 community through conversation

# SPECTRUM



**Cybersex,  
Solipsism, and  
Paul's Notion of  
the Body**

Screwtape's  
Nightmare

**Dreams Come  
True in (Black and)  
Blue Hawaii**

Invitation to a  
Christian Witness for  
Peace in Iraq

**Remembering the  
Whitecoats**

Pork

**Her Body  
Sprouted Wings**

community through conversation  
**SPECTRUM**

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**ABOUT THE COVER:**

*The Mirror.* This image is based on a Photoshop sketch/oil painting from 2003. *The Mirror*, or so it seemed to me at the time, is actually a "reflection" on the idea of law as a revealer of personal defects.

My paintings often draw on various fifteenth-century sources for their imagery. When using these sources, however (which I alter to varying degrees using Adobe Photoshop), I am working as an artist, rather than an art historian. In *The Mirror*, for example, The Tower of Babel is from Pieter Bruegel.

**ABOUT THE ARTIST:**

John Hoyt lives in Alberta, Canada. This is his third *Spectrum* cover.

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SPECTRUM is a journal established to encourage Seventh-day Adventist participation in the discussion of contemporary issues from a Christian viewpoint, to look without prejudice at all sides of a subject, to evaluate the merits of diverse views, and to foster Christian intellectual and cultural growth. Although effort is made to ensure accurate scholarship and discriminating judgment, the statements of fact are the responsibility of contributors, and the views individual authors express are not necessarily those of the editorial staff as a whole or as individuals.

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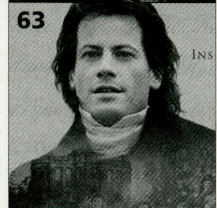
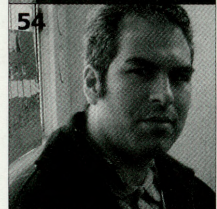
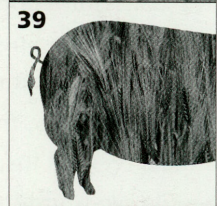
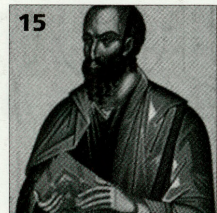
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## Thirty-Five and Counting... on Hope | BY BONNIE DWYER

WITH A NEWLY UPDATED LOOK, a lively companion Web site, and promises of great discussions to come, *Spectrum* begins volume thirty-five thinking of itself as new media. Well, let's be honest, all media today has to be new media, because of the constant technological changes taking place, modifying and expanding our ways of gathering and sharing information. Postmodernity is not a choice.

Nonetheless, the challenges of technology have, at times, seemed insurmountable—where in the world would we find ten thousand dollars for better software to manage our subscription database? Answer—from loyal supporters who gave us the resources to do a better job. Through the years, with gifts large and small came bundles of hope for the future. Hope was the thing with feathers that gave us courage to take flight. And with each gift, hope also became in my mind what good friends give to each other.

Hope also arrived with new young writers, artists, and scholars, some of whom are included in this issue—Julius Nam, Kendra Haloviak, Heather Isaacs, Alita Byrd, Alex Carpenter. They and numerous others have made hope rise like a river at flood stage.

What was the best way to showcase the creative work of the twenty-somethings? Should we dedicate a special issue just for them? No, they told us. They wanted to be part of the mix, not singled out. They wanted to sit at the table with everyone else.

Come to think of it, large family holiday dinners with a children's table in the kitchen may be where the separation of conversations between generations begins. But whether it's the teenagers gathered at the end of the table, or the grandparents with hearing challenges who sit silently, everyone wants to be heard and understood.

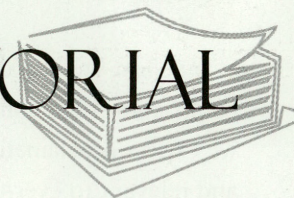
Trouble is, we talk differently. In "My Satirical Self," an article that appeared September 17, 2006, in the *New*

*York Times Magazine*, Wyatt Mason described the difficulties that he and his father experienced in discussing the news. Whereas Mason's father often expressed anger about "the latest folly in the corridors of power," he felt mirth. When his father called to chew over some maddening morsel of news, Wyatt had found a way not to be angry at all. "I have taken shelter in the ridiculous," he said. And whereas his father took his anger to the opinion pages of the nation's finest newspapers, he went to *The Onion*, which he called America's Finest News Source.

And what was it that he found so attractive about stories from *The Onion*? "Comedic tone—a smart blend of parody and hyperbole and mockery," a tone that he suggested has been resonating through every echelon of American culture, a shift affecting and informing every storytelling medium, whether factual or fictional." With satire, conversation becomes, as Ambrose Bierce ironically defined it in his *Devil's Dictionary*, "a fair for the display of the minor mental commodities, each exhibitor being too intent upon the arrangement of his own wares to observe those of his neighbor."

So given the changes in tone and technology, what chances do cross-generational conversations have of ever taking place in Adventism? What hope is there for a magazine that is more than thirty-five years old? Plenty. Our webmaster has talked eighty-year olds through the process of posting comments on our Web site. Blogs have brought more twenty-somethings to the conversation. That's the wonderful thing about new media. It creates a place that can be comfortable for all ages to get together and share. In the sharing lies the hope.

For me, the great Advent hope encompasses more than just the second coming of Christ, it resides in the body of Christ sharing not only the good news of the gospel, but also love for one another through listening and talking to each other. ■



## Screwtape's Nightmare

*Mind if I shout?* | BY CHARLES SCRIVEN

Before the Holy Spirit drew me back into Hope, I thought we'd slipped into a rut too deep to escape. Trevan Osborn's report of his summer evangelism experience, recorded on the *Spectrum Blog* and then in the previous issue of this magazine, read like a Screwtape success story.

I can just imagine C. S. Lewis's Evil Angel confiding to Wormwood, his nephew: "There is no need to make our enemies, the Adventists, recant their faith. Just make sure they're afraid of their minds—afraid to think because thinking is too hard and too hazardous. Dupe them into believing their Adventism, like some widget from the factory, is finished, and their beliefs, down to the last detail, just fine the way they are, permanent as steel. Then create a climate of inquisitorial orthodoxy—overseers monitoring what people think so no one will stray from convention, and everyone else cowed into cynicism or feckless routine...or both."

In my mind's eye, Screwtape titters at his own ingenuity.

What did Trevan Osborn say? The evangelistic experience was part of his ministerial training, he explained, and took place in and around a YMCA gym in the Hunter's Point area of San Francisco, where residents deal regularly with drugs, violence, and poverty, not to mention relationships gone bad.

The evangelist used a series of canned "PowerPoint sermons," and began by addressing what Osborn called "tough topics," topics, that is, that even Adventist young people "don't care" about, let alone teenagers "just hanging out in the streets." The first night, for example, he

advised some one hundred listeners about what happens at world's end to the wicked and the righteous, and spent "extended time...debunking the rapture theory." Sermons on the "twenty-three hundred days" and the "Mark of the Beast" followed. Nor did the evangelist fail to address "speaking in tongues."

Osborn, who has become a pastor in Virginia, said the focus on how the world will end, and why other denominations can't be right, left him wishing instead for attention to the question "How does true life begin?" It was beyond wrongheaded to preach the gospel and "not even attempt to address any of the issues the community is facing."

Earlier, in late May, another Adventist pastor, Ryan Bell, had remarked on the *Spectrum Blog* that evangelistic campaigns typically peddle a truth both "static" and "de-contextualized." Osborn's diary described a perfect example of this.

We all know that a profound fear of the new—especially anything new and fresh in Adventist teaching—has clouded Adventist consciousness for years. No one has to name the villains or victims whose stories have seeded the fear; the knowledge is commonplace. We know, too, that this dark climate now approaches Screwtape's "ideal," and leaves all too many damaged in both self-confidence and productivity. Thankfully, some, including the best of church administrators, rise above the fear, and try new thoughts and new approaches. But many either dance around the danger they perceive, or give in to it. Some—not many, I think—become fear mongers themselves.

Does this not explain, at least in part, why

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evangelism—telling the good news, widening the circle of compassion—has come to such a doubtful state? How can we expect proclamation that is both faithful to the gospel and relevant to ever-changing circumstance unless the Adventist culture emboldens us to think, and permits us, along the way, to make mistakes? Evil Angels do not quake before a mindless foe, and when creativity and risk-taking meet with disapproval, we make ourselves, quite simply, into pushovers.

My point is not thoughtless blessing of novelty. For one thing, we may learn from the preachers of conventional evangelism as well as ask our questions. For another, new attempts at fresh interpretation will fall short, and require themselves a critical second look. But if, as two young pastors have suggested, many who make a public witness to our faith—including some who teach ministers-in-training—are simply stuck in conventionality, it is time to call a rut a rut, and get out of it.

The prophets and preachers of the Bible illustrate the remarkable variety—of approach and also of thought—that God seems to welcome and to work with. Peter and Paul disagreed about important matters, yet both brought converts to the church. God's thoughts were higher than theirs; each saw through a glass darkly. So it was no wonder they fell short of full agreement. Still, despite their flawed unity, God blessed what they did (Isa. 55: 8, 9; 1 Cor. 13:9; and 2 Pet. 3:18).

But it's not just imperfect understanding, and blessing in spite of it, that the Bible sets before us; it's also the possibility of new understanding. Through the prophet, God told the Hebrew exiles that the desert between them and home could be crossed, just as once the Jordan River had been crossed. It was a "new" thought, in that time and place not easy to grasp, but God wanted them to grasp it. Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would guide them toward the whole truth they were not yet ready to "bear"; God knew they would one day be able to bear it, and expected their knowledge to grow (Isa. 43:19; John 16:12, 13).

All this underlies Ellen White's none-too-familiar dictum in volume five of her testimonies that fear of "new questions" and "difference of opinion" is a recipe for spiritual decline (706–7). The plain fact is that it's always time to face down fear, and always time to embrace growth in Christian understanding. Growth is both necessary and possible, and Christian growth—growth that is open and

infectious and widely celebrated—is one of Screwtape's nightmares.

Here and there teachers, pastors, and evangelists are looking to transcend mere conventionality. I have a professor friend who is exploring fresh approaches to Revelation as a means of outreach. I know a pastor who has several times conducted an entire evangelistic campaign in a key that would, I feel sure, inspire both Trevan Osborn and Ryan Bell.

Most of us miss out on these experiments. But it wouldn't have to be that way. There could be more experiments. There could be wider encouragement of creativity and risk taking. And one day we could be thankful, not just for the few, but for the more than a few, who gladly bear a torch down unfamiliar paths.

Shakespeare has a general say: "Defer no time; delays have dangerous ends." Anyone who knows how hard it is to find, let alone keep, creative Adventist leaders—whether evangelists, or pastors and lay leaders for churches, or administrators for our institutions—knows this urgency, knows it in mind and heart and gut.

Openness to the Spirit—there is a rallying cry for everyone, church leaders most of all. Even more important, of course, is actual engagement in the conversation that lets the Spirit make its impact. Not the cry, after all, but the rising of the wild duck is what makes the flock take flight.<sup>1</sup> ■

## Notes and References

1. Michael Oakeshott somewhere says (roughly) this.



**Charles Scriven** occupies the presidencies of the Kettering College of the Medical Arts and Adventist Forums.



## More than One Thousand Comments

Report from the Spectrum Blog | BY ALEXANDER CARPENTER

**O**n January 17, 2007, the *Spectrum Blog* recorded its millesimal comment. Thanks to those of you who have dropped by to join the new, online Adventist Forum conversation. Clifford Goldstein has been mixing it up over Genesis with some very quick-witted *Spectrum* community members. It's great to be among those who entertain and challenge views that differ.

In honor of the one-thousandth comment, the *Spectrum Blog* invited short submissions that address the following question:

### What would I change about the Church?

I REMEMBER my early Sabbaths as a new believer, the anticipation of them, the wonder of them, the expectation, surrounded by newfound family, beautiful melodies filling the air. My friends seemed to know all the songs and verses by heart. The messages drew me still higher. The whole experience seemed to approximate heaven. Our corporate expectations were high.

Church-wide things are more subdued now; our expectations are not so lofty. What have we lost? Was our expectation just an illusion? In my new

experience with Jesus was my thankfulness just spilling over and coloring all of my church experience? I think not.

We knew we were special (not superior). We knew we were blessed in an extraordinary measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. We recognized God's mercy as a catalyst, substitution a means and not only an end. Our vision needs to be clear; our blessings still remain but are largely unrecognized and I fear unappreciated. Extol them from the heart and the anticipation, wonder, and expectation will return.

**Posted by: Kenneth M. Ray, Jr.**

Kalispell, Montana

ADVENTISM WOULDN'T even be an "ism." We would be so soaked in the Holy Spirit that people would sense the scent of the Savior in us. Society, wherever we Adventists were, would be so saturated with our presence that it would be as though Christ once again walked this weary world. The marginalized masses would know that there is a way out of this morass.

I would return us to a "movement" mentality. Museums and mausoleums have their place, but we're here to prepare a people to meet the Messiah.

A marbled message won't do it. God (truth) never changes but our understanding should always grow.

I would seek to have that truth (God) written in our hearts, not on a wall somewhere. It would be where truth made a difference in today and not just a hope for the future. Our meetings would always be Christo-centric, no matter what the topic. And we could safely say, "Follow me, as I follow Christ."

Church would be a changing room. It would be a place where people could find safety to change into Christ's likeness. But church would also be a charging room. It would be a place where people would be empowered with the passion of Christ to seek and save the lost...

What would I change? Don't get me started. Better yet, "Lord, let the change start with me."

**Posted by: Michael Cook, Pastor**

Prescott, Arizona

I WOULD CHANGE the way the Church handles negative information about itself. Many like myself have deep and painful issues surrounding the Church. Protection of the organization takes precedence over the safety and spiritual well-being of those in the pews.

As a victim of childhood sexual abuse in the Church, I have experienced this firsthand. When one follows the guidelines the Church has provided for such grievances, the

abuse continues mentally and spiritually and increases the victim's shame and isolation. Most of us must leave the Church to find an environment that is free of these institutional toxins to healing.

The Church could provide much healing and help to those who have experienced abuse by providing an outside, objective organization to deal with the allegations. It could do much more to prevent the abuses that continue to happen by being honest about the need, by refusing to transfer those who are known to abuse to new positions, and by demanding that thorough background checks are done on *all* those in leadership.

They could take their spiritual responsibilities to heal the heart and mind as seriously as they do their commitment to physical healing.

**Posted by: JeriAnne Berry**  
Knoxville, Tennessee

I DISAGREE WITH the church of my childhood on many significant points. It may surprise those who have shared cyberspace with me to learn that there is only one thing I would change about contemporary Adventism.

Adventism grew out of the willingness of our pioneers to challenge established beliefs of their time. Their studies convinced them to adopt new ideas and doctrines that were so distinctive that they were forced out of the communities that had once welcomed them. So convincing were the arguments they had to support their new positions that someone had the brilliant idea to declare that "We have the truth." Those four words have changed a thriving organism into a groaning organization.

Those who have the truth do not need to seek and those who do not seek cannot grow; those who do not grow are dead no matter how much they may sway in the wind. This is all I would change about Adventism. If you are constantly challenging your positions then it matters not if you are wrong today for you will correct the error tomorrow. But if you are correct the world benefits little if you are dead.

**Posted by: Darius Lecointe**  
Muncie, Indiana

THE CHANGE I'd really like to see in Adventism is that *all* of us become, functionally at least, Universalists; that we step down from feeling so "set apart" and "special" and "remnant" and "right," and just learn to accept that maybe *everyone* is just as special—in the eyes of God—as we are.

Why not take literally the reality expressed in 1 Corinthians 15:22 (NIV)—"For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive" (same idea in Romans 5:18)? We understand (and mourn) the "all" of Adam's death; how is it we miss the "all" of the Life Christ brings? (That "true light" is giving to *every* man!—John 1:9.) Why do we so resist the implications of the obvious meaning of this text? Because we are so sure God divides up people, we do the same. What might happen if we all started acting *as if* we are *all*, already, on the "right team"—the one labeled "Children of God"....

Do we dare believe this is true? Do we dare act like it might be? Let's just leave the "saving and damning" to God—and act as if we are *all* in this together....

**Posted by: Bob Riggsby**  
Altamonte Springs, Florida

I WOULD DEFUSE the culture of its spirit of fear.

Somehow "the fear of the Lord," which can be a good thing, has moved far beyond the beginning of wisdom to embrace an unhealthy fear of church authority, a fear of embarrassment by misbehaving Adventists in the public media, fear for careers if one's true beliefs on various subjects were widely known, fear of what other members would think about this or that minor infraction.

Then there are the "biggies"—fear of the "time of trial," the apocalypse, the judgment. Way, way too much fear. Time for all of them to go under the bed, back in the closet, maybe into the lake of fire.

