germany in such a way that most of the population would require constant medical attention. . . . It is absurd to consider morality on this topic when everybody used it in the last war without a word of complaint from the moralists or the Church. On the other hand, in the last war the bombing of open cities was regarded as forbidden. Now everybody does it as a matter of course. It is simply a question of fashion changing, as she does between long and short skirts for women.⁵

In the end, the Allies were unable to devise a feasible plan for chemical war, but not for lack of will or trying. They were hampered, in Churchill's words, by "that particular set of psalm-singing uniformed defeatists," and by logistical considerations within the military. "I cannot make headway against the parsons and the warriors at the same time," he lamented.⁶

The aerial campaign against civilian populations meanwhile proceeded without dissent. What feeble resistance there was to the policy of "total war" was kept to a minimum through pressure tactics and facile slogans. This will end the war sooner. This will save lives. We must take retribution. We must punish the aggressor.

There were, it should be noted, a surprisingly high number of RAF pilots and crews who objected to the terroristic annihilation of defenseless noncombatants now required of them. But the military took severe disciplinary action against these individuals, court-martialing and imprisoning them to prevent their strange ideas from spreading through the ranks. The official reason given for their punishment was "LMF"—lack of moral fiber.

Fortunately, in the Pacific arena, moral fiber was in abundant supply. On the night of March 9, 1945, the United States set the entire city of Tokyo ablaze with napalm bombs. The heat was so intense it boiled the water in the canals. More than 100,000 civilians died in the attack. Bomber crews in the last waves could smell the burning flesh.

The same was done to more than fifty other Japanese cities, leading to a befuddling dilemma for Allied strategists: by May and June there were few "untouched" cities left for the ultimate demonstration of Allied "resolve." At last a list of cities, including the religious

center of Kyoto, was compiled and submitted to the American High Command. None were proposed for primarily military reasons. What was critical in each case was that the target include a massive "unspoiled" population that could be annihilated without warning in a single blow. Civilian morale and psychological considerations—terrorism to be precise—dictated where the atomic bombs would fall.

The strategy, as we all know, was a spectacular success. More than 350,000 civilians were killed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in a litany of unspeakable horror, some instantly in the inferno that consumed the cities at the speed of two miles a second; some more slowly, their skin hanging from their bodies like rags; some vomiting and convulsing from radiation sickness days later; some bleeding out of the retina, the mouth, the rectum, and respiratory passages from decay of internal organs; others later still from cancer and unknown diseases. As a bonus, for years afterward thousands of children conceived in the two cities were born with chromosomal and genetic disorders—an added insurance policy against recalcitrant Japanese nationalism.

In five short years between 1940 and 1945, the cycle of violence had come full circle. The Allies began the war vowing that they would not use the techniques of their enemies, but in the end the logic of violence proved irresistible. Their cause was just. Their motives were pure. But the initial cause of war proved immaterial to the way in which the war was finally waged. Once violence was accepted as a means to an end, violence became its own end. Traditional morality was discarded as so much intellectual and spiritual deadweight.

"If [the Japanese] do not now accept our terms they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth," said President Harry S Truman in his radio broadcast to the nation.⁷ The nation applauded. A poll in *Fortune* magazine suggested that nearly a quarter of the American public only regretted that more atomic bombs had not been used. Truman, for his part, insisted that after ordering the bombings he went to bed and slept soundly.

The point is not that Allied soldiers lacked moral principles, good will, or noble intentions. It is that war has its own will and its own intentions: it refuses to be contained or controlled by mere humanity. Whatever vestiges of decency and restraint America and England possessed at the start of the war gave way to more pragmatic calculations as the war progressed. The sentimental image of American GIs dispensing chocolate bars to German and Japanese children belies the staggering slaughter inflicted, with absolute calculation,

on hundreds of thousands of civilians.