**Posted by: Jiggs Gallagher**  
Cathedral City, California

#### TWO COMMENTS:

*Please, tell me these were all written by Adventists! Much much better than my contribution! Are these people members of the same church that I am? Wow: I bet there are a whole lot of similar dreams and wishes and hopes for Adventism.... That if the lot of us got together, and instead of giving up on Adventism because of our feelings of isolation and loneliness and helplessness, we actually helped each other? If only to listen and cry together?*

**Posted by: Bob Riggsby**

*Thanks Bob! What a thought! Yes, indeed, I'm a Seventh-day Adventist. I'm suddenly reminded of a bit of humor. Remember Rowan and Martin's "Laugh-in," on NBC? (I'm dating myself here.) It was a three-liner, delivered by two of the stars: "I'm a Fifth-day Adventist." "No, silly, it's Seventh-day Adventist." "But I take the weekend off." (Bada-bing.)*

**Posted by: Jiggs Gallagher**





## Rallying for Roy Adams, the discussion about God continues, conscientious cooperation or objection

### In Support of Roy Adams

I AM A THIRD-generation Seventh-day Adventist. As I look around, many of my contemporaries have left the Church for a variety of valid reasons. I have elected to stay and take a stand for my faith and belief. Yet my faith in the Church, its structure, and its leadership suffers further erosion when a qualified individual like Roy Adams is blatantly set aside and denied a deserved promotion after years of dedicated service to the Church (Andy Nash, "Opportunity Lost," fall 2006). I am forced to ask myself if we are any different from the political and corporate entities with which I deal every day in the business world.

I guess I am still naïve enough to believe that Church might be different. I am naïve enough to believe that once you've paid your dues and done a good job within the church structure, you will get the promotion if you are the next person in line for it. I am naïve enough to believe that the seemingly logical dominator of color might not play a role in church leadership and its functions.

I am naïve enough to believe that when a leadership committee meets and makes a request/recommendation, the executive branch does not force its will on the committee. I am naïve enough to believe that a dying church

in North America would infuse itself with the brilliance of one of its luminaries. Alas, naiveté often leads to discouragement, bewilderment, and a sense of loss permeated by lack of faith in a system that shoots its wounded and give its young away for adoption.

I was at Andrews University when Roy Adams was there. I heard him speak at many functions and we greeted each other as we traversed the halls of learning. On more than one occasion, I watched him engage the minds of a Sabbath School class in a masterful way. He is gentle man, a scholar, and a great mind. He would have made a great editor-in-chief for our church paper. But that's just the opinion of a naïve mind.

WILNY AUDAIN

Cape Coral, Florida

### Rejecting a "Designer Christ"

THANK YOU FOR the fall 2006 issue of *Spectrum* magazine. I believe you are performing a vital service for thinking Adventists by facilitating frank, open, in-house debate of key issues from various viewpoints. Including the *Spectrum Blog* background to Charles Scriven's editorial was a good move because it enables readers to weigh the points of evidence and decide for themselves. Beatrice Neall's short masterpiece is also very helpful.

Unlike Neall's essay, much of Charles

Scriven's editorial is off target. Here are some reasons for this assessment:

1. The editorial is titled "Biblical Authority: A Challenge to the Seminary." But Scriven is reacting to articles by only two seminary teachers (Richard Davidson and Roy Gane). Further investigation would reveal that, in fact, the biblical approach of Davidson and Gane to biblical authority is mainstream at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, which is committed to upholding all of the Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs. The first of these is: "The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit...."

2. Scriven does not dispute that in the Bible there are "several stories that say God commanded Israel to carry out the total annihilation of an enemy." But he objects to the fact that "Gane takes it for granted that, as a 'true theocracy,' Israel was acting for God—responding to 'direct revelation from God'—when it engaged in genocidal violence." If Scriven is right, the Israelites made a serious mistake because they were not really responding to direct revelation

from God. If so, we cannot trust the way the Bible expresses God's will through his prophets.

3. Scriven cites my statement, "When God tells you to do something, you do it," even if it is unusual, unpleasant, and "evokes revulsion and instant condemnation." He reacts: "A theory of biblical authority that permits these conclusions is worse than dubious: it is dangerous." So this alleged ongoing danger is the reason for rejecting the divine inspiration of the biblical narratives regarding genocide, even though I made it clear in my article that there is no such thing as divinely mandated genocide after the end of the Israelite theocracy.

4. Scriven finds that while Gane "alludes to the 'truer religion' of Jesus with its ideal of 'sacrificial love,'" it is unfortunate that Gane "makes no explicit case for why Jesus should trump the theocrats." I make no explicit case for that because I do not find in the New Testament that Christ invalidated the theocracy that was centered around himself. Christ's self-sacrificing love and his justice are complementary rather than mutually exclusive because those who choose to spurn his mercy give up the only thing that is keeping them from destruction. God and Christ reveal and emphasize different aspects of their character in different parts of the Bible, but they are the same persons throughout.

After reading what I have written here, Richard Davidson applauds Scriven for acknowledging in hindsight that "in substantial part, Davidson's criticisms [of the historical-critical method] ring true, especially now that the self-assurance of modernity has begun to seem like arro-

gance." But he adds: "You [Gane] have well pointed out that Scriven's 'Christ-centered' approach actually presupposes a 'designer Christ' invented by Scriven that is not true to the full portrait of Christ in Scripture.... Scriven's approach leads to a 'canon within a canon' that muzzles those portions of Scripture not in accordance with his own reductionistic view of Christ."

ROY GANE

*Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary  
Andrews University,  
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CHARLES SCRIVEN RESPONDS:

High appreciation to Roy for participating in the conversation!

My title was meant to be arresting—many of us yearn, not just for papers from seminary professors, but also for more occasions of actual give-and-take. Perhaps the title was unfair. I apologize.

As for the rest, let me just say that Roy has not yet addressed the linchpin passages in my argument. These (and I here note the verses as well as the chapters) are Matthew 28:18; John 1:1, 14; Colossians 1:15–19; and Hebrews 1:1–4. In these and other places, Christian Scripture lifts Jesus to the position of final authority for insight into the will and way of God. No one else who walked on earth holds that position. Moses does not, nor anyone else—except Jesus.

The Old Testament remains, of course, critically important, for it is through the Old Testament that we come to understand Jesus. As an observant Jew, he was at home arguing a particular interpretation of the Bible he loved. God gave clear blessing to that interpretation on the day of the resurrection (Rom. 1:1–4).

## Language and the Bible

I'M NOT ONE WHO writes letters to editors, but "The Discussion about the Nature of God" (fall 2006) aroused me from my lethargy and propelled me to my trusty Mac. Maybe it was just the sound and smell of screeching tires. Or perhaps it was another point that struck me between the eyes.

I do not know personally either Roy Gane or Richard Davidson, but I do know, casually, Chuck Scriven and Dave Larson. Both impress me as being reasonably intelligent and well-educated chaps with a better-than-average command of the English language. The same may be said of Gane and Davidson, if I may judge by their writing. But Gane says to Scriven, "Disagree if you like, but try to accurately represent what I say. You grossly distort my article...."

Beatrice Neall also dips her oar into this fluid discussion. She and I derived in less than three years time from the same maternal/paternal gene pool, but that has hardly made it easier for me to understand her—or her me. (I do admire her writing prowess whether or not I understand what she is saying.)

So here is the point: If several people with impressive letters after their names who all speak American English can't seem to communicate accurately with each other, why should I have confidence in their ability to understand what the Bible authors wrote millennia ago—centuries after the events they describe—in a foreign language for which we have no ancient and appropriate *Webster's Old World Dictionary* of the Hebrew language?

GORDON SHORT

*Salt Lake City, Utah*

## Abraham and Isaac

I READ Ron Ritter's letter on the story of Abraham and Isaac (fall 2006) with interest:

Most people—Christians and non-Christians alike—find the traditional explanation of this story difficult to understand. Would God command something that contradicts his own law? Why would he keep Abraham in terrible distress for a long time before the command was counteracted?

Maybe we should think instead that the command came from the devil, since there are other passages in the Bible about such confusion (2 Sam. 24:1 vs. 1 Chron. 21:1). Although Abraham did not understand this, God took pity on him because he was willing to give up his dearest possession. Then he waited until the last moment to stop Abraham and give him another object to sacrifice.

As far as I know, nobody else has suggested this interpretation, since the Bible says the command came from God. I myself am reluctant to do so because I do not want to spread heresy, but I think this is the only way the story can be understood properly.

I believe that Ritter's observation is correct.

KRISTEN FALCH JAKOBSEN  
*Ringstad, Norway*

## Running God's Errands in the Military

I SHARE Ron Osborn's discomfort with the traditional Adventist stance on combatancy ("The Moral Ambiguity of Conscientious Cooperation," fall 2006), and have always had questions about our internal consistency on this troubling issue. But I come to a different conclusion from Osborn.

Yes, we should be unequivocal

advocates of peace, unfailingly promoting it in our public discourse. Yes, it is entirely appropriate, even necessary at times, to question our country's involvement in preventable conflicts—involvement that is sometimes calculated to advance political agendas.

But I wonder about Osborn's implication that allegiance to the United States or, in other words, fundamental patriotism, is inherently morally flawed. It is one thing to dissent from a country's occasional foreign policy misadventures (and yes, the United States has engaged in such), but quite another to suggest that "the military as an institution" is morally objectionable.

Were it not for a daunting military, the United States arguably would have never existed (the Revolutionary War). Or it would have been hopelessly sundered by the rebellion and secession of the 1860s, which would have essen-

tially gone unanswered, with slavery as an institution continuing indefinitely until much, much later when it probably would have died of natural causes (probably economic in nature). What of the obvious moral ambiguity of allowing that to happen?

If it is morally wrong for Seventh-day Adventists to participate in the military, then it is morally wrong for others as well, even in the defense of freedom and in resistance to tyranny and genocide. Should Hitler have been finessed? (I seem to remember that Chamberlain tried that.)

Both Osborn and I may find the work God has for us in the classroom. I am willing to allow that others may find the errands God has for them at the DMZ in Korea, or even in the heart of the Pentagon.

RAY MINNER  
*Collegedale, Tennessee*

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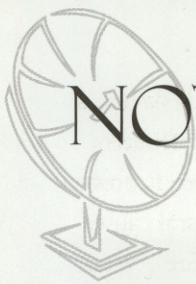
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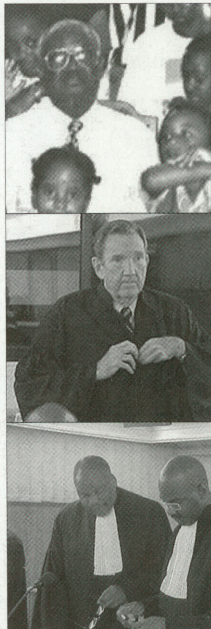
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## More Chapters to the Rwanda Story



**Top to bottom:** Elizaphan Ntakirutimana; Ramsey Clark donning judicial robe to defend Ntakirutimana against charges of genocide; lead prosecutor Charles Adeogun-Phillips.

### Pastor Released from Prison, then Dies

BY ALITA BYRD

Elizaphan Ntakirutimana, the former Seventh-day Adventist pastor convicted of genocide for his part in the Rwandan killings of 1994, has died in Arusha, Tanzania. Death came to eighty-two-year-old Ntakirutimana the night of January 22/23, 2007, only seven weeks after his release from prison.

Many believed the Adventist pastor, whose health has been very poor for many years, would not live to complete his ten-year prison sentence. "The judgment is very harsh," Jerome Ntakirutimana, his son, said when the court pronounced its sentence in 2003. "He won't make it in prison. He will die."

But Ntakirutimana, the first clergyman ever to be convicted of genocide in an international court, became the first prisoner to be set free after completing the prison term handed down by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR).

On Wednesday, December 6, 2006, Ntakirutimana was

released from the prison located outside Arusha, Tanzania. A journalist present noted that, although the eighty-two-year-old pastor was emaciated and visibly exhausted, leaning on a walking stick, he was dressed with care and wore a tweed cap on his head. He was greeted by his wife, Royisi. Before getting into a UN car to be driven to a hotel in Arusha, Ntakirutimana made a few comments to the gathered press.

Ntakirutimana called on his fellow Rwandans to be cautious and warned them against making "false accusations against innocent persons" like himself.

Throughout the ordeal, Ntakirutimana has insisted on his innocence. "Before God and this tribunal, I declare that I have never harmed anyone," he said during the appeal. Ntakirutimana has grown old against him. He was bitter about the accusations against him and his conviction.

He spoke with tears at the tribunal of all the people who died at Mugonero. "My sisters, my teachers, my pastors, all dead!" he cried. But when he

spoke of the genocide victims, he always came back to his own situation, showing disbelief that anyone could think he was involved in the atrocities.

Ntakirutimana walked free after serving his sentence, but his conviction still stood. Although he continued to profess his innocence, his record still held a gigantic black mark against him. He spent less than two months as a free man, knowing the world still saw him as a criminal.

Though Ntakirutimana was resentful, others made it clear that he had paid his debt to society. "The old man has served his time and I wish him and his family well," lead prosecutor Charles Adeogun-Phillips, who argued the case against Ntakirutimana, said in a recent e-mail message to the media. "I hope that, following his release, the pastor will consider devoting the remainder of his life to fostering the much-needed unity and reconciliation amongst his kinsmen."

Speaking to a Rwandan newspaper, the country's justice minister, Tharcisse Karugarama, said Ntakirutimana was free to

return to Rwanda if he wished. "We are a country that respects the rule of law and since he has served his sentence, he is free like any other innocent person to come and stay in his country," Karugarama said.

As it turned out, Ntakirutimana didn't have time before his death to work for Rwandan unity or return to the land of his birth.

Elizaphan Ntakirutimana was a senior pastor and the president of the West Rwanda Association (similar to a conference) when the horrific genocide swept the country in April 1994, killing close to a million people. He lived at the Mugonero complex, near the western border of Rwanda, where an Adventist hospital, school, and church were located. Mugonero is thirty miles over rough roads from the nearest town, set among peaceful hills.

On Sabbath, April 16, 1994, Tutsi men, women, and children sheltered in the Mugonero church were brutally murdered—it is estimated that three thousand people lost their lives that day. The day before the killers came, the pastors in the church sent a note begging Pastor Ntakirutimana for help, saying: "We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families." Ntakirutimana's note in reply said there was nothing he could do. The morning of the massacre, he fled with his family. The words from the note became the title of *New Yorker* writer Philip Goure-

vitch's book about the genocide, and Pastor Ntakirutimana became infamous.

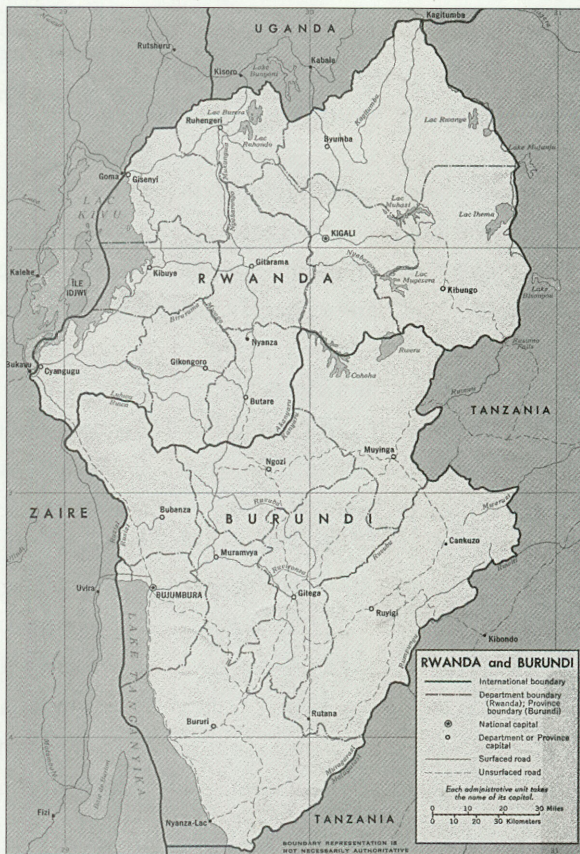
Ntakirutimana was accused of taking attackers to the church where the Tutsis were hiding, and convicted by the court. Though this conviction was later overturned on a legal technicality by the appeals chamber of the court, the pastor was still found guilty of helping attackers in other locations.

Prosecutor Adeogun-Phillips emphasized that the pastor was in a position of authority that he could have used to help people—but he didn't. "Omission, failure to act. That has been our case," he said. "He stood by and turned a blind eye when he could have helped those people. The evidence suggests that nothing happened while he was still there. If he had stayed perhaps nothing would have happened."

Elizaphan Ntakirutimana was first arrested on September 29, 1996, when he was staying with family in Laredo, Texas. He was released, then rearrested and after he lost a long court battle against extradition in 2000, he was transferred to the ICTR's detention facility in Arusha. In a two-year trial, the pastor was tried, together with his son Gérard, a medical doctor. Ramsey Clark, former U.S. attorney general, served as his defense lawyer. On February 19, 2003, Pastor Ntakirutimana was convicted of aiding and

abetting genocide, and given a ten-year sentence, with credit for the years he had already spent in prison. His son, Gérard, was given a twenty-five-year sentence.

For much of the trial, he seemed hardly to realize where he was. The elderly man sat in the courtroom day after day



**The central African nation of Rwanda, site of the 1994 genocide.**

next to his son—but he often paid no attention to the proceedings, and frequently had to leave to use the bathroom. When the judgment against him was read by the judge, he sat unmoving, with his head down. He did not bother to use the provided headphones so he could hear a simultaneous translation of the English verdict into Kinyarwanda. He wore a thick coat, despite

the heat, and stood only when the guard physically helped him out of his chair. Probably nobody in the room who heard the judge's sentence thought Ntakirutimana would live as a free man again.

He looked even older than his seventy-nine years when he spoke movingly during the closing statements of the trial in August 2002. "You understand that I am an aged person... may I and my family be able to go back to our country, the land of our birth, in order to die there," he said.

Ntakirutimana's wish did not come true. He was not even able to leave the city where he had spent so many years behind bars. But perhaps he had become resigned to waiting for the next world, where all things will become known. He told a friend he was waiting for "the Great Judge who will finish the case himself."



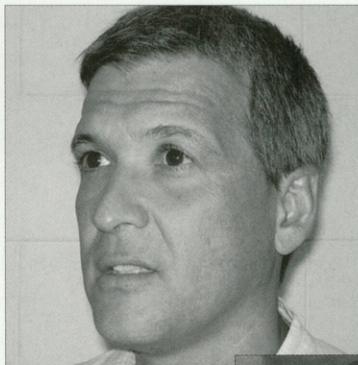
A member of *Spectrum's* editorial board, **Alita Byrd** is a journalist who lives in Pretoria, South Africa. In 2003

and 2004, she reported for *Spectrum* online on Rwandan Pastor Elizaphan Ntakirutimana's conviction for genocide. A more lengthy report of hers, "Searching for Truth in Reports of the Sabbath Massacre," appeared in the spring 2003 paper issue of *Spectrum* magazine.

## African Rights Pays Tribute to Carl Wilkens

BY ALITA BYRD

AFRICAN RIGHTS has published a powerful twenty-eight-page tribute to the courage of Carl Wilkens, the American Adventist Disaster and Relief Agency country director who stayed in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide.



**Above: Carl Wilkens today. Right: Carl Wilkens and his family in Rwanda.**



Although foreign diplomats, missionaries, aid workers, and peacekeepers all fled the horrific killing, Carl Wilkens decided to remain at his post and help wherever he could.

The African Rights tribute is a moving testimony of the lives Wilkens saved. The tribute is even more impressive considering that African Rights, a human rights organization based in London, was one of the primary documenters of the atrocities committed among Adventists in Rwanda.

Right after the genocide, African Rights began gathering testimonies from people all across Rwanda. It published twelve hundred pages of eyewitness testimony, titled *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance*, helping to bring many of the genocide's perpetrators to court. African Rights interviewed many survivors in Mugonero, where Pastor Elizaphan Ntakirutimana was based, and presented damning evidence against him. African Rights strongly condemned the priests and pastors—including Adventists—who professed to be Christians, yet took part in the killings.

Now, as part of its *Tribute to Courage* series, African Rights is using the same techniques used to gather evidence against genocide perpetrators—but this time to honor those who stood up for the lives of others in the face of great personal danger.

The director of African Rights, Rakiya Omaar, wrote an introductory letter in the report addressed to the Adventist community. In it, she said Carl Wilkens was

*the only American, and one of the few foreigners, known to have remained in Rwanda throughout the genocide of the Tutsi minority. During the one hundred days of killings, he repeatedly risked his life to seek out safe havens for those under threat, to transport them to safety, to ward off threats by standing up to the perpetrators and to obtain and deliver much-needed water, food and money to hundreds of people in hiding.*

The introduction to the African Rights tribute reads:

*In the face of genocide, it is easy to focus on why it occurred, how it unfolded, who was responsible for it and how it was allowed to take place. But it is also important and necessary to understand how and why certain individuals rejected the call to violence and indifference, and by doing so, upheld the values which define our common humanity. Their examples arm us with new insights in the fight against genocide and crimes against humanity in the future.*

African Rights says that it had no trouble gathering information for the tribute—everyone who knew Wilkens in Rwanda wanted to talk

about him. The people wanted to honor him, though they said they could never repay him for saving their lives.

Emmanuel Niyidorera said that if "everyone could have done as Carl did," many of his relatives, friends, and colleagues would be alive today. "If he hadn't taken us, we would have perished, as so many others did," Niyidorera says. "The day that I was evacuated, the other Tutsis in my area were killed and thrown into mass graves. I would probably have been among them if it weren't for Carl. If all missionaries had been as firm, and had brought a strong message to stop the killings, I think they could have changed things."

This sentiment was echoed in

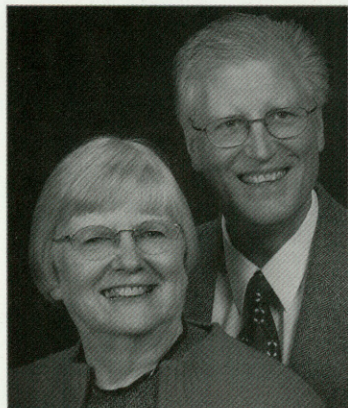
the report by Amiel Gahima: "Carl Wilkens should be recognized nationally as a hero. I've been saying this for more than ten years now. He put his life on the line, committed his own family to God's care, and left the comfort of his home to serve the people of Rwanda at the risk of his own life. He saved so many people, and in so many ways, that the exact number will never be known."

For the past two years, Wilkens has traveled around the United States, sharing his story at schools and universities, raising awareness about the genocide, and fundraising for projects in Rwanda. Now Wilkens works as chaplain at Milo Adventist Academy, in Days Creek, Oregon.

Although no one can ever thank him enough for his brave work in Rwanda, the African Rights tribute brings the story of Wilkens's efforts to a wider audience and provides some acknowledgement for his acts of courage.

The African Rights report concludes: "Like the other men and women who took a stand against the genocide, Carl Wilkens' contribution is a powerful testament to the fact that a single individual can, even under the most daunting circumstances, make a critical difference in the lives of others." ■

All information in this story is taken from the African Rights report, "A True Humanitarian: A Tribute to Carl Wilkens," published December 2006.



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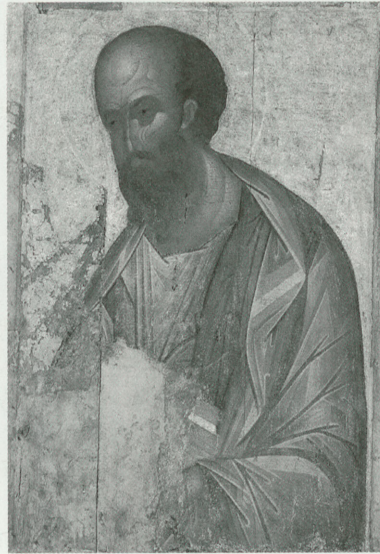
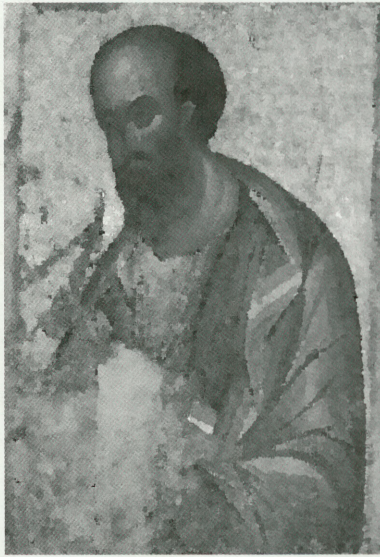
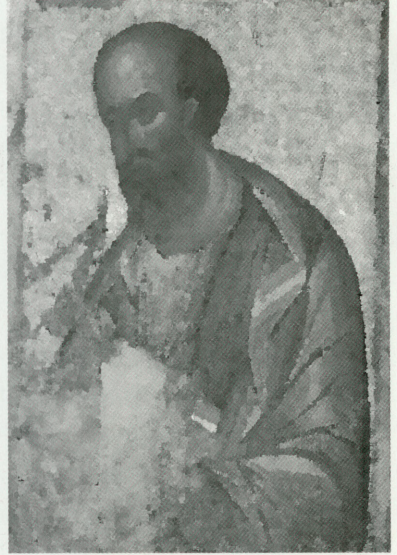
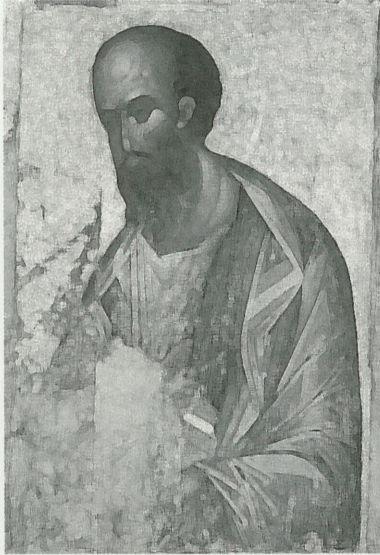
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# BIBBLE



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## Discovering the Multicultural Paul *How My Specific Cultural Experience Affects My Reading of Paul* | INTRODUCTION BY CHARLES SCRIVEN

**E**ach of us inherits a particular form of life, with a particular language, a particular set of conventions, and a particular way of thinking. It turns out, therefore, that each of us looks out on the world through a distinctive pair of lenses. We each see it our own distinctive way, and when we report on what we see, we speak in our own distinctive voice.

To demonstrate how this works, we have asked five people to reflect on how their own experience—their own identity—has affected the way they read Paul. They will all reflect, too, on how they regard this sure impingement of self or of the self's story, on the interpretive process. How might the existence of various perspectives, or prejudices, enrich the Church's conversation about its sacred texts? And what risks go along with it? How, for example, can I keep from being so settled in my own prejudgments that I do not hear the text's summons—to me—to change?

These presentations formed the basis for a lively discussion at the November 2006 meeting of the Adventist Society for Religious Study. They are intended to help you think creatively about how you read Paul, and prompt lively conversations with your friends.

**Can we go  
beyond the  
particulars  
of Scripture  
in order to  
be biblical?**

## Imitatio Pauli

BY JULIUS NAM

### Paradox

Paul, like Jesus, is an enigma. He is both a bull-headed fundamentalist and a sophisticated liberal. And I love him for it. He confounds attempts at classification because he tries to be all things to all people. He understands the yin and the yang and the value of the paradoxical nature of God and the cosmos. In Paul, I am given permission to leave questions hanging, live with the irreconcilable, not serve the idol of consistency and clarity...and still speak boldly about the things I am not fully certain or confident about.

### Mars Hill

I receive permission to engage in my culture in a positive and respectful manner. Culture war is not one that Paul is really interested in fighting. Rather, culture is a resource. So, following the lead of Paul, I am led to look for evidence and expressions of God in my heritage. Paul forces me to look for the gospel, for Christ, in the Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths of Buddha, and the Five Virtues of Confucius. He also challenges me to venture into the dazzling disarray of beliefs, values, and styles represented in MySpace, YouTube, and Google, as well as in ministries as diverse as Amazing Facts, Promise Keepers, Sojourners, and SDA Kinship

For sure, in Paul, there is a clear vision of Christ and there is unimpeded boldness in expressing that vision. At the same time, there is recognition (1) that Christ is and has been active in all cultures and religions throughout history, (2) that he and his vision are only a part of a whole, fulfilling a partial function, and (3) that we all know and prophesy in part, so we must treat one another with faith, hope, and love. He is clearly bold and convicted, but he is also deeply self-aware and humble.

### Creativity

I receive further permission from Paul to use the lessons learned from culture in shaping my theology and providing a contemporary version of the truth. In Paul, I find a wonderfully creative revisioning of the Kingdom of God as taught by Christ, using the resources from his Jewish

and Hellenistic heritage and audience. He is not afraid to redefine, reimagine, and reappropriate Scripture as he knew it, as well as the life and teachings of Jesus.

My sense is that one reason God called Paul for this task is that the disciples who had been with Jesus would forever be captured in the beautiful yet stifling shadow of their time with him. Essentially, Paul was called to take a step beyond Jesus in a way that did not negate Jesus. I'm now urged to go further than Paul in a way that is true to Paul and Jesus. All that was good for Paul and Silas cannot be good enough for me.

So, I ask: Is it possible that we can disagree with the specific conclusions made by Paul in the best of Pauline spirit? Can we go beyond the particulars of Scripture in order to be biblical? Can we reimagine the apocalyptic, following the inspired examples of Daniel, John, and Ellen White?

### Praxis

Which is closer to Paul's heart—the theological articulations or the practical exhortations? I don't know. But what is closer to my heart are the practical, ethical teachings. Some have argued (in fact, a colleague of mine at Loma Linda has "emblazened" in my mind) that the enigmatic yet sublimely beautiful theological discourse in Romans 1–11 was really an elaborate introduction to the practical section that follows in chapters 12–16. In fact, some have even somewhat playfully intimated that the fundraising intent that Paul betrays in chapter 15 was the real purpose of the book!

I'm sure the book had more than one purpose, but it does seem that Romans 12–16 is really the climax of the letter. Or...perhaps this kind of reading is really a function of my pristine Asian mind corrupted by Western dualism. But really, I don't look to Paul as that theological authority that explains the law definitively or that normative standard for orthodoxy on salvation. My reading of Paul leads me to surmise that he would be OK with using a different set of theological reasons to get to the life in the Spirit that is the ultimate desire and passion of his writings.

Along with ancient Asian sages for whom metaphysics takes a backseat to ethics (well, it's this way: ethics is metaphysics), I find that Paul's praxis makes the heart, essence, and totality of his theology.

## Method

Paul's method, for me, is his genius and mark of inspiration—one that I desire to imitate. How he lived the paradoxical nature of life and truth; how he related with Scripture and culture; how he revised Christ and the

gospel; and how, in the midst of it all, he captured the essence of the gospel as a living, breathing, pulsating life of love.

**Julius Nam** is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Religion at Loma Linda University.

## Cultural Identity and Pauline Interpretation

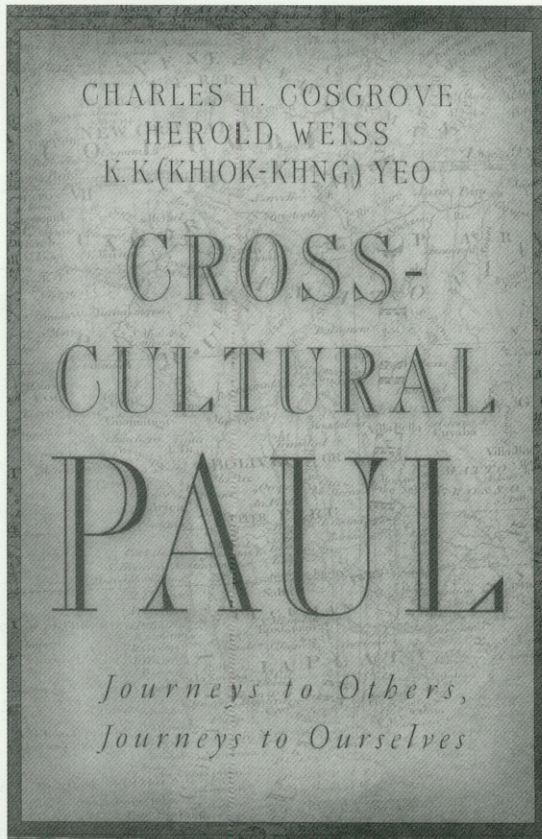
BY HEROLD WEISS

**A**s a *rioplatense* of German ancestry, a Latino who received his higher education and pursued a career in the educational system of the United States, I am a double hybrid whose identity is somewhat ambiguous. The ambiguity of my hybridity has increased because I am a Seventh-day Adventist who grew up in a predominantly Catholic culture and felt comfortable and fulfilled his academic dreams in a Catholic institution.

Reading Paul, "I ask him questions from within different locations. As a student of Paul, I ask, Who was Paul writing to? What were his recipients concerned with? Why was he writing to them? How would his readers have understood what he wrote?"

As a *rioplatense*, I ask, "Which Pauline themes are also central to my Latin culture? What would Paul say to my compatriots and me about our submission to Fate, our constant preoccupation to outwit each other and the laws of the land, our love-hate relationship with death, and our authoritarian and hierarchical social structures?" As a Seventh-day Adventist, I ask, "What does Paul mean by salvation? How does he view himself in God's world? What does he consider to be the purpose of life on earth? What is his moral compass?"

Of course, I never ask all these questions at the same time. At different times, I am particularly concerned with one of these sets of questions. In reference to the second and third sets, however, I can only address them after I have more or less answered the first. Then, I have to ask two crucial questions: "In what way does what Paul says challenge my cultural and religious views?"



**Does Paul  
reveal  
unnecessary  
burdens in  
my cultural  
and religious  
baggage?**

Does Paul reveal unnecessary burdens in my cultural and religious baggage?" I must also ask, "In what way does what Paul say reflect a blind spot in his own cultural and religious background?"

Placing on the table the cultural locations of both the author and the readers allows us to recognize that there is more than one legitimate interpretation. This does not mean, however, that all interpretations have equal merit. It does mean that one must come up with criteria for their evaluation. I find helpful a set proposed by David Rhoads: literary cogency, historical plausibility, and ethical impact on various contemporary contexts.