All of the mealy-mouthed arguments dredged up from medieval scholastic theology to vindicate violence for “a just cause”—and particularly World War II—therefore miss the mark. The ethical principles set forth for defending stone castles, if ever valid, were rendered obsolete by the advent of modern war. As Thomas Merton wrote in his essay “Target Equals City”:

There is one winner, only one winner in war. The winner is war itself. Not truth, not justice, not liberty, not morality. These are the vanquished. War wins, reducing them to complete submission. He

CHRISTIAN COMPLICITY IN THE ATROCITIES OF OUR CENTURY THUS REVEALS HOW DEEPLY THE CHURCH HAS ABSORBED THE PAGAN MALAISE OF DETERMINISM.



makes truth serve violence and falsehood. He causes justice to declare not what is just but what is expedient as well as cruel. He reduces the liberty of the victorious side to a servitude equal to that of the tyranny which they attacked, in defense of liberty. Though moralists may intend and endeavor to lay down rules for war, in the end war lays down rules for them. . . . War has the power to transmute evil into good and good into evil. Do not fear that he will not exercise this power. Now more than ever he is omnipotent. He is the great force, the evil mystery, the demonic mover of our century, with his globe of sun-fire, and his pillars of cloud. Worship him.⁸

But is there any alternative? Do we have any choice other than violence? When Hitler and Hirohito unleashed their war machines on the world, what else could be done? If not retaliation in kind, what then? If not retributive justice, how peace?

Before attempting to give a positive answer, it is important to grasp what the question implies. The question suggests the same fatalism that permeated ancient Greek thought. For the Greeks, over and against the will of the gods was the inexorable reality of Fate or *Moirai*. Fate, armed with necessity (*ananke*), joins with the Furies (*Erinyes*) to defy human craft and intelligence. Even Zeus is unable to overrule what Fate commands.

In Plato's *Timaeus*, for example, it is the task of the Creator, or Demiurge, to mold blind, inert matter to the divine will. But matter, *ananke*, is resistant to any meaning

or purpose, so the creation is never wholly good or complete; there always remains in the universe a residual amount of “brute fact,” or necessity, that even the gods cannot rationalize or control. Ultimately, then, the highest provenance is not the divine will but the law of Fate. It is impossible to predict what Fate will command. It is impossible to argue with what Fate decrees. “Fate is immutable, impersonal, unseeing, and strikes like a thunderbolt. Future is like past: determined.”⁹

In the *Iliad*, the war is not spurred on primarily by human choices, but by the edicts of Fate meted out by Zeus. Achilles, Zeus declares to the goddess Hera, will not fight until after Hektor kills Patrokolos “in the

narrow place of necessity. . . . This is the way it is fated to be.” In the meantime, the Furies must ensure that the war does not come to a premature end; so “Terror drove them, and Fear, and Hate whose wrath is relentless. . . the screaming and the shouts of triumph rose up together/ of men killing and men killed, and the ground ran blood.” Homer sees how abhorrent war is, but he is unable to posit any escape from it; the cycle of violence is senseless but unavoidable.

Several centuries later, this idea of the simultaneous futility and inescapability of bloodshed would form the heart of Greek tragedy. Aeschylus' *Oresteia* trilogy is archetypal: Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter Iphigeneia to propitiate the goddess Artemis. His wife Clytaemestra must then murder him to avenge the death of her daughter. But Orestes, prompted by Apollo, must now kill Clytaemestra to avenge Agamemnon. The cycle is only ended by the arbitrary intervention of the goddess Athene, who appeases the Furies by giving them a permanent home beneath the city of Athens.

The contemporary question of whether there is any alternative to violence (and the assumption that the answer is negative) is best seen in this mythological context. For when we examine the statements made by politicians and military planners in World War II, what is most striking is not the fact that they made dubious ethical choices, but that often in the deepest



sense they did not make choices at all.