In reference to the last point, In what ways may they promote justice, respect, and liberation, and in what ways may they lead to injustice, exploitation, and oppression? I think we would agree that justice, respect, and liberation are biblical standards

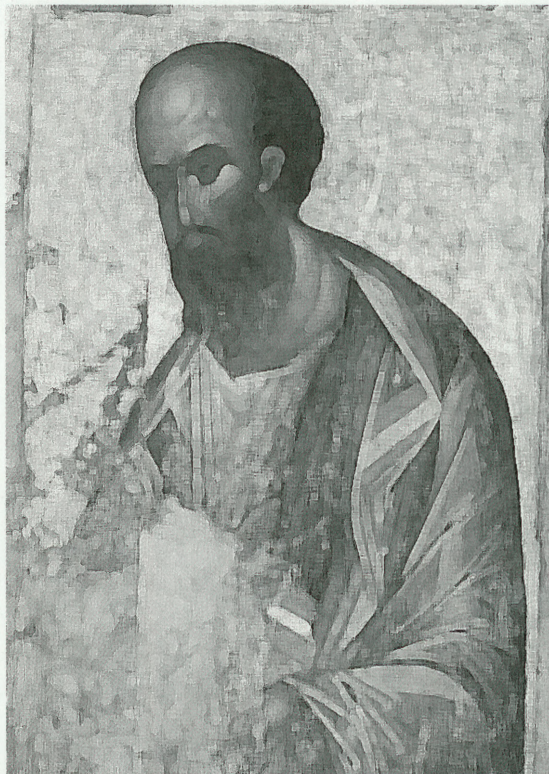
that transcend the cultural limitations of particular biblical authors and readers of the Bible.

**Herold Weiss** is professor emeritus of religious studies at St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana.

## Reading Paul as a White, Male, American Adventist

BY JOHN BRUNT

**When I went to academy, we put away childish things, and stories were replaced by “key texts.”**



I represent a white, American male perspective. Yet the way I read (or didn't read) Paul as I grew up had more to do with a subset of that culture, my Adventist subculture. Where I grew up—in Glendale, California, in the 1950s—there was no racial or ethnic diversity. My world was divided into two basic groups: Adventists and non-Adventists. I played with non-Adventist children in my neighborhood after school, but I knew they were different. They went to movies, ate meat, and went to football games on Friday night at the public high school down the street. During those games, I could hear the shouts when touchdowns were scored, and I can remember feeling guilty for

wondering which team scored them.

The Bible was central to us, but the way it was used meant that I did not read Paul. During the years from Cradle Roll to junior academy, the Bible was a source of stories—exciting stories—each with a moral to teach us how we ought to live. My life was shaped by these stories, and I am grateful to the many Sabbath School and elementary teachers (mostly female) who taught them to me. But Paul's letters don't have many stories. Therefore, I learned stories about Paul from the book of Acts, but I can never remember reading Paul. I do remember in the seventh grade memorizing the route of all three of Paul's missionary journeys and his trip to Rome. I could recite Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and so forth, in order, but I had no idea what Galatians or Philippians was all about.

When I went to academy, we put away childish things, and stories were replaced by “key texts.” These texts from the Bible supported Adventist doctrines so that we would be ready always to give an answer for the hope in us. The Bible was seen as one piece. It didn't matter whether the key texts came from Ecclesiastes (“the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing”) or Revelation (“the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”), they provided us with the “the truth.”

Quite a few of these texts came from Paul. The most important was Romans 3:31 (“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”) We also learned texts about the Second Coming from 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15.

But we didn't "read Paul," and I still had no idea what Galatians or Philippians was all about.

Finally, when I went to college, I did "read Paul" for the first time, with great tutors such as Royal Sage, Walter Specht, and Fritz Guy. My Adventist background clearly shaped this reading. I had wonderful, loving Adventist parents and I never felt oppressed by my Adventism. But there was enough legalism in the package that I felt liberated by Paul's emphasis on grace. It had an existential impact that can only come to one who has known enough of legalism to feel the liberating message of grace.

Later, in graduate school, I learned more about Roman civilization and come to see political dimensions in Paul's message that had previously escaped me, and I would read Stendahl and recognize that my understanding of Paul had been read through the individualistic eyes of a Westerner.

I learned about Paul's more communal society and saw the social dimensions of Paul's message.

It was in doing premarital counseling for a couple where she was a white American and he was a Samoan, however, that I first realized how different American individualism is from a more communal culture. Yet even though Paul both lived in and was shaped by a different kind of culture, he offered critique of it as well.

Finally, I have to admit that even my assessment of how my culture has affected my reading of Paul comes from within my culture and is, at least in part, influenced by it. Therefore, I look forward to learning how others from other cultures might critique even this assessment.

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**John Brunt** pastors the Azure Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church, in Grand Terrace, California.

## Reading Paul in Community with Others

BY KENDRA HALOVIK

I realize, as this panel's woman, I should probably immediately jump into my problems with the Pauline tradition's assumptions about my gender. However, when I first encountered Paul, I was far more conscious of my identity as a "righteousness-by-faith" Seventh-day Adventist than my identity as a woman. This consciousness grew in the aftermath of Glacier View, when, as an earliteen, I began reading the works of Paul. I really thought I had solved my denomination's theological crisis when I came upon Galatians 2:21: "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing." What could be more clear? We could stop fighting! Desmond Ford could be reinstated.

In those days, I imaged Paul as much like Ford—proclaiming the good news, putting the law in its rightful place, challenging all who wished to add something to the sufficiency of God. Given the amazing grace of God, I was hopeful. Our church could repent, start over, celebrate salvation by grace alone. My identity as a "righteousness-by-faith" Adventist during a particular time and place (the 1980s; Takoma Park, Maryland) shaped my theological thinking for a long time. Paul's writings, especially Romans and Galatians, made up my canon-within-the-canon.

A decade later, I went to graduate school and met people who hated Paul. Not because they were legalistic, law-loving Adventists, but because they were feminists. I was shocked to learn that Paul was a misogynist. But I was even more disturbed by challenges to my assumptions about Paul's soteriology. Some of my peers hated Paul because of the substitutionary atonement theology accredited to him. I heard one graduate student proclaim: "Oh, that's great news—God will kill one child in place of others. What an act of compassion and grace. No thanks." Although I felt I should be wrestling with the gender issues, I was actually more concerned with the picture of God reflected in my understanding of salvation by grace through faith.

James Dunn's short work, the *Justice of God*, helped me read the words of Paul without hearing the voice of Desmond Ford. Paul was not an Adventist challenging the legalists. Paul was a Jew for whom God's law was itself a gift to chosen, elect people. Paul's struggle was not the grace of God in contrast with the law, but the grace of God to include those who did not have the law. In other words, Paul's struggle with legalism was a struggle with his theological commitment to election.

Dunn argued that after Paul wrestled with the intersection of old traditions and new experiences, he embraced

the earth-shattering idea that all people (Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female) are elected for salvation. Paul's inclusive soteriology moved me to agree to participate in Sligo Church's ordination service of three women pastors. As I knelt on the platform that Sabbath afternoon in September 1995, I did so convinced that my local church acted in harmony with Ellen White, Jesus, and Paul.

Several years later, after making a presentation to women in ministry serving in the South Pacific Division, I noticed a young woman, a student at Avondale College, sobbing on the back row of the conference room. I sat with her for a while, wondering what was torturing her. When she could speak, I learned that she had recently decided to drop her theology major and ministry plans because of Paul.

Knowing this decision, someone had encouraged her to attend the women in ministry meetings, and now she was in agony all over again—torn between her sense of God's calling of her and the others in the room, and her desire to be faithful to Scripture. We talked for a long time. During part of our conversation, I compared the undisputed letters with the pastorals. I tried to help her hear Paul arguing with the later Pauline tradition.

Currently, I am not sure that was the best approach. Rather than assume that texts will dictate the contemporary course of action on any given issue and then argue which texts will be given such authority (authentic Paul or the pastorals?), we need to learn how to read all the texts as profound and prejudiced, full of insights and blind spots, the record of real people struggling to act in harmony with their emerging theological convictions. It seems to me that Scripture teaches us more about a history of ideas,

a trajectory, a movement in a direction with twists and turns, corrections and clarifications, than it does any particular moment whose ethics get etched in stone.

Some of my students have no problem seeing the human Paul, the real person, who sometimes spoke with extraordinary insight, and other times exhibited weaknesses. At the beginning of this school term, I asked my students in my New Testament survey class to write their reactions to the opportunity of having lunch with Paul. What did they think that would be like?

One student said it sure wouldn't take Paul long to decide what to get from the menu! Another student admired Paul's sense of knowing what God's plan for him was because she longed for that clarity. Several hinted that they would be intimidated, but would, hopefully, have the courage to ask him questions. One student said that, given his ego, would we really have a conversation, or would he "argue his point until I agreed with him?" My students help me think about the nature of Scripture: this remarkable collection of God-inspired, human-created writings we refer to as "the Word of God."

My journey with Paul parallels my journey with all of Scripture. My personal experiences draw me to specific passages with particular questions. My readings in community with others—literary critics, historians, students, and lay people—provide checks and balances, challenges and new possibilities to hear the texts again and again and again.

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**Kendra Haloviak** is assistant professor of New Testament studies at La Sierra University, Riverside, California.

## Not So Hard to Understand

BY KEITH AUGUSTUS BURTON

I wonder how many people are as incensed as I am when they read Ellen White's statement regarding the effect of Noah's curse on successive generations of Ham's sons. These aren't ignorant statements from the pen of the prophet. As a child of nineteenth-century America, she knew exactly how her readers would have interpreted her words. She had probably read Genesis 9:25–27 hundreds of times, yet she still could not break free from the racist interpretive lenses she inherited from her compatriots.

Ellen White is by no means an anomaly. All of us approach the text with spectacles prescribed by experience and culture. Although culturally nuanced readings sometimes amount to autobiographical musings of various social groups, the biases we take to the interpretive process don't always pull us further from the meaning. As is demonstrated by the two-volume project edited by Fernando Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (*Reading from My Place*), there are times when one's social perspective can aid in deciphering the author's intended meaning.

## Passive Acceptance

Had I not been invited to participate in this discussion, I probably would have never reflected on my obvious journey in my encounters with Scripture—particularly with Paul. I was raised in a home where the Bible was a central part of our existence. Bible reading was something the entire family did before breakfast and after supper. We were also encouraged to read individually, and each of us looked forward to the Christmas when we would be rewarded with our own hardback illustrated King James Version by Collins publishers.

I'm not sure if it was in that particular Bible, but I remember being drawn to a couple illustrations that had Black Bible characters. As a young man searching for identity, this was important to me. The scenes they depicted involved the baptism of the Ethiopian government official and the runaway slave, Onesimus, returning to his master Philemon. How else would a slave look? Weren't all slaves Black? My reading of the passages in Paul that dealt with slavery were also noncritical. The truth is, I can't even remember paying attention to them. I lived in a world where race permeated every institution. There were no Black pastors, doctors, lawyers, or teachers. My cousin's father was part owner in a business—but that was a junk shop.

## Active Resistance

In 1974, my parents sent me to Jamaica for my six-week summer vacation. This was my reward for progressing so well with my piano lessons. That trip changed my life—forever. I had never been in a Black world before. All of a sudden, I became aware of who I was. I returned to England a different person.

The classical music that had afforded me the opportunity to be selected from among ten siblings to make the precious trip was now detestable to me. I was through with Beethoven, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky, and I became mesmerized with the rhythms of Bunny, Bob, and Toots. Reggae was my thing, and the writings of Paul were anything but attractive. I didn't want to hear "Slaves

be submissive," it was time for me to "Get up, stand up, stand up for my rights." I didn't want to hear about the "treasure in earthen vessels." I was "a true born African awaiting repatriation."

## Informed Acceptance

Years later, some supernatural events led me to respond to God's call on my life. Even after entering the academic path to ministry, I pur-



**Even after entering the academic path to ministry, I purposed to stay away from certain Pauline passages.**

posed to stay away from certain Pauline passages. I didn't mind the mandates in Ephesians 5, but I had no reason to go to chapter 6. I'm not sure what happened, but all of a sudden I found myself strangely drawn to Paul the person. Actually, I do know what happened, it was the love that my mentor, James H. Melançon, had for Paul. Just like the "Ole Time Religion," if Paul was good enough for Elder Melançon, he had to be good enough for me.

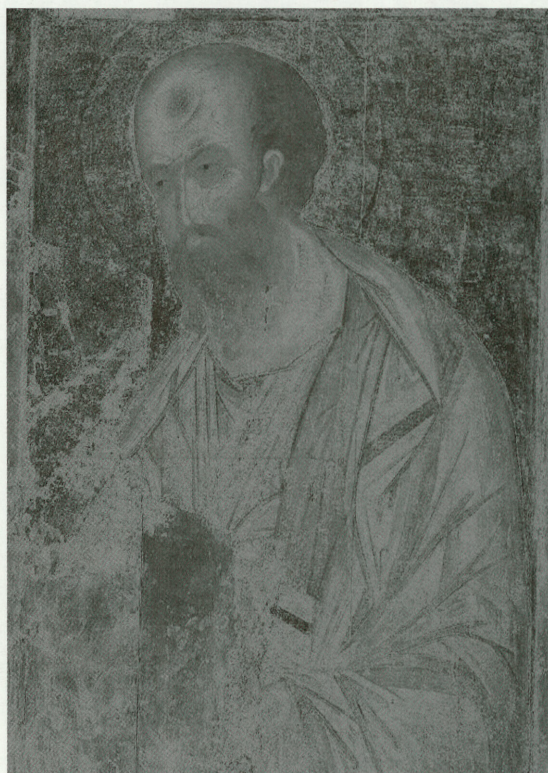
Fully aware of my cognitive dysfunction, I sought to vindicate the Apostle to the Nations from the manipulative grip of those fashioned under the Pauline Mandate. At first, I stayed safe by dealing with his mystical dogma on salvation.

**After seeing Paul's admonition to slaves in its social context, I was led to take another look at his conversation with Philemon about Onesimus.**

That gave me plenty to shout about in my sermons. The "treasure in earthen vessels" was no longer about an escapist's pie in the sky, but the concrete faith that buoyed my ancestors.

The more I studied about Paul, the more I grew to admire the man. He was not an establishment clone, he was a radical subversive who was at odds with the system. At times he got "in the face" of the hypocrites, as in Antioch with Peter. At other times, he exercised diplomacy, as with the opponents in Romans (Rom. 14:1–15:13).

My admiration for Paul even crept into my master's thesis, which focused on the social world behind the church in 1 Peter, but it gave me an opportunity to reexamine the *baustafel* in Colossians and Ephesians. I quickly discovered that when compared to similar statements in



Aristotle and other Greco-Roman codes, Paul's version was unassumingly liberating. When he addressed the economic slavery on which the empire was built, he not only addressed the slaves, but also broke social convention by instructing the masters on how to treat the

slaves and even reminded them that they, too, were slaves (Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1).

After seeing Paul's admonition to slaves in its social context, I was led to take another look at his conversation with Philemon about Onesimus. With new lenses, I was able to see that Paul really intended for Onesimus to emancipate the runaway slave (Philem. 13–14), who—according to law—should have been sentenced to death. By evaluating Paul in his social setting, I had no problem seeing what Paul was "really" saying to slaves in 1 Corinthians 7:21: "If you have a chance to get free—go for it!"

### **Conclusion**

Paul's rhetoric resonated with my reason, and I chose freedom over bondage. Not just freedom from the reign of sin in my life, but freedom from an oppressive interpretation of Scripture. Paul is not a misogynous bigot who is insensitive to the rights of women; he is a prophetic voice who calls husbands to love and pamper their wives (Eph. 5:25–29). Paul is not a card-carrying comrade of the Ku Klux Klan who burns crosses on church lawns; he is a promoter of ethnic unity who recognizes the common humanity of all ethnic groups (Gal. 3:28–29). Paul is not a rigid traditionalist who sees everything in black and white; he is a sensitive human who understands that the faith of each individual is between that person and God (Rom. 14:22).

There are still some things in Paul's writings that are difficult to understand, but I'm so glad that Paul himself—the one who looked like an Egyptian—is not beyond understanding. ■

Evangelist and theologian **Keith Augustus Burton** is president of Life Heritage Ministries, which is based in Alabama.

### **For further reading**

Charles H. Cosgrove, Herold Weiss, and K. K. Yao, *Cross-Cultural Paul: Journey to Others, Journey to Ourselves* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005).





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"PSYCHOLOGY TODAY" BY JOHN HOYT

# Cybersex, Solipsism, and Paul's Notion of the Body

BY GRENVILLE KENT

I found him whom my soul loveth:

I held him, and would not let him go

—*the woman, Song of Solomon, 3:4*

If God is dead, somebody is going to have to take His place.

It will be megalomania or erotomania,

the drive for power or the drive for pleasure,

the clenched fist or the phallus,

Hitler or Hugh Hefner.

—*Malcolm Muggeridge*

**W**ho would want to have sex with a computer? A lot of people, it seems. Cybersex is defined as sexual activity with a real or computer-simulated person or persons. It takes place in visual, auditory, and tactile stimuli of virtual reality.

Fiction offers examples of sexy computers—the Stepford wife, the cyborg escort in Spielberg's *AI*, the “fembot” of *Austen Powers*, *Bicentennial Man* (though never the *Terminator*). Sex with computers is dictionary-defined online before the technology really exists, and is “widely recognised in the VR community as a ha ha only serious projection of things to come.”<sup>1</sup> One 1992 magazine cover showed a man and woman with virtual reality (VR) helmets, sensor gloves, and gendered genital interfaces, the woman with mechanical hands over her breasts. Yet more than a decade later, that vision is still not technologically possible, limited by software and the hardware of body interfaces.