"Truman made no decision because there was no decision to be made," recalled George Elsey, one of his military advisors involved with the Manhattan Project. "He could no more have stopped it than a train moving down a track. . . . It's well and good to come along later and say the bomb was a horrible thing. The whole goddamn war was a horrible thing." So, we discover, from the *Iliad* to Dresden and Nagasaki nothing has changed. Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met at Malta. Fate, necessity, and the Furies decided the war.¹⁰

This is why violence, at its most basic root, is the ultimate form of passivity. It is based upon the assumption and the fear that when Fate decrees slaughter, humans have no choice but to obey. The "realist" is a conscientious objector to nonviolent action because ultimately he does not believe we are truly free. To think "pragmatically" about when it is acceptable for innocent humans to be destroyed is to think mechanistically about what it means to be human. "War always encourages a patriotism that means not love of country but unquestioning obedience to power," writes Kentucky farmer-philosopher Wendell Berry.¹¹ "In the face of conflict, the peaceable person may find several solutions, the violent person only one."¹²

Christian complicity in the atrocities of our century

thus reveals how deeply the church has absorbed the pagan malaise of determinism. By rejecting nonviolence as a binding principle, Christians have cauterized their consciences and absolved themselves of the freedom to make authentic moral choices. Can the passivity of the German population in World War II be separated from Martin Luther's claim that Christians are duty bound to wield the sword for the sake of political and social order? Can the compliance of the Catholic chaplain who administered mass to the Catholic crew that dropped the atomic bomb on Nagasaki (destroying three orders of nuns in the process) be separated from Augustine's "Just War" teaching? "[S]hould you see that there is a lack of hangmen," Luther wrote in 1523, "and find that you are qualified, you should offer your services."¹³ The Protestant Church has been offering its services ever since. The Catholic Church had a head start beginning with Constantine in the fourth century.

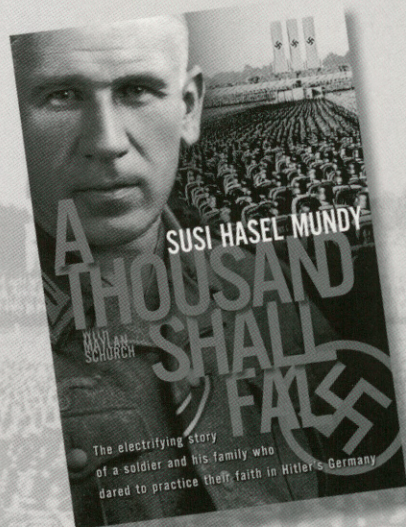
So again, the question: is there any alternative to violence and the fatalism it implies?

The New Testament witness says there is. This witness, however, does not take reason as its highest value and starting point. Rather, it declares that reason itself is defined by the life and teaching of a single

person. One may, of course, reject this person's teaching of peaceableness toward enemies. What one cannot do is deny what this teaching is: The evidence is absolute and unequivocal; all special pleading for violence must studiously refrain from sustained exegetical analysis.¹⁴

You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. . . . You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

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that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.
(Matt. 5:38-48 NKJV)

The Sermon on the Mount, from which these words are taken, is presented in Matthew's Gospel in a programmatic fashion as the new Torah, a new charter for the community of believers. Just as Moses delivered the tablets of stone from Sinai, Jesus gathers his disciples on the mountain to disclose a new covenant with Israel.

The new covenant begins with the Beatitudes (5:3-11), a counterintuitive and politically charged overturning of the world's values and moral reasoning. God's blessings, Jesus declares, are upon the downtrodden, the oppressed, the meek, the peacemakers. All of

the mechanism by which it will be achieved.

Jesus shatters this strict geometry with a simple injunction: "Do not resist an evil person." This does not imply passive capitulation to force, but physical nonretaliation as a dynamic spiritual weapon, particularly in the political realm. The command only makes sense in the context of the prophetic community or *polis* Jesus has announced he is building. By exemplifying the peaceableness and conciliatory spirit of the Beatitudes, the believer confounds and shames the aggressor, creating an opportunity for the violent person to be reconciled with God. By absorbing undeserved suffering and not retaliating in kind, the disciple also destroys the evil inherent in the logic of force. Instead of an endless cycle of violence and

THE HOPE OF NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE TO EVIL IS NOT UNREALISTIC, AS HISTORY HAS PROVED.



the accouterments of power and prestige on display in Greco-Roman society mean nothing. Education, wealth, and noble pedigree are illusory anchors. Lord Caesar and Lord Mammon are out. Reality, in God's eyes, is ordered with a paradoxical premium upon weakness and undeserved suffering.

To embody God's truth in a blinded world, Jesus calls for the formation of a countercultural community, "a *polis* on a hill" (v. 14). In the *polis* of Jesus, reconciliation will overcome hostility; marriage vows will be kept with lifelong fidelity; language will be honest and direct; all hatred and violence will be renounced. The emphasis throughout is not upon individual piety as a means to salvation, but upon personal and social ethics leading to restored community in the present reality.

Jesus sees his teaching as the deepest fulfillment and revelation of the Law and the prophets. He does not seek to negate the Torah but actually *intensifies* the Torah's demands. The Law prohibits murder; Jesus prohibits even anger. The law prohibits adultery; Jesus prohibits even lust. When it comes to the matter of violence, however, Jesus does not simply radicalize the Torah: he decisively alters and in fact overturns it.

The *lex talionis*—an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth—is spelled out in several passages in the Hebrew Bible, but particularly in Deuteronomy 19:15-21. If in a criminal trial a witness gives a false testimony, the Law declares, that person must be severely punished in order to preserve the social order. "Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" (v. 21). Political stability is the goal and fear is

recrimination, there is *shalom*, there is peace.

The assumption among believers that violence is an acceptable tactic and tool, and the willingness of the Christian community to play chaplain to our nation's military complex, therefore discloses a crisis of mistaken identity. When Christians declare that "we" must wage war for the sake of this or that political goal, when they point to what "they" did to "us" and argue about what "our" response should be, they mistakenly identify the calling of believers with the objectives of the nation-state.

But the *polis* of Jesus is not merely one kind of allegiance contained within others, wheels within wheels. It is a radically different allegiance based upon goals and principles that the state may at times not tolerate or comprehend. In the final analysis, because nonviolence may result in martyrdom as it did for Jesus, it only makes sense to those who see all war in "cosmic perspective," who know that there is genuine freedom because there is also Advent hope.

The freedom of the prophetic community is not freedom from "this-worldliness." It is not liberty for the sake of personal security or individual purity. It is not motivated by narrow perfectionism or pious idealism. Rather, those who are truly free are conscious that they must live as faithful witnesses amid all of the ambiguities and anxieties of society, speaking truth to power in a fallen world and acting in ways that might



actually make a difference. This means challenging the unquestioning raptures of a war-worshipping culture. This means proclaiming the principles of the Sabbath Jubilee as God's judgment upon social and economic systems that oppress and exploit. This means fighting for peace using the weapons of peace rather than the weapons of death and fear.

The hope of nonviolent resistance to evil is not unrealistic, as history has proved. The accomplishments of Gandhi and Martin Luther King are well known, but there have been many others. During World War II, the French Huguenot village of Le Chambon Sur Lignon saved thousands of Jewish children through nonviolent noncooperation with Gestapo and Vichy authorities. The entire nation of Denmark likewise engaged in nonviolent resistance to the Nazis.

When told that Jewish refugees must wear stars, the Danes declared that they would all wear stars; they mounted strikes and protests; they refused to repair German ships in their shipyards; they ferried Jews to Sweden out of harm's way; they hid Jews in their homes. Again, thousands of lives were saved. Nazi officials were thoroughly unnerved, bewildered, and deflated by these actions. Many were converted. Eichmann was repeatedly forced to send specialists to Denmark to try to sort out the problem since his men on the ground could "no longer be trusted."¹⁵

These movements, however, were rooted in communities that took their Christianity seriously and were prepared to count the cost. Let us cease praying for the success of our technology and weaponry long enough to ponder: is Christianity still ready to count the cost?