Currently, however, technology has made these advances:

- *Wired* magazine reports that a female vibrator

can have its force and rate of thrust controlled by a male vibrator via the Internet.<sup>2</sup>

- Realdoll, a multimillion-dollar California corporation, sells silicone “love-dolls” in various body shapes, shavings, and ethnicities, and as gendered females, males, and shemales, shipped to your home in coffin-sized boxes for sixty-five hundred to twenty thousand dollars. These dolls can be hired in Japan, and are reportedly taking business away from live call girls.<sup>3</sup> Owners, says an industry spokesperson, are typically men “who don’t have intimacy in their lives,” but that “doesn’t mean they’re not searching for it.”<sup>4</sup> Realdolls are passive, though the company hopes to offer animatronic dolls in the future.
- Sydney scientist Dominic Choy has patented a life-sized sex doll controlled by a computer as well as its own sound and touch sensors. Users put on a coordinated VR headset to imagine they’re in bed with anyone they choose. News reports say the doll will be “essentially passive” but “certain key body parts would be motor driven.”<sup>5</sup> This is not yet on the market.
- Web sites like RedLightCenter.com offer adult chat in virtual bars, parties, and so forth. Users simply construct an avatar, a “digital person” or “3-D representation of yourself,” that interacts with other avatars and objects in a virtual world. Avatars allow users to “be whoever you want to be” and “live your fantasy” by creating their own profiles of gender, age, and sexual preference, and stating their desired outcomes: “a virtual relationship,” “erotic chat,” “social encounters,” “cyber sex,” “just checking it out,” or “cyber friendships.”<sup>6</sup> Avatars can be acces-

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sorized with a range of hair types, eye color, clothes, and so forth. Avatars are controlled by keyboard commands—the up arrow means walk forward, right arrow means look right, space bar means jump. Upon meeting another avatar, a right click yields a menu of options like: see their profile, make friends, ignore (which renders them invisible to you), or “invite for sex,” which usually means simply watching the avatars. The graphics and promised interactivity are reportedly about as convincing as Playstation, and, I’m told, make you wonder if you’re a man or just a mouse. The site plans to introduce Voice Over IP to allow real users to talk, and potentially allows the use of Internet-mediated vibrators as described above.

- There are more than three hundred sex-themed computer games, but, again, the interactivity is in its infancy and uses nothing like the full sexual potential of the human body. Indeed, Martian archaeologists encountering current cybersex machines may conclude that the human body consisted of one eye and one hand and, in some cases, simple genitalia.

Pop culture reflects a demand for cybersex technologies. One online chat room participant gushed: “I’d never leave my apartment... I’d vote for Bill Gates for president. Think of the money that could be made.” The cartoon Dogbert is more cynical: “I can predict the future by assuming that money and male hormones are the driving forces for new technology. Therefore, when virtual reality gets cheaper than dating, society is doomed.”

History suggests that today’s sci-fi fantasy may be tomorrow’s mass-market technology. Ray Kurzweil, artificial intelligence guru, futurist, entrepreneur, and recipient of an MIT Inventor of the Year Award and eight honorary doctorates, predicted in 1999 the advent of VR sex with full auditory and visual realism by 2009, though without realistic touch, “admittedly an important limitation.”<sup>7</sup>

Kurzweil foresees that full touch will take another ten years, at which point virtual sex will offer “the all-enveloping, highly realistic, visual-auditory-tactile virtual environment,” and will become “a viable competitor to the real thing,” safer and eventually even “better in some ways,” providing physical “sensations that are more intense and pleasurable than conventional sex, as well as physical experiences that currently do not exist.”<sup>8</sup>

Kurzweil prophesies that virtual sex will be safer,

without possible disease or pregnancy, and that rape will be unknown, as users could log off.<sup>9</sup> Sex workers will be replaced by machines, and group sex participants will experience the same sensations. He wonders what all this will do to marriage and commitment: “the definition of a monogamous relationship will become far less clear,” and the technology “will introduce an array of slippery slopes.” Yet he promises romance: “Stroll with your lover along a virtual Champs Elysees.”<sup>10</sup>

As a Christian, I would like to know: (1) Will this be possible? (2) Will it be good (in a moral and experiential sense)?

## 1. Will It Be Possible?

At base, the question is: Can humans be replicated and even improved upon?

In his essay, “The Evolution of Mind in the Twenty-First Century,” Kurzweil quantifies human brain-power—twenty million billion calculations per second—and extrapolates growth rates in computer processing speed. By 2019, he believes a thousand-dollar computer will match the human brain; by 2029, a thousand human brains.<sup>11</sup> Kurzweil also calls this “evolution by other means,” “faster than DNA-based evolution,” with its “blind” or “mindless watchmaker,” because silicon-based consciousness will be created by humans, a “mindful watchmaker.”<sup>12</sup> (He gives no account of how humans got mind from a material universe.)

Kurzweil speaks of copying the “design” of the human brain, which took “its original designer several billion years to develop.”<sup>13</sup> He claims “the purpose of life—and of our lives—is to evolve, so we must be careful to guide evolution well.”<sup>14</sup> Notice he posits design, purpose, and morality—all without reference to God, a philosophical feat akin to building a skyscraper on air.

Other essays in the fascinating book, *Are We Spiritual Machines?* offer solid responses, though we lack space here for more than a simple summary.

- Mind philosopher John Searle questions whether computers really think at all or merely process.
- Geneticist Michael Denton argues that machines are not fully analogous to humans: there is “elusive, subtle, irreducible ‘vital’ difference... between the two categories of the ‘organic’ and the ‘mechanical,’ and... these properties, human intelligence and human nature, may never be

replicated.<sup>15</sup> He uses concepts of irreducible complexity.

- Mathematician and philosopher William Dembski argues that humans are not machines, and are more than merely machine-like. He reminds us that neuroscience has come up with no explanation of how consciousness arose from mere matter: "the mind-body problem," that is, no materialist model or causality for consciousness. For him, even Cartesian dualism, splitting matter from mind, is unsatisfactory because it views matter as primary and law governed.<sup>16</sup>

On these grounds, one may well question whether machines made after our likeness will ever equal or surpass us in anything but narrow functionalities. If they ever did surpass us, would humans continue to exist or would we become evolution's discards, useless as Cro-Magnon man? Would we be pets? In *Terminator II*, the machines kill humans. In *The Matrix*, they use us as batteries.<sup>17</sup>

## 2. Would Full Cybersex Be Good?

Cybersex will probably be popular and extremely profitable. For some benchmark, pornography in print and on screen may utilize only one or two of the five senses, but it still earns some fifty-seven billion dollars per annum, more than Hollywood or all professional sports combined.<sup>18</sup> This despite Christian and other critiques of its effects.

Users may admit that it is not better than loving sex, but would claim it is better than nothing. Cybersex looks likely to involve more senses, and to outrate other media. Yet critiques of cybersex already seem apparent:

### Sensual Critique

Computer scientist Sherry Epley objects based on the senses. Epley says she is surprised how often men at VR conferences ask how soon they can have sex with a computer: "I'm not at all afraid that a machine will replace me, I'm

just amazed that some men want so little out of sex." Epley says, "I want it all"—sight, sound, smell, touch and taste.<sup>19</sup> (One could ask whether that is all.)

Sight and sound are easy, thanks to 3-D games, and the French perfume industry has designed an electronic nose, but touch is extremely difficult because "it includes our perceptions of temperature, weight, resistance, texture and motion," and "we are years away from even the most rudimentary experiments on the delicate sense of touch required for sexual pleasure." Epley does not think machine sex will ever provide the sensory stimulation another human body can.<sup>20</sup>

If she is right, theistic arguments from design could well be constructed at this point. Evidence for God based on sexual pleasure may be a marketable argument.

Even if a machine could produce better sensory stimuli, Epley doubts whether users of virtual sex will find that the earth moves for them. Why? Because "everything is pre-programmed," and it would fall as flat as trying to tickle yourself.<sup>21</sup>

### Solipsism Critique

Linda Williams's monograph, *Hardcore*, is upbeat about future virtual sex, but raises issues that may in fact doom it: "if true interactivity is to be defined as communication with the difference and unpredictability of an 'other' (as opposed to interacting with the sameness of oneself), the interaction with this female 'piece of a[...] in a software package' would seem to be the height of solipsism."<sup>22</sup>

Solipsism is "in philosophy, the view or theory that only the self really exists or can be known. Now also, isolation, self-centredness, selfishness."<sup>23</sup> The philosophical base is René Descartes. Simply put, I think and feel, therefore I am a subject, but I'm not sure you exist as more than an object. So technology built on Cartesian dualism may inevitably lead to solipsism, just as a culture that so emphasizes individual experience may lose the "other," and thus worsen its own loneliness.<sup>24</sup>

**Evidence**

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Williams writes: "Where a real sex partner might surprise you, the woman on the screen has no independent agency. The paradox of these interactive games would seem to be that the greater the simulation of the agency of the 'other,' the more the real sense of the other is missing."<sup>25</sup> Humans have independent agency, the free will, which, for all it has cost the human race and God, may be part of the image of God in us. Can a machine have subjectivity? Can mind emerge from mere matter, consciousness from material?

Perhaps the logical end of materialism is the sexbot—a thing with some of the traits of a person, but none of its free choice to be accommodated by "my" selfishness. Technology may be more controllable (for some), but it allows a flight from true intimacy. It allows, in Martin Buber's terms, an I-It relationship and may preclude an I-Thou connection.

Part of intimacy is respect for the subjectivity, selfhood, and desires of the other. As Elizabeth Huwiler has shown, the ideal love poetry of the Song of Solomon "presents a view of male-female sexuality which is neither exploitive nor hierarchic. Both the man and the woman act on their own initiative as well as in response to each other."<sup>26</sup>

If technology can be controlled, can it allow this?

### The Individual Self-Critique

Hugh Hefner has written of cybersex: "She creates a character, who climbs into a hot tub and performs outrageous acts on your noncorporeal body. Is she a she? Does it matter? Concepts of male and female are so old-fashioned, so analog. On the Internet everyone is beautiful."<sup>27</sup>

Media reports credit cybersex with ultimate "electronic liberation"—sex free from one's race, class, gender, name, and body.<sup>28</sup> So one cannot say that cybersex is playing with yourself—in fact it's playing without yourself. Sociologist Sherry Turckle has written: "The Internet has become a significant social laboratory for experimenting with the constructions and reconstructions of self that characterize postmodern life."<sup>29</sup>

But such slippery constructions of self make relationships problematic. Being unselfed, how can one know oneself or be true to oneself? And how can one know or be true to another? How can a multiphrenic self be intimate or make a commitment? Surely love (and making love) must involve some form of knowing, even as we are known (1 Cor. 13:12).

### Wholism Critique

Will cyberspace utilize the full potential of the human body, or just the brain?

One therapist has written: "Mind and body are not separate phenomena, one being somehow spirit and the other matter. Mind and body are both aspects of one information system. Biology is a process of information transduction. Mind and body are two ways of conceptualizing this single information system."<sup>30</sup>

Yet cyberspace itself remains inherently dualistic. Science writer Margaret Wertheim calls it "a repackaging of the old idea of Heaven but in a secular, technologically sanctioned format."<sup>31</sup> It is a Platonic heaven where disembodied data flows freely, unlimited by the flesh; an ideal world beyond the physical, yet undeniably real; a virtual paradise for the questionably virtuous, a place where secular immaterial souls can pass without judgment.

Robotics whiz Hans Moravec of the prestigious Carnegie Mellon University predicts the possibility of uploading entire human minds into computers to live on in a meatless heaven forever (backed up against system failure).<sup>32</sup> This drive to transcend the body is dualistic. Art theorist Simon Penny argues that "the philosophical tradition around which the computer is built inherently affirms the Cartesian duality," and that distinctions between software and hardware, and between data and substrate, are dualistic.<sup>33</sup>

What role can the body have in this vision? Cyberpunk novelist William Gibson derides the body as "meat" and privileges the online mind over body, yet Gibson nonetheless credits the flesh with its ways of knowing.

In *Neuromancer* he describes a sexual encounter in these terms: "It was a vast thing, beyond knowing, a sea of information coded in spiral and pheromone, infinite intricacy that only the body, in its strong blind way, could ever read...and then he was in her, effecting the transmission of the old message."<sup>34</sup>

Kurzweil also recognizes that the body is important, that much of human thought is directed toward the body's survival and pleasure, and that

*some philosophers maintain that achieving human level intelligence is impossible without a body. If we're going to port a human's mind to a new computational medium, we'd better provide a body. A disembodied mind will quickly get depressed. There are a variety of bodies that we will provide for our machines, and that they will provide for themselves: bodies built through nanotechnology...vir-*

tual bodies (that exist only in virtual reality), bodies comprised by swarms of nanobots.<sup>35</sup>

This, too, is dualism, positing a mind/self that is ontologically and practically separate from a body, capable of taking a body or bodies at its choosing, but not limited to the body.

Yet dualism has been challenged recently. Traditional understandings of the human person could be broadly classified along a continuum between the following two extremes:

- Reductive materialism, which claims that all human experience, including the rational, emotional, and religious, can be reduced to chemistry and physics. It leaves little space for any theology.
- Radical dualism, in which the mind/soul is practically and ontologically separate from the body, and the person is the soul, not the body.

Dualism is the traditional Christian view, but it is increasingly difficult to match with biblical studies and systematic theology. Hence, other views have attracted recent attention from Christians, intermediate views that are less materialist and/or less dualistic.

- Wholistic dualism, in which mind/soul and body are ontologically separate but functionally a unity, being interactive and in causal relations and functional dependencies.
- Trichotomism, which posits body, soul, and spirit as separate entities.
- Monism, which describes the persona as just one entity, with a soul or spirit that is, however, part of the whole. Monism recognizes that the experiences traditionally explained by a soul cannot be explained by a brain alone, and demonstrate other parts or aspects of a person. Various types of monism include: Nancey Murphy's nonreductive physicalism, Kevin Corcoran's constitution view, and John B. Wong's Christian wholism.<sup>36</sup>

Recent experimental findings in the neurosciences are demonstrating connections between the thoughts and emotions and the functions and structures of the physical brain, suggesting that human experience can be accounted for without recourse to a nonmaterial soul.<sup>37</sup> "As a whole, those neuroscientists who are Christians champion the notion of psychosomatic unity... though they are careful to avoid the reduction of mental states or spiritual awareness, for example, to neuronal interaction."<sup>38</sup>

Meanwhile, recent shifts in the disciplines of biblical studies and theology have moved away from traditional dualism (or, in some cases, Old Testament monism and New Testament dualism) toward "anthropological monism."<sup>39</sup> Christian philosopher Nancey Murphy concludes that "the dualism that has appeared to be biblical teaching has been a result of poor translations"; that most Christians have been dualists largely because of cultural influences; and that nonreductive physicalist anthropology would be a useful corrective to Christian systematic theology.<sup>40</sup>

Cognitive scientists researching the new area of "embodiment" are finding that body and mind are not as separate as once thought. For example, some violinists' hands have been shown to move too fast for nerve signals to travel to the brain and back, so the hand seems to be using its own intelligence. "German psychologists have observed that children who cannot walk backwards cannot subtract," and those who cannot balance have not had the bodily experience of the equals sign, suggesting that even abstract mental concepts may have their basis in bodily experience.<sup>41</sup>

Embodiment attempts to retheorize the separation "of the mind and body and the hierarchical ordering of mind over body" that have dominated Western thought since Plato, and through Augustine, Descartes, and Kant.<sup>42</sup> Of course, this is hotly debated, but embodiment seems to be pointing in the direction of some form of monism or wholism.<sup>43</sup>

If human feelings and thoughts are embodied in such complex ways, can human love and sex be anything but embodied? Can sex and love be

**Perhaps the  
logical end of  
materialism  
is the sexbot  
—a thing with  
some of the  
traits of  
a person, but  
none of its free  
choice to be  
accommodated  
by "my"  
selfishness.**

imagined in a nonembodied way? The Genesis tradition describes bodily love with the deceptively simple phrase "to know" (Gen. 4:1).

### **Beginnings of a Biblical Theology Critique**

The Song of Songs praises whole-person love, based on wholistic anthropology. The woman says:

*I found him whom my soul loveth:  
I held him, and would not let him go. (3:4 KJV)*

The King James Version translates *soul*, the Septuagint translated *psyche*, so it is easy to read this through a Platonic lens as two immortal souls in Ideal love. But the Hebrew word *nepesh* knows nothing of that. It means a whole person, a personality, a life, a being, an individual, oneself.<sup>44</sup> It dies, and has physical dimensions, including appetite, desire, hunger, wish, and even throat.<sup>45</sup>

Also, Paul's concept of wholistic love, countering the Platonic imbalance of a previous age, is relevant here. In 1 Corinthians 6:12–20, he quotes a number of Corinthian slogans and contradicts them:

*[You say,] "Food for the stomach, and the stomach for food,"  
and God will do away with both of them.*

The slogan infers that God is interested only in the immortal part of a person, whereas "the body is morally irrelevant" because "sin occurs on a different 'level.'"<sup>46</sup> This is classic dualism, perhaps proto-Gnosticism. And its wrong eschatology (destruction of the soma) causes a wrong ethic (the body's actions don't matter).