Notes and References

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Ronald Osborn is a graduate student in liberal arts at St. John's College, in Annapolis, Maryland, and the grandson of Robert Osborn, a World War II noncombatant medic.
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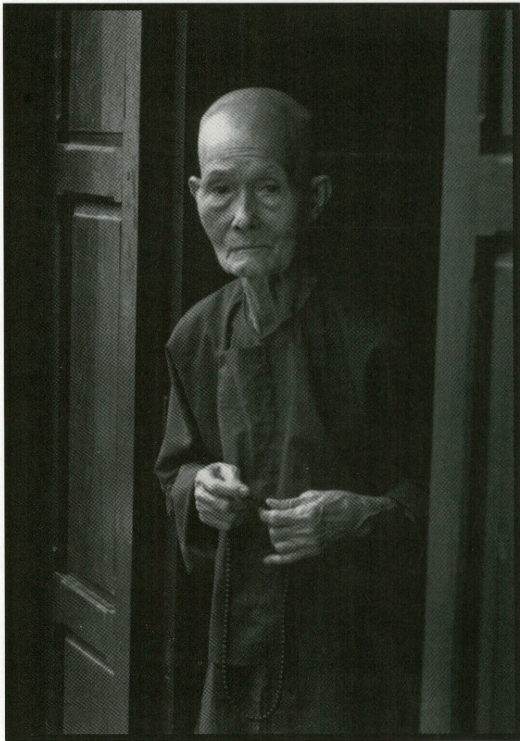
Seeds of Friendship in Việt Nam

By Peter Erhard

In the central highlands village of Lak, about sixty kilometers south of Buon Ma Thuot, this boy-scholar found my photographic activities interesting. I explored the M'ngong village of long houses built four to six feet above ground level on wooden pilings near the shore of Lac Lake. I was fortunate to spend one night in this village during one of my earlier trips.

The sun hung low in preparation for its daily plunge into the lush greenness of the western Me Kong Delta and Cam Pu Chia. It was still too hot and stuffy to stay in my dimly lit hotel room, so I sat in the lobby next to a black table with ornately carved turtles, phoenix, and dragons and wrote in my journal. The open French doors of the lobby allowed air to pass through, into the reception area. The Me Kong River was flowing fast and heavy just outside the window with the monsoon run-off of floating ecosystems from Tibet, Burma, Laos, and Cam Pu Chia. I could hear the rapid putt-putt-putt of long-shafted outboard-motor-powered sampans blending with the chugging of larger inboard-powered junks as they plied watery paths to and from the market landing just up the street.

Pausing from my writing, I looked up and noticed a Viet Nameese family across the lobby. Perhaps they were celebrating a holiday, a birthday, or death-day, which is the Viet Nameese custom. Suddenly, I realized that my eyes and the eyes of one of the women had met. I nodded respectfully and smiled, then returned to my journal entry. A few minutes later, I looked up again and my eyes were greeted and acknowledged by the same woman. I wondered what she found interesting about this solitary white face. Perhaps it was my long American nose. Why did she continue to look at me even when she knew I was looking back? Is it appropriate for a Viet Nameese woman, hand



Giac Lam Pagoda, Ho Chi Minh City. Retired Buddhist nun on the grounds of the oldest pagoda in greater Ho Chi Minh city, dating from 1744.



Ho Chi Minh City Horse Race Track stable area. Wife of a farrier. The race track stable area is usually frantic with horses being prepared for a race or cooled down right after. The farrier's wife seemed thoughtful during a few relatively quiet moments.

perhaps a grandmother, to look so directly at a foreign stranger? I nodded again and returned to my writing.

A few moments later, I sensed someone approaching. When I looked up, the woman from across the lobby was standing just on the other side of the low black table. Again, I smiled, nodded, and encouraged her to sit down in the chair opposite me.

She spoke quietly in Viet Nameese. Through expression and gesture I tried to let her know that I did not understand, but I wanted to know what she had said. She spoke again. Although I listened more intently, I still failed to understand her softly spoken words. I felt awkward and embarrassed at my ignorance of the Viet Nameese language.

As our eyes continued the only conversation possible, she positioned her hands as if writing in a notepad. I handed her my pen and journal, opened to a fresh page. Carefully, she penned a short sentence, then handed the notebook and pen back across the table. Unfortunately, I still could not comprehend what she was trying to communicate. My eyes passed from her eyes to what she had written, and then back to her eyes. We looked at each other, our inability to communicate made our smiles awkward, but all the more valuable.

As I sat attentively leaning toward her over the table, she slowly reached her cupped right hand, palm up, across the table toward me. I did not really know what an appropriate response should be, but for some reason I reached out my right hand, also with my palm up. As my hand drew next to hers, she tipped her

Somewhere in eastern central Viet Nam I found this young lady waiting in her boat for the return of her mother. I was drawn to her hat and expression.

Overleaf
Cholon, The China Town of Ho Chi Minh City. The proud owner of a, thus far, triumphant fighting cock. I believe that cock fighting is illegal in Viet Nam but widely practiced.



hand vertically above mine, spilling a half-dozen or so black watermelon seeds into my upturned palm. We smiled, she rose, turned, and crossed the room back to her family. I finished writing and returned to my room for the night. I still did not know what her message was. I did not see her again. I valued her gift.

It was not until I reached home several weeks later that I had her words translated. A paraphrase of what she wrote expressed the friendship I found as I traveled this land that most Americans associate with war. "The Viet Nameese people have been very good to your people. We think of you, and treat you as our own flesh and bone. We treat you as family. We have become family."

About the Photographs

All but one of the photographs here were taken during a 1999 sabbatical from La Sierra University. I spent eight weeks traveling the length and breadth of Viet Nam on a motorcycle. The 5,000-mile journey took me into some of Viet Nam's most remote mountainous areas to photograph members of several of the country's over fifty ethnic groups. The trip was part of an ongoing photographic project to document Viet Nameese society that has been supported in part by research grants from Andrews University and La Sierra University. Photographs accumulated over the years have been exhibited at: Columbia University, New York; Andrews University, Michigan; La Sierra University, California; Notre Dame University, Indiana; The University of California, Irvine; and at a conference on Viet Nam, Cam Pu Chia, and Laos in Arlington, Virginia. Plans are also underway to publish the photographs in book form to further disseminate the seeds of friendship that I found in Viet Nam, where I learned that understanding people even a little requires experiencing the places in which they live.

Peter Erhard is professor of art at La Sierra University.
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Twelve Reasons Why the IBMTE Won't Work

I believe it is right and proper for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to cultivate and monitor the theological integrity, loyalty, and unity of those, like myself, who teach religion in our church's colleges and universities. Unfortunately, however the current procedural guidelines of the General Conference International Board for Ministerial Training and Education (IBMTE) strike me as inadequate in at least twelve ways:

1. The IBMTE includes many ex officio members whose other responsibilities will not allow them to participate in its work in a regular and responsible fashion: its quorum is one-third of the membership.
2. Many members of the IBMTE are specialists in fields other than tertiary Seventh-day Adventist theological education and spiritual formation.
3. Someone who has successfully taught religion in our church's colleges and universities for many years is placed in the same category as one who has never done so.
4. Rather than having the IBMTE members independently examine every religion teacher's application the IBMTE's chair and secretary will appoint a subcommittee of two or more members to study the applicant's record and affidavits.
5. The criteria that will guide this subcommittee's work are procedurally and substantively vague, especially when compared to those of the Rank and Tenure and Peer Review committees on most of our campuses.
6. This subcommittee will not report its findings to the IBMTE as a whole but to its chair and secretary, who will decide whether to forward them to the entire IBMTE.
7. These guidelines do not specify what should happen if the chair and secretary find themselves deadlocked in disagreement regarding the subcommittee's findings.
8. These guidelines provide inadequate opportunities for a candidate to appeal to the IBMTE as a whole if he or she receives a favorable review from the subcommittee but an unfavorable one from the chair and secretary.
9. These guidelines do not require each member of the entire IBMTE to vote by way of secret ballot on each candidate's application.
10. These guidelines anticipate that the IBMTE will have access to a religion teacher's student, peer, and administrative evaluations that now are and should remain confidential.
11. There are important tensions between these guidelines and our church's positions on academic freedom that are included in the IBMTE's procedural handbook.
12. The entire process complicates and frustrates the ability of members of each institution's board of trustees, most of whom are full-time employees of our denomination, to fulfill their fiduciary obligations in ethically and legally acceptable ways.