Paul counters:

*But the body is not for sexual immorality, it is for the Lord, and  
the Lord for the body.*

According to J. N. Sevenster, an authority on ancient Greek thought, "It is inconceivable that such a statement could come from [a dualist like] Seneca [for example]. For him the soul, the spirit, could glorify the gods," writes Sevenster, "but this is impossible for the contemptible body which always threatens the purity of the spirit."<sup>47</sup>

But Paul does not privilege *psyche* or *pneuma* over *soma*.<sup>48</sup> And this is in the current fallen human body, not yet the "glorious body" of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:38–40; Phil. 3:21).

Next, Paul corrects the wrong eschatology:

*And God resurrected the Lord and will resurrect us by his power.*

Note the logic of the systematic theology here: the resurrection of Christ guarantees the believer's bodily resurrection, and thus highly values the body.<sup>49</sup> The afterlife will include bodies, not just disembodied souls.

*Don't you know that your bodies are parts of Christ's body? So  
would I remove parts of Christ's body and make them parts of the  
body of a prostitute? Never!*

Then Paul references Old Testament theological anthropology:

*Don't you know that person who joins a prostitute in intimacy  
is one flesh (with her)? For "the two, it is said, will be one  
flesh." But the person who joins the Lord in intimacy is one  
spirit (with him).*

Paul uses one word for the relationship both to Christ and harlot (*kollao* = to join, to bond, to glue, to bind indissolubly). This infers that sexuality is not just a bodily matter but a whole-person (including spiritual) matter. He also dramatically offers the choice, "To whom will you join yourself?"<sup>50</sup> The Greek word *kollao* is used in the Septuagint for Solomon's joining to unbelieving women who turn his heart to other gods (1 Kings 11:2).

*Run from sexual immorality!*

Then another slogan is quoted:

*[You say,] "Every sin a person may commit is outside the body."*

And Paul counters:

*But the person who sins sexually sins against their own body!  
Or don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy  
Spirit, who lives in you,...*

For Paul, the body is not the prison of Platonic thought, but a shrine.<sup>51</sup> Rosner writes, "Paul could be saying 'don't go to the temple (to use prostitutes), you are the temple!'"<sup>52</sup>



...whom you received from God...

Paul never misses a chance to emphasize that all aspects of salvation are by God's gracious gift, especially when he writes of our duty in response.

...and you do not belong to yourselves? You were purchased at great cost.

Clearly the cross—grace—is anything but cheap. This clearly refers to Christ's sacrificial death on a cross, a bodily act that glorified God (John 21:19).

So reveal God's glory in your body.

Gordon Fee writes: "in most Western churches, where sexual mores have blatantly moved toward pagan standards, the doctrine of the sanctity of the body needs to be heard anew within the church... Those who take Scripture seriously," he continues, "are not pruders or legalists at this point; rather they recognize that God purchased us for higher things."<sup>53</sup>

This passage does anything but devalue sex. It recognizes the psycho-somato-spiritual bonding inherent in sex between two whole people. Fee calls this "one of the most important theological passages in the N[ew] T[estament] about the human body. It should forever lay to rest the implicit dualism of so much that has been passed off as Christian."<sup>54</sup>

Clear wholistic anthropology is important to Christian systematics, as Adventists have begun to see in connection with the state of the dead (with its implications for hell and God's character, and for spiritualism); with bodily health as part of gospel restoration; and with eschatology and more. Yet wholism affects our doctrine of sex also, and it is important that Christians be taught this important aspect of discipleship as part of balanced biblical preaching. Should Platonic or Victorian self-censorship stop Adventists from teaching all the counsel of God (Acts 20:27) about sexuality, or should we discuss it frankly and respectfully, as the Bible does, as part of balanced preaching and teaching?

### Where from Here?

Christians should respond to new porn technologies not with knee-jerk judgmental outrage, but with fine moral reasoning from social effects and from scriptural principles of what it means to be human and to love. Some churches

may define virtual monogamy as not using avatars of anyone but one's spouse and encourage computer-mediated sex between a married couple if one spouse is away or physically injured (Matt. 5:28). Others may proscribe all online sex because it has no chance of procreating.

Beyond ethical questions, Christians should take this opportunity to have a conversation about human nature and origins. The Church should seize this opportunity to make a reasoned case for its view of human purpose that underlies ethics, persuading with gentleness and respect (1 Pet. 3:15). We may even point people toward the experience of whole-person love and the grace and truth of a Creator who was made flesh. ■

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## The Transfigured Paul | BY ROY BRANSON

**M**y first memory of Paul goes back to Damascus. As part of an Adventist missionary's family, I was shown, with great confidence, the very window in the city wall from which Paul was lowered in a basket to escape his pursuers

Since that trip to Damascus, I have met many Pauls—and so have you. Probably the most familiar Paul is the advocate of righteousness by faith, not works—the Paul of Luther who has brought the comfort of forgiveness, justification, and grace to millions. This Reformation Paul has been important in the Adventist Church since at least 1888. More recently, this Paul has driven the teaching of Edward Heppenstall and Desmond Ford, and enriched the ministry of hundreds of pastors.

In the 1960s, another Paul appeared in the halls of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. James Cox, head of the New Testament Department, had studied with Krister Stendhal, the Swedish Lutheran who headed Harvard's New Testament Department and subsequently became the dean of Harvard Divinity School. After World War II and the Holocaust, Stendhal found a Paul who focused on Jewish-Gentile relations. Paul's disputations were not over doctrine, Stendhal insisted. Paul was arguing for toleration of ethnic diversity.

I remember team teaching Andrews University Sabbath School classes with James Cox. Repeatedly, he would say what Stendhal was convincingly telling a generation of New Testament scholars and pastors: The important parts of Pauline epistles were those neglected sections at the end, full of concrete, pastoral admonitions, particularly how Jews and Gentiles could live together in the emerging Christian congregations.

A century and a half after 1844, Adventists bury relatives and friends, still weep until the day-dawn, still endure the Great Disappointment of God's hiddenness. We ask how Paul might respond to the question, What today should be the message and mission of Adventism?



**I**N ITS QUEST, nothing could reenergize this apocalyptic Adventist Church more than discovering the transfigured Paul. Paul tells the Corinthian church that he receives "visions and revelations of the Lord" (2 Cor. 12:1); that is, he receives visions as well as apocalypses or unveilings of the risen Lord, what James Dunn has called "a sense of the divine presence of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

However reluctantly, Paul refers to a specific vision when he was caught up fourteen years earlier to the third

heaven; "whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not now—God knows." Indeed, he "was caught up to Paradise," and "heard inexpressible things..." (2 Cor. 12:1).

Murray-Jones and others believe Paul is here putting himself in an ancient visionary, apocalyptic tradition going all the way back to Ezekiel. In his call to the exiled poet, God sweeps Ezekiel up into the divine throne chariot, ascending to the heavenly sanctuary.<sup>2</sup> "Paul", says Griffith-Jones, "is a poet" who rightly sees himself in the grand tradition of other visionary poets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel.<sup>3</sup>

## Ezekiel

**Narrator/Ezekiel:** *In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the river Chebar, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God... As I looked a stormy wind came out of the north: a great cloud with brightness around it and fire flashing forth continually, and in the middle of the fire, something like gleaming amber. In the middle of it was something like four living creatures... over the living creatures there was something like a dome shining crystal, spread above their heads... and there came a voice from above the dome... and there was a splendor all around... there was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.*

*When I saw it I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of someone speaking.*

**The Lord God:** *O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you... Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to the nation of rebels who have rebelled against me... O mortal, eat what is offered to you; eat this scroll and go, speak to the house of Israel... speak my very words to them... say to them, "thus says the Lord God," whether they hear or refuse to hear.*

—from Ezekiel 1 and 2 (NRSV)

As in the calls to Isaiah and Daniel, luminous clouds and smoke envelop Ezekiel, fire flashes, the human bows in awe before the glory of the Lord. Following the dazzling light, a voice calls, a commission is uttered, and the messenger departs from the presence of the Almighty to fulfill a mission given from on high.

Paul, like the great visionary poets of Scripture, is awed by the majesty and beauty of the disclosures or apocalypses granted to him. Paul's "letters," Griffith-Jones, insists, "are not quarries from which we mine a couple of

handy doctrines," but poetry conveying us to realms of worship which prose cannot reach.<sup>4</sup>

Because years of Paul's life were immersed in studying and being in the presence of these visionary poets, Paul understands his mission as also proceeding from the holy of holies, from the divine presence itself. The early church shared in placing great importance on a visionary, apocalyptic authentication of ministry. When Luke-Acts comes to be written, Luke includes not one, but three accounts of the divine presence descending on Saul, transfiguring him into an apostle of the Lord. Before an angry Jerusalem crowd, Paul is shown providing a succinct description of his encounter.

## Paul

**Narrator/Paul:** *About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me,*

**Jesus:** *"Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?"*

**Saul:** *"Who are you, Lord?"*

**Jesus:** *"I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting."*

**Narrator/Paul:** *My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.*

**Paul:** *"What shall I do, Lord?"*

**Jesus:** *"Get up... and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do."*

—Acts 22:6–10 (NIV)

Paul's experience on the road to Damascus is, according to scholars like Michael J. Gorman, the defining experience of his life.<sup>5</sup> As Bruce Chilton puts it, "Paul's vision gave him the theme of his thought and of his life."<sup>6</sup> The account in Acts is in the form of a prophetic call.<sup>7</sup> Paul, like the visionary poets before him, is surprised. He, like Isaiah and Ezekiel and Daniel, understands his experience in the context of the sanctuary, of the temple.

The visionary prophets and Paul are all convinced that the light that has shined on them radiates from the holy of holies, that they have been enveloped in the *Kavod*, the divine presence. Their eyes have seen nothing less than the glory of the Lord.<sup>8</sup> Paul, like his predecessors, prostrates himself before the daunting authority of the Holy.

Steeped in the sanctuary and temple traditions of Isaiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel, Paul knows that in apocalypses, the *eye* of the visionary prophet beholds the glory of the Lord; the *ear* hears the command to act. Out of the blinding bright-

ness before Paul, a voice commands, "Get up and go." Paul hears in the voice of Jesus of Nazareth echoes of the heavenly command to Ezekiel: "Now go up and stand on your feet (compare Ezek. 2:1, 3); he hears reverberations of words delivered to Isaiah: "I am sending you to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light" (compare Isa. 42:7). From beholding the radiance of the Lord, messengers are dispersed—commissioned to dispel the darkness.

## II

DOROTHY LEE, in her recent monograph, *Transfiguration*, suggests that Paul knew something of an account that Jesus himself had experienced an apocalypse, a transfiguration.<sup>9</sup> That account of the transfiguration of Jesus later appears in the very center of Mark and in all of the Synoptic Gospels.

### Christ

**Narrator/Matthew:** *After six days, Jesus took Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus,*

**Peter:** *"Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make here three [tents], one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."*

**Narrator/Matthew:** *While he was still speaking a bright cloud enveloped them, and behold a voice from the cloud said:*

**God:** *"This is my Son whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"*

**Narrator/Matthew:** *When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them.*

**Jesus:** *"Get up.... Don't be afraid."*

—Matt. 17:1–9 (NIV)

Before Jesus proceeds to Jerusalem and his ministry of death and resurrection, he ascends a high mountain and encounters a bright cloud. On the high mountain, his face shines like the sun, his clothes glisten. An unveiling of divine majesty transfigures Jesus, and the glorified Jesus is, in turn, an apocalypse or revelation to the disciples.

The eyes of the disciples can see Jesus as the embodiment of the cloud of glory that enveloped Moses on

Mount Sinai, that swept Elijah to the heavenly realms, that rested in the sanctuary. But when Peter suggests an equality among Moses, Elijah, and Jesus—by proposing to build each of them a sanctuary—the ears of the disciples hear the words of command: "This is my Son... Listen to him!"

Luke depicts the disciples caught up in an experience reminiscent of the visionary prophets. The disciples see the light of God's Glory. They then hear the command to act. Overcome by the divine presence, the disciples prostrate themselves... until they hear Jesus' command, "get up, don't be afraid." The disciples, who have been gathered in worship, and been caught up in the transfiguration of their leader, descend from the mountain with the new Moses, and proceed on their exodus to Jerusalem.

## III

PAUL, STEEPED IN THE imagery of temple worship, possibly aware of an account of Christ's transfiguration, himself recipient of "visions and revelations from the Lord" (I Cor. 12:1), not surprisingly develops what he calls "the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:4). For his Corinthian congregation, Paul compares earlier and later glories. At Sinai, Paul says in his second letter to the church in Corinth, Moses' face reflected his experience of the divine glory. Paul does not disparage Moses. He acknowledges his brightness. But Paul does say there is a greater and permanent glory—the glory that comes from the Lord, the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:10, 18).

At this point, Paul moves directly to the Christian Church—those who have been baptized into the Lord. Who are we? We are all the transfigured ones. Not one skilled mystic here, another spiritual adept there. No, declares Paul, "all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord, as though reflected in a mirror, are being *transfigured* into the same image from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor. 3:18). Being transfigured reminds us that the Christian life is always a response to God. We are attracted to the beauty of the Holy and are formed into a clearer reflection of the divine.<sup>10</sup>

And what are we all to do? Paul answers six verses later in his admonition—his command—to the Corinthians: "Let light shine out of darkness... the light... of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

The transfigured life is life together in the church. The life of transfiguration is a form of worship.<sup>11</sup> The church's mission is to be Christ's radiant sanctuary in the world.

As we have seen, being transfigured in worship does not mean seeking sanctuary from the world. It means our movements in the world start and return to a center of meaning and exaltation; a time and a place alive with the songs of Zion, the music of prayer, the thundering words of the Almighty. We are drawn to the presence of God from which we are sent to wage peace and justice against the powers of darkness, in order that more of creation may be attracted to the pulsating warmth of holiness, and join wisdom in dancing before the Lord.

## IV



IT IS NOT ALWAYS EASY to be transfigured, to reflect the glory of God. The world sometimes darkens. A year ago, I buried my best friend, my brother Bruce. Last November, the best teacher I ever had, and a life-long mentor, died from cancer of the throat. Otilie Stafford, for

whom I was a student worker when she was the chair of the Atlantic Union College English Department, was born into an Adventist worker's home. She pummeled and harried the church she cared about to be more open, more fair, more just in its treatment of its members. She was also a person who turned teaching into worship. In one semester, she forever transformed the Bible for me, from black and white obligations to a multihued delight.

I have read again a testimony to the Adventist Church she wrote and called "The Holiness of Beauty."<sup>12</sup> Today, as on so many other days, she will have the last word. "Imagine a world," she begins, and describes the darkness experienced by the visionary poets of Scripture—and shared by the Ellen White of *Early Writings*.

*Imagine a world where sounds are only noise, never music,  
where the "spontaneous particulars of sound"  
have no ordering effect on a period of time,  
where the journey of the mind and emotions  
that takes place when the listener enters worship can never occur.*

In such a bleak, routinized world, she says:

*The divine command is to restructure our world,  
to "sing a new song,"  
to put something new and fresh into our daily experience,  
to transfigure our experience  
by imagining a restored world of perfect beauty  
and shaping our lives by that vision.*

When she reaches her conclusion, she invites us to:

*"Imagine a world," where language is clear and honest,  
where image and symbol and parable coincide exactly with reality,  
where words do not break down under emotion,  
but are filled with "an Elixir, an excitation, a pure power."  
Imagine a world where song has won a final victory over silence  
and solemnity,  
where music is motion and motion music, and  
both move about a center of serenity and joy.*

That vision, she reminds us, is at once "our lost homeland, our hope for the future, our strong conviction of what should be." And if the church will treasure its poetic, visionary imagination,

*Then perhaps in song and in words,  
in architecture and in music,  
in sculpture and in landscape gardening,  
in liturgy and  
in the words of the preacher,  
the church may, even in this imperfect world,  
join together in that great song of praise to the Creator  
with the morning stars and the other Sons of God.*

## Notes and References

1. James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans: 1998), 401. See also page 25 in Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001): "This brings us to the ultimate meaning of Paul's vision and revelations. Recent study suggests that these may have been more numerous and more significant for Paul than previously thought." On page 36, Gorman points out that since at least Albert Schweitzer in the 1930s, a few students of Paul have insisted with Schweitzer that the doctrine of righteousness by faith is a "subsidiary crater formed within the rim of the main crater, the mystical doctrine of redemption through being-in-Christ" (*The Mysticism of the Apostle Paul* [London: Black: 1931], 225); what E. P. Sanders more recently has called "participation in Christ," (*Paul and Palestinian Judaism* [Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress: 1977], 431–523). I wish to thank John Jones, professor of New Testament at La Sierra University, for recommending Gorman's *Cruciformity* to me.

2. C.R.A. Morray-Jones, "Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1–12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate; Part 2: Paul's Heavenly Ascent and its Significance," *Harvard Theological Review* 86.3 (1993) 266–67; Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 24–25.

3. Robin Griffith-Jones, *The Gospel According to Paul: The Creative Genius Who Brought Jesus to the World* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco: 2004), 3. I wish to thank Elvina Tomenko, a doctoral student at Fuller Theological Seminary, for recommending this very helpful book to me.

4. *Ibid.*, 35.

5. Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 23.

6. Bruce Chilton, *Rabbi Paul: An Intellectual Biography* (New York: Doubleday: 2004), 35.

7. Samuel Terrien, *The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology* (New York: Harper and Row: 1978), 436.

8. Griffith-Jones, *Gospel According to Paul*, 164–66; 504–5.

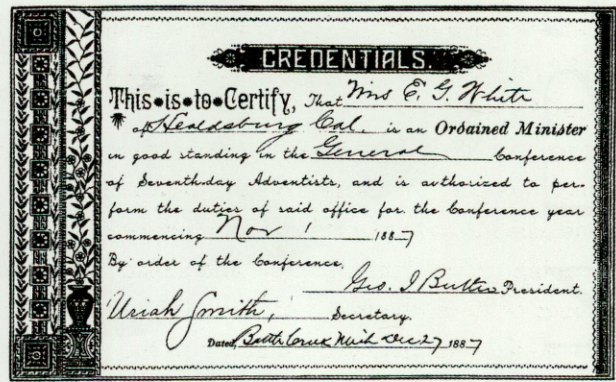
9. Dorothy Lee, *Transfiguration* (New York: Continuum: 2004), 113; Terrien, *Elusive Presence*, 427.

10. Lee, *Transfiguration*, 113. "The verb used here is the same as in Mark and Matthew for Jesus' transfiguration (*metamorphoumetha*, 3:18; Mark 9:2; Matt.17:2)."

11. *Ibid.*, 114–15.

12. Otilie Stafford, "The Holiness of Beauty, or Why Imagination Matters," *Spectrum* 7.4 (April 1976):7–12.

**Roy Branson** is director of the Center for Law & Public Policy at Columbia Union College, and a former editor of *Spectrum*.



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# HEALTH AND FITNESS





# Pork

*Hogmeat revisited* | BY LOREN SEIBOLD

Given that much of Adventist theology is orthodox evangelical theology, why is it that we are so separated from all other Christians, even those whose theological foundations and practices resemble ours? It seems to me that the answer is twofold: food and time. We eat different things from other people, and must constantly declare that; and we do important things (or refuse to do other things) at times different from other people, and must constantly declare that. We don't have discussions with our neighbors over, say, the nature of Christ; it doesn't come up. What we believe is less important than the actions we choose to do or not do. These things mark us as different from others.

One of our most persistently practiced doctrines, and one of the two or three by which we are known to others, has to do with unclean meats. Before I got on the bus for my very first day in first grade of public school, my mother instructed me how to ask the cooks if there was pork in the cafeteria food. It was one of my earliest marks of identity: Loren is the boy who won't eat pork, and I had to ask about it even in front of schoolmates I wanted to impress. I've been left with a strong sense of the identifying power of this belief.

## History

Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 discuss which animals are edible and which are not. In mammals, the two-toed ruminant ungulates (grazing, cud-chewing animals with split hooves) are singled out; among water creatures, those with

scales; among fowl there is no simple distinction, but a list, many of the Hebrew names of which we can't identify.

James and Ellen White initially had little interest in these rules. Ellen White wrote, "If it is the duty of the church to abstain from swine's flesh, God will discover it to more than two or three." James was similarly stubborn: "We do not, by any means, believe that the Bible teaches that its [pork's] proper use, in the gospel dispensation, is sinful."<sup>1</sup>

The founders eventually became interested in the teachings of Victorian health reformers, among whom pork was an unpopular meat. The pig was a scavenger, its meat considered unwholesome. When Ellen White had her first health reform vision, pork was among the things she was shown that make people unhealthy. Soon thereafter, her visions led her to promote an all-vegetarian diet.

Here is a quick summary of the history, as taken from Ron Graybill in an article from the Ellen G. White Estate:<sup>2</sup>

1. When church leaders talked about pork as unhealthful, they did not include the rest of the unclean meats.<sup>3</sup> In the nineteenth century, they never mentioned Leviticus 11 as a biblical diet guideline.
2. All of the food guidelines of the early church leaders appear to be based on health considerations.
3. As far as Ellen White was concerned, she moved from food not being a relevant issue, to pork being unhealthy, to vegetarianism.

**What we believe is less important than the actions we choose to do or not to do.**

Says Graybill, "Mrs. White never explicitly declared that the general distinction between clean and unclean meats was one which Seventh-day Adventists were still bound to observe."

4. The first serious assertion in church writings of the distinction between clean and unclean meats based on Leviticus 11 comes not from Ellen White, but from S. N. Haskell, writing in 1903. "In His infinite plan [God] appointed a part of the animal kingdom to act as scavengers... In order that we might know those which feed upon clean food, He placed a mark or brand upon them." Haskell then quoted Leviticus 11:1-8, and concluded, "The eating of these things which God has forbidden is very grievous in His sight."<sup>4</sup>
5. It wasn't until the Church's 1931 Yearbook that a statement of twenty-two fundamental beliefs was published, and in this statement, the clean-unclean meat distinction was first given officially.

So it is incorrect to say that this is part of historical Adventism. In fact, it is a later development, and less a part of Ellen White's theology than is vegetarianism.

## Biblical Background

In *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, Mary Douglas notes that some of the ancient commentators, like Maimonides, as well as some modern commentators, have tried to ascribe the Torah's dietary laws to God's concern about health and hygiene.<sup>5</sup> But she insists that nowhere in the Hebrew Scriptures are the laws said to be for these practical reasons. According to the Torah,

*You are the children of the Lord your God. Do not cut yourselves or shave the front of your heads for the dead, for you are a people holy to the Lord your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the Lord has chosen you to be his treasured possession. (Deut. 14:1-2)*

*Do not defile yourselves by any of these creatures. Do not make yourselves unclean by means of them or be made unclean by them. I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. (Lev. 11:43-44)*

The rules may have contributed marginally to health, but the reason presented for avoiding some meats is that they insult the Hebrews' distinct identity as God's holy

people. These are sacred categories—not practical ones—to the writers. The evidence for food's role in a sort of sacramental holiness is too clear to suppose that God was saying, "Hey, I just want you guys to stay well." If he wanted them well, why did he send them through a desert, allow polygamy and slavery, and give them the bizarre test for an unfaithful wife? (Num. 5:11-29). No, this body of rules is not practical, but religious.

Jesus, too, does not mention health in connection with the dietary rules. But he appears critical of the Torah's assumption that obedience can create holiness.

*So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with 'unclean' hands?"...*

*Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean.'..."*

*After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. "Are you so dull?" he asked. "Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'? For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.") (Mark 7:5, 14-15, 17-19 NIV)*

The one item in the text that we today might consider healthful and hygienic—washing your hands—Jesus regards with disinterest.<sup>6</sup> He's very clear that outward actions can't create inward holiness. Only spiritual, moral choices can make one good. Food doesn't make one spiritually unclean; to the contrary, verse 19 concludes, "Thus he declared all foods clean."<sup>7</sup>

Jesus does not say that all foods are good for you. It would be silly to suppose that nothing you ingest can hurt you. Health, and even taste, are good reasons for not making dietary choices. The error is supposing your choice of food substitutes for a spiritual heart and godly life.

Paul appears to regard the food laws as Jesus did.

*As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died... For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and*

*drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit...* (Rom. 14:14-15, 17)

Again, health isn't the topic, but the inability of diet to accomplish spiritual work. Paul, like Jesus, opposed those who would say that one's choice of food has any direct spiritual consequences one way or the other. No food is spiritually unclean, says Paul.

Paul makes it clear that there is a point of spiritual value here, however: although you cannot add spiritual value by what you eat, you can subtract it from someone else by what you eat; for if a believer who does have a hang-up about food is hurt by your freedom, then you damage that person's faith, and presumably, your fellowship in the body of Christ. The spiritual significance of food in this passage hasn't to do with obedience to the Torah, but with maintaining good relationships with one another.<sup>8</sup>

### **Practical Implications**

If I asked a group of Adventists what these rules are for, most would answer "health." I would not disagree that eating, say, deep-fried rats may be less healthy than a beefsteak. Yet my experiences with Adventists have convinced me that no matter what we say, health isn't the real reason we eat as we do.

Years ago, I took an evangelism class from a well-known Adventist evangelist. In one class, he taught us how to convince evangelistic interests to give up unclean meats by explaining that God gave his people only the very best food to eat because he wanted them to be healthy. One student asked, "What if someone should have no clean food available?"

"It is unlikely that people would have nothing to eat but pork," the evangelist answered. "God will provide for the faithful. But," he added, "if I were on a desert island and had nothing but a ham, I would starve to death before I would eat it."

I wanted to reply (but didn't), "Wouldn't your death thwart God's plan for your good health?" I don't at all mean to criticize him; he's a good man who has won many to Christ. But he showed that his conformity wasn't about health, but about following the rules under God's judgmental gaze.

Were we only concerned about health, we Adventists would be more consistent across a wider range of issues. In

diet, we would follow Ellen White to full vegetarianism, and the clean-unclean distinction would never come up.<sup>9</sup> Exercise and sleep would be as important in evaluating one's orthodoxy as diet is. Ethically, the clean-unclean meat distinction does not save animals' suffering or conserve the world's food resources.<sup>10</sup> By itself, it doesn't contribute substantially to health. And, according to Jesus, we run a grave spiritual danger of thinking that we are good because of what we eat, rather than by the gift of God's grace through Jesus Christ.

I am convinced that, for Adventists, this is not a matter of health, but of something else entirely.

When Mary Douglas strips away all the other reasons for the Levitical health and purity laws, she comes down to this: life is ambiguous, and human beings find comfort in drawing lines. These rules, for Douglas, are a sort of symbolic boundary maintenance. What we eat marks us as being in a particular group, and those who don't eat as we do are outside of our group. Food, then, becomes a symbolic boundary marker.

I remember my grandmother trying to overhear in the restaurant whether someone she suspected of being an Adventist (usually because they wore no jewelry) had asked that the bacon be left off their breakfast special so she could introduce herself as a fellow church member. Similarly, a church leader's position could survive not exercising and overwork, but could never survive being seen enjoying a ham sandwich. Food is the marker of who's in and who's out.

Food rules, these among them, are, it seems to me, about identity and belonging. And that's how Paul treated them. "If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died" (Rom. 14:15). This would have been the ideal time for Paul to restate the Levitical distinctions had he wanted to. But he only asks that his readers not do anything to drive a wedge between believers. Of course, in Paul's model, if no one else objects, the spiritual implications of what you eat become nonexistent (though other consequences, like health, may remain).

Every group has something that symbolizes belonging. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, for at least a century, belonging has been marked by eating the right foods. So in this community it remains that the person who in his Christian freedom munches his BLT in the face of his weaker brother is violating a much more

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important principle of Christian behavior than dietary laws could ever be. "Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food," says Paul. "All food is clean but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble" (Rom. 14:20). ■

### Notes and References

1. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1948), 1:207; and James White, "Swine's Flesh," *Present Truth*, Nov. 1850, 87.

2. "The Development of Adventist Thinking on Clean and Unclean Meat," <[www.whiteestate.org/issues/Clean-Uncl.html](http://www.whiteestate.org/issues/Clean-Uncl.html)>.

3. That is why it is false to chastise Ellen White for continuing to eat oysters; she didn't think oysters unhealthful—only pork. It is a stronger argument to criticize her for continuing to eat meat after endorsing vegetarianism, and some early church leaders did.

4. S. N. Haskell, *The Bible Training School* (South Lancaster, Mass.: S. N. Haskell, 1903), 1:186.

5. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966. Philo, in contrast, said that God had prohibited only those foods that were the most delicious, in order not to tempt people to excess of appetite!

6. In reality, their handwashing was more ceremonial than cleansing.

7. Some cling to the King James Version, which retains some ambiguity about what exactly is cleansed: "Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him. Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?" Interpretation rests upon the meaning of the Greek word *katharizo*, translated here "purging," which in Greek means purifying, not emptying out. Modern translations are correct in saying it is the foods that are purified, not the body emptied.

8. The Adventist position about these passages has always been that they don't apply to clean and unclean foods because each addresses rabbinic rules, not biblical ones. But though Jesus and Paul began with a specific prohibition in mind, both ended up making very broad statements about the inability of diet to produce godliness.

9. Of course, the same thing Jesus said to the Pharisees should be made clear to Adventist vegetarians: there is no automatic salvation in it.

10. Ironically, it saves the unclean animals from suffering, but not the clean ones!

**Loren Seibold** pastors the Worthington, Ohio, Seventh-day Adventist Church.

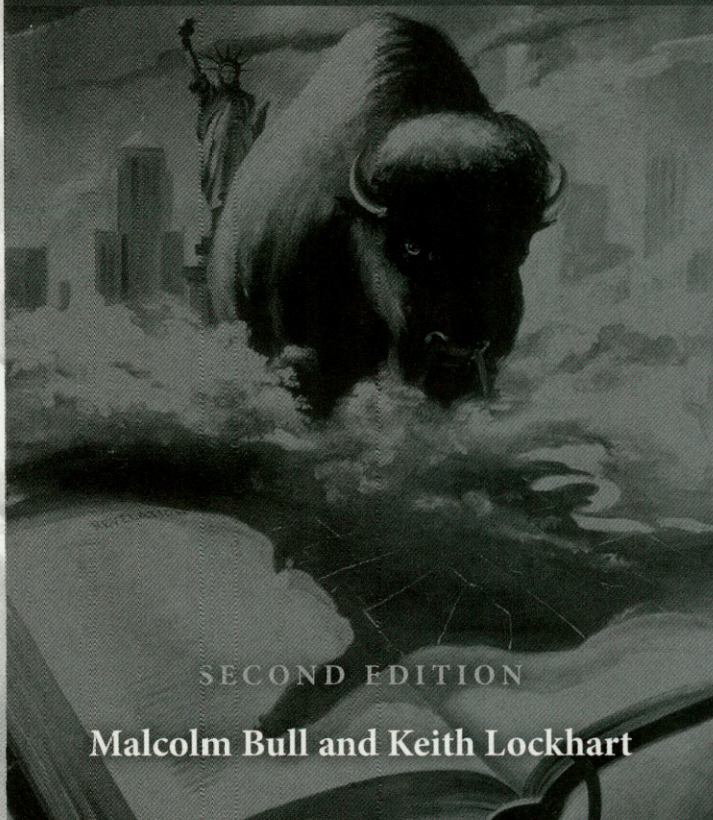
### For further reading

*The Bloodless Revolution: A Cultural History of Vegetarianism from 1600 to Modern Times*, by Tristram Stuart (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007).

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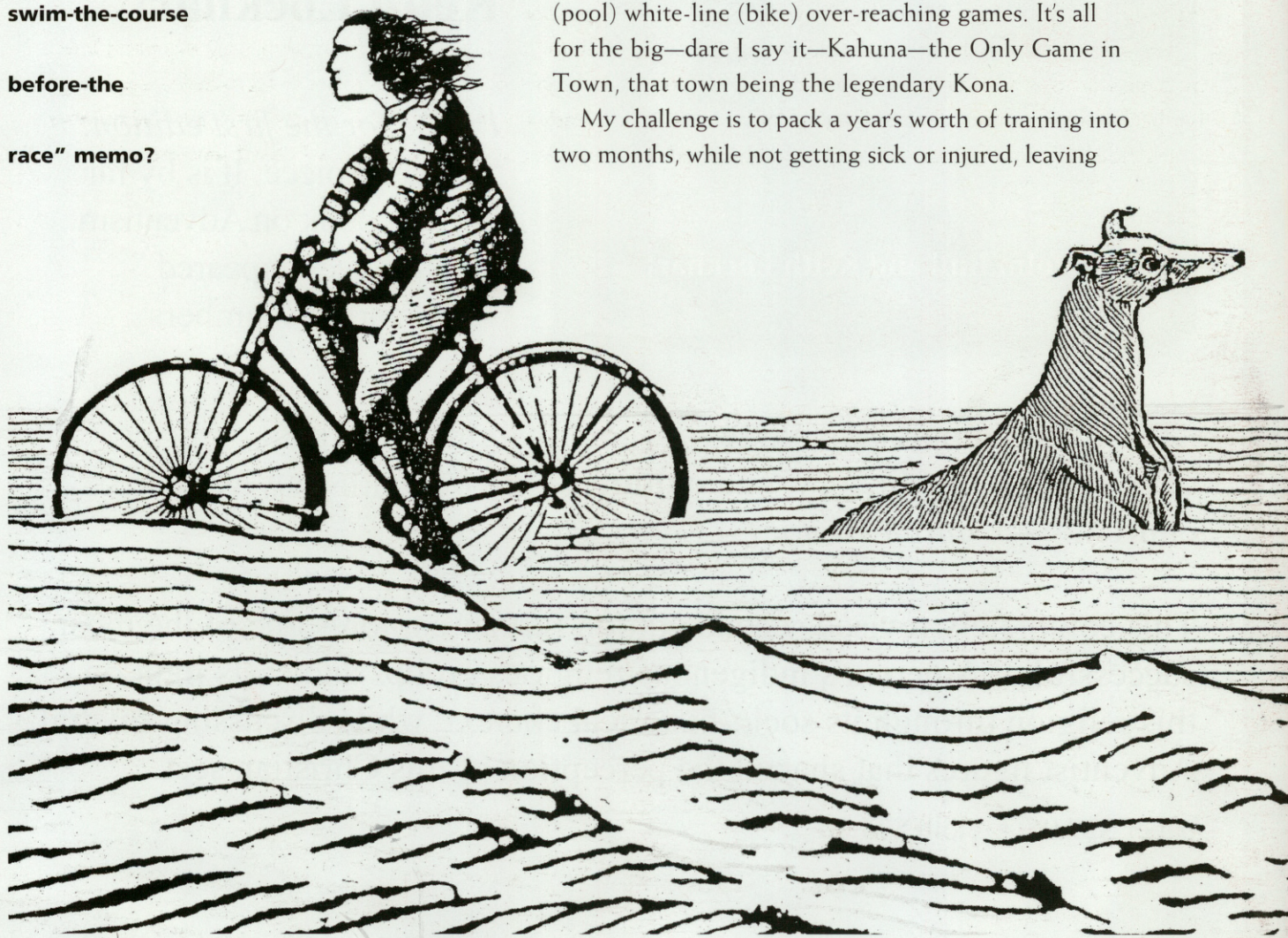
## Dreams Come True in (Black and) Blue Hawaii

*A Sophomore Stab at 140.6* | BY CAROL DAVENPORT

**Am I the only  
one who didn't  
get the "all-  
athletes-must  
swim-the-course  
before-the  
race" memo?**

**I**n the "be-careful-what-you-wish-for" department, I snagged a Hawaii slot at Vineman this past summer. It's the culmination of every triathlete's dream—not the race, but the two-word boast: "I qualified." Once the delirium wears off, reality, like a bad hangover, sets in. It's a very short trip from "I qualified, yippee!" to "I qualified—I don't feel so good." Let the games begin: the mind games, the bike upgrade games, the black-line (pool) white-line (bike) over-reaching games. It's all for the big—dare I say it—Kahuna—the Only Game in Town, that town being the legendary Kona.