For all practical purposes, the IBMTE as now comprised and commissioned will function as a committee of two: its chair and its secretary. All other members of the IBMTE will be so dependent upon these two people for information and evaluations that it will be difficult for them to study the issues and options for themselves and to cast informed and independent votes in secret ballots.

This way of doing things is unprecedented in the entire history of our church. It is also unjustified. It is difficult to imagine methods more at odds with the warnings of Ellen G. White and many others in our church's past against concentrating too much administrative and theological power in the hands of too few people.

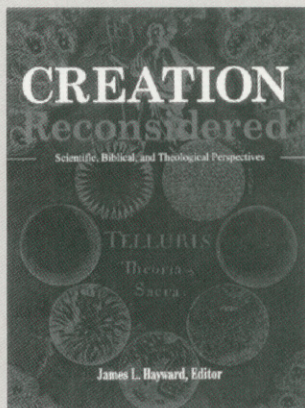
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M. Haluschak (president)
goldpan@telus.net

Sydney, Australia (New South Wales)
Burns McLean
burns.mclean@sac.nsw.edu.au

Regional Representatives

Atlantic
Gary Gilbert
Boston, Massachusetts
ggilbert@massmed.org

Canadian (West)
Bruce Buttler
Lacombe, Canada
buttler@telusplanet.net

Southern Pacific
Jim Kaatz
Lakeside, California
ak-jk@home.com

Chapters wishing to be acknowledged in this list, please contact the Association of Adventist Forums: (916) 774-1080

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Discipleship

Jésus came to me on the moon,
when August was bearing down,
like an unwed mother in labor.

Since then, silence.

I enter empty rooms,
where the curtains pick up their skirts
to dance and point at open windows – saying:
“If you had been here,
he would have touched you as well.”

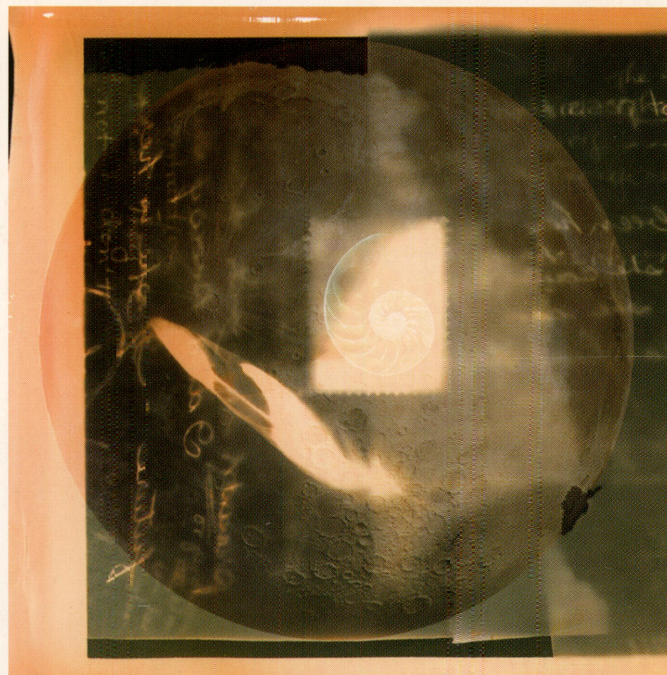
I lie on my side in bed,
face to the wall –
my fingers outline the strange,
misshapen contours
of fairies and thieves.

He stands over me
or rocks in nonna’s chair.
But I would that he lie down with me
to talk like old friends.

He could touch my lonely face
while I told him bad jokes
just to hear him laugh.

We could talk about anything in the world.

It would be so much more
than this current conversation –
an echo so faintly my own voice,
I rarely know when it is holy
and when it is me.



Beata Dzurbova. *Living Shadow*. Digital collage, 2000.

I wake and run to the marriage tree,
beside the dirt road that leads to an open field,
the stars, and the maze of manzanita.

There is no need to be strong here.
His face is in the shadows
of the trees I sing to.

For now, content to pass my hand
through the late morning steam,
as rain from the ground
gathers in my palm.

-Heather Isaacs

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