My challenge is to pack a year's worth of training into two months, while not getting sick or injured, leaving



# HEALTH AND FITNESS

enough time to arrive at the start line nicely tapered, muscles packed with fuel, head comfortably numb, and family still intact. I exude quiet confidence as I exit my hotel the first morning in Kona. I am an Ironman athlete.

I saunter across Alii Drive for my morning coffee and run into Faris Al-Sultan. Quiet confidence sputters, stalls, nosedives. "I'm doomed. Who am I kidding? I don't belong here." As I retreat to my hotel, I spy Lori Bowden pushing a baby carriage down the sidewalk. Sure, she's fifteen years younger than I am, but knowing she could beat me with that stroller, baby included, strapped to her back intensifies my (advanced) age-group insecurities.

I wander down to the pier and see several hundred

whippet-thin athletes swimming along the buoys in the cove. Am I the only one who didn't get the "all-athletes must-swim-the-course-before-the-race" memo? Well, no. The ones who aren't in the water are whizzing through town atop their carbon monocoques in full wind-tunnel regalia, like college sophomores pulling all-nighters, cramming for that last final exam. The right side of my brain assures me that these guys are nuts, just wasting precious energy and inviting a last-minute crash or injury. But the left side, already unnerved by the complete absence of body fat in Kona, is ascendant, suggesting that readiness for this race is directly related to the number of tattoos one has on one's body. I have none.



Nevertheless, I'm in Kona—a ramshackle, beachy village where everything is body temperature—the air, the wind, the sea, the Gatorade sponsors are handing out. What's not to like? This being my second Ironman, I navigate the registration process more smoothly than the first. I know I'm going to be weighed, I know I'm going to get more bags for clothing and transitions than I know what to do with, I know to leave an extra space in my ID wristband so that gangrene doesn't set in until after the race. Registration behind me, I enter the temple of the god M-dot, and leave him many alms in exchange for most anything with his

logo embroidered on it.

The only race-prep I'm eager to do is to drive the bike course, the famed Queen Kaahumanu (or Queen K) Highway. So my husband and I set out across the lava fields, and up to Hawi, the turnaround, where the terrain turns from moonscape to jungle, palm trees hunching in ominously fierce winds. Driving back, I have Al Trautwig's purpley narration about Madame Pele looping through my head, so we stop and leave my initials in white coral in the lava, hoping to create good jujū with the wind gods. Having tied off all the supernatural loose ends, we head to the brewery for a burger and a tall drink.

Friday afternoon, the day before the race, I check in my bike and transition bags. I've seen this setup on television dozens of times, the hanging bags, the pros running up the ramp from the swim, grabbing their bags, and heading off for their four-hour bike ride. It looks coolly choreographed, made for TV. I'm dizzy with fear that I'll flub my moment—I'll grab the wrong bag, I'll wander lost in the ocean of bikes, I'll knock over Ricky Hoyt's wheelchair—all the nightmare slo-mo scenarios that have kept me awake for the past few weeks. Nevertheless, I drop off my bike, remove the computer in case it

## Glossary

**140.6** The total distance in miles of an Ironman race.

**Body Marking** A convention of triathlons; all athletes are marked on their arms and their calves with their race number and age.

**Carbon Monocoques** Super-duper high-end time-trial bikes. Most triathletes are gearheads and spend more money on a bike than some people do on cars.

**Drafting Penalty** The rules of Ironman racing state that drafting (riding close to another rider) is illegal, and there are marshals on the course who look for drafting and issue time penalties for infractions. It is well-known that the faster men often draft in races despite the rules, believing that it's not drafting if you don't get caught.

**Energy Lab** Part of the run course, around miles fifteen to eighteen, is on the property of a local power plant known as the Energy Lab.

**Gels** Nutrition is a serious concern in an endurance race, because of the huge caloric expenditure and the inability of the body to accept much in the way of food. A whole line of nutritional stopgaps have been developed to get calories in without much digestive effort. One such product is a carbohydrate gel, a one hundred-calorie substance that is easily ingested while competing.

**Hand Cycles** Challenged athletes of all types compete in the Hawaiian Ironman. Those who are paralyzed from the waist down can do the "run" in a hand cycle, a hand-powered wheelchair.

**Hawaiian Ironman** This particular race is the World Championship, and virtually all competitors must have won their division or age group in any of a series of races designated as qualifiers; all are of full- or half-ironman distances during the current triathlon season.

**IM (Ironman) Florida** An Ironman distance race held in November in Panama City Beach, Florida.

**Ironman Triathlon** A triathlon is an athletic event comprised of swimming, biking, and running. An Ironman distance triathlon is the longest of triathlons and consists of a 2.4 mile swim, a 112-mile bike ride, and a full marathon, 26.2 miles. Competitors have 17 hours in which to complete the race. Pro men can do it in around 8 hours; pro women in about 9. Age group triathletes compete in 5-year divisions, that is, males 30-34, females 45-49, and so forth.

**Kona, Alii Drive, Palani Drive, Queen K, Hawi** Because of the exclusivity of the race, the streets and city of Kona and the Ironman course have become legendary to all long-course triathletes. These names carry the same mystique as Hopkinton or Boylston Street for the Boston Marathon.

**Last-Minute Training** Conventional wisdom is that trying to squeeze in last minute training is a bad idea for such a long race. However, most triathletes are Type-As who have too much nervous energy and end up doing workouts that will probably only tire them before the race.

**Madame Pele** Hawaiian goddess of fire, said to be the spirit in the lava and volcanoes that abound on the island.

**Mass Starts, Wave Starts** The swim is the first event in triathlon. In some races, mostly Ironman distance races, all athletes begin the swim at once, known as a mass start. In most other races, competitors are launched in groups, or "waves," generally as age groups, and at several-minute intervals.

**M-Dot** This is the famous Ironman Logo, a giant letter M with a dot on top.

**Vineman** A half-Ironman distance race held in Santa Rosa, California, in July. It is one of about twenty-eight designated Hawaii qualifiers.

**"You are an Ironman"** Every finisher is announced by name as she crosses the finish line with the words "You are an Ironman." I have found that only people not involved in triathlon find this sexist. Triathletes consider all finishers Ironmen, and gender is not an issue.



rains overnight, and treat myself to my third Thai meal in as many days, my hometown Santa Fe, New Mexico, being a town that boasts many fine restaurants, none of them Thai.

The eerie dark of race morning is a scene from *Night of the Living Dead*. Seventeen hundred zombies march silently toward the body-marking area to be tagged and sorted before they hurl themselves, lemming-like, into the sea. I have always thought the big-stamp numbers of this race were terminally cool. My own race number is an anagram of my home address, and I immediately stand in the wrong line—my street address number—for stamping. The ladies of perpetual body marking expect a certain amount of brain fade from us, and they show me to the correct line, where I am proudly emblazoned with my six-inch numbers that reach from my shoulder to my elbow.

Race legend Irongent Bill Bell shows me to my bike, and I am in the midst of it—Natascha Badmann conferencing with her coach, Michellie Jones, a tower of fuchsia, hunching over her bike. I hear German, Japanese, Aussie, French. But no matter the language or ranking, we are all the same—captives in porta-john hell. Our final ablutions done, we head out to a line of surfboards and inflatable sponsor logos—where we will tread water while various national anthems, conch shell blasts, and Hawaiian folk songs are sung. Then we'll tread water for another fifteen minutes after the pros are launched.

I've always preferred mass starts to wave starts because I take a drubbing only for the first ten minutes, as opposed to every ten minutes in wave

starts. I actually escape unscathed during the start, but am inexplicably clobbered about a half-hour into the swim, almost losing my goggles in the process. How someone can come upon a lone swimmer in crystal water and just slam into her, I'll never know. But despite that setback, the first half of the swim goes quickly. I circle around the committee boat and head for home.

The second half, I soon discover, resembles an Endless Pool treadmill—take ten strokes, look up, take another ten, look up—no apparent forward motion. I learn afterward that a current going out to sea has dragged down everyone's times, although I am perfectly happy with mine, being several minutes faster than my IM Florida swim. I also learn that several swimmers have been stung by jellyfish—all of them, I assume, ahead of me—the jellyfish are all stung out by the time I get to shore.

On land again, I head to transition, where a sister of merciful bag handlers has already procured my bike bag—I pull on my socks, hit the porta-john, head out on an AstroTurf labyrinth, grab my bike, and begin the longest part of my day. As I hop on my bike, I notice a gray piece of plastic where my bike computer should be. I removed the computer last night, threw it in my swim bag, and promptly forgot about it this morning.

I spend a few seconds berating myself for such a stupid mistake, but then quickly remind myself that positivity is what is going to make or break my day. No amount of self-flagellation will conjure my computer, so I might as well get on with it. I still have my watch, and the five-



**Biking in the Lava Fields of the Queen K Highway; running down Alii Drive; finish!**

mile markers on the course will help me approximate my speed—If I pass through a five-mile mark in fifteen minutes, I'm going twenty miles per hour. If it takes me twenty minutes, fifteen miles per hour. Sadly, it appears I'll be going at the latter rate.

**A**round twenty miles into the ride, it begins to rain, at times heavily. My Pollyana-for-the-day self assures me the rain will keep me cool. I remove my sunglasses—all this coolness is approaching torrential. Eventually the rain stops, and the heat begins. Well, Pollyana says, at least it's not windy. About thirty miles into my ride I see Stormin' Normann Stadler, heading back to town. The second man back appears to be in a different zip code. After them, the familiar packs of men appear. As a back-of-the-packer who lives in abject fear of incurring a drafting penalty on the lone septuagenarian ahead of me, I am awestruck by the peletons of riders who routinely flout the rules of their sport with such impunity.

The Queen K ends, I turn left and then up a long fifteen miles or so to Hawi. Here's where the wind kicks up along with the road. It's a tough grind, but soon (well, more like an hour) I'm turned around and headed back to Kona. As with my first Ironman, I have lost my appetite halfway through the bike. I learned that gels will get me through, and I manage to suck one down every half-hour. I'm considerably slower than I was in Panama City, but other than that I'm in pretty good shape as I head out to run. I know I'm slower

because in Florida I got to listen to the announcer calling in the male finishers as I began my run; this time it's the female finishers. Ah well, at least it's still daylight.

I'm so happy to have my feet on the ground, my first couple miles down Alii are at a pretty good clip. But soon enough, I'm making the devil's deal with the run-to-the-aid-station bargain, which soon turns into run-to-the-next-traffic-cone, walk, run-to-the-cone, walk. Darkness falls around mile ten on the run-up on the Queen K, where the complete absence of light makes running both easier and more precarious. Easier because without any land markers, I forget how much I have left to run and am able to amble for several minutes at a time without stopping. More difficult because without any visual cues, I just hope the road is even and I don't step into a pothole or uneven surface. Even with the glow sticks we now wear, I almost crash head-on into a hand cycle heading the other way.

Down in the Energy Lab, Peter Reid offers me water. In my advanced state of Ironman delirium, I don't recognize him until someone shouts "Hey, Peter Reid just handed you water; the least you could do is run!" I glance back and instantly make out the lanky body of the three-time world champion, and pause to berate myself for (a) not appreciating the remarkable volunteer work he's doing, and (b) being so dreadful at this race. To add insult to injury, the giant inflatable Ford Logo tunnel is being knocked down for the night. The crew is going home. Ugh.

But once I'm out of the Energy

Lab and back onto Queen K, I can smell the barn. I make out a faint glow of street lights in the distance. My running picks up. As with the Boston Marathon, where one can begin to hear the din of the cheering Wellesley girls a half-mile before the coed gauntlet appears, the energy of the crowds two miles away pulls me like a magnet. Once onto Palani, an ear-to-ear smile takes over my face. The finish I've dreamed about is happening—onto Alii and headed for my "You are an Ironman" moment. I elbow past a guy who's stopped to pick up his two kids as he finishes, I pump my fists as if I'd just done the race in nine hours, and savor the indescribable joy of accomplishing a dream I once never thought possible.

**M**y first Ironman, I assured my husband, would be my last. Ironman Hawaii, of course, is always an exception—it's the world championship, after all. But I caught him saying to me during race week, "if you do this again, we can... (fill in the blank—try a different restaurant, go snorkeling, skip the car rental)... whatever. All I heard was that he could tolerate another year in which I figure out how to do this again. I'm on board. Yippee! I don't feel so good. ■

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**Carol Davenport** has been a competitive triathlete for ten years and a competitive runner for thirty. She's a veteran of forty marathons, including thirteen Boston Marathons. She was a medical librarian at Loma Linda University for several years and currently lives with her husband, Donald Davenport, in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

SERVICE TO GOD AND COUNTRY

# POLITICS



# POLITICS

SERVICE TO GOD AND COUNTRY

## Invitation to a Christian Witness for Peace in Iraq

### Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We invite you to join thousands in a "Christian Peace Witness for Iraq." As followers of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, our faith compels us to make our voice heard—to repent of our complicity with the invasion and occupation of Iraq and to renew our commitment to peacemaking. We ask you to join us in praying for peace, studying the Scriptures, learning nonviolence, lighting candles of hope, and gathering together for an ecumenical public witness on March 16, 2007, the fourth anniversary of the war in Iraq. We stand in solidarity with sisters and brothers in other faith traditions and ask their prayers and support for our witness.

Just as Jesus wept over Jerusalem because it did not know the things that make for peace, we weep over Washington, D.C., because of the tremendous human suffering and loss of life that have resulted from our government's policies toward Iraq. We are convinced that peace in Iraq cannot be won militarily. It is time to bring the troops home and to support a comprehensive peace process there.

We believe, with Martin Luther King, Jr., that "the ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it.... Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars.... The chain reaction of evil-hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars—must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation."

### Peace Witness Focus

**1. End the U.S. Occupation.** Like Isaiah, we are called to raise our prophetic voice, saying that security cannot be achieved through military domination of one people over another. We call on one another to find genuine security in God, who insists that we build just relationships with all people. We call on the President and Congress to bring

our troops home from Iraq, to remove our military bases and to stop threatening Iran and other nations.

**2. Support Our Troops.** Like Jesus, who healed the sick and preached good news to the poor, we are called to be a pastoral presence to our country. We call on one another to care for soldiers and their families who give so much of themselves in times of conflict. We call on the President and Congress to provide generous support for veterans and active-duty soldiers and their families as they seek to rebuild their lives.

**3. Rebuild Iraq.** Like Paul, we are called to love our neighbors as ourselves and to care even for our enemies. The lives of our sisters and brothers in Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, and across the Middle East have been turned upside down by the war. We call on one another to financially support relief efforts in Iraq through our denominations. We call on the President and Congress to lead the way in funding international reconstruction of Iraq and providing humanitarian aid for shattered Iraqi families, for our experience in other conflicts has taught us that such assistance is the most effective path to real security for all people around the world.

**4. Say NO to Torture.** Like the disciple who learned to put away the sword, we are called to treat others as we want to be treated. We call on one another to learn and practice the discipline of active nonviolence: to resist violence and injustice and to construct the culture of peace and reconciliation that we all desire. We insist that our government treat all enemy combatants humanely and take decisive action to ensure that torture is banned by all agencies of the United States government.

**5. Say YES to Justice.** Like Mary, who praised God for lifting up the lowly and filling the hungry with good things, we long for a world free from hunger, homelessness, environmental

destruction, injustice, and oppression. We call on one another to do justice and show mercy to make our vision plain. We call on the President and Congress to create a federal budget that puts priority on meeting basic human needs instead of on making war. Let us together begin to fashion a just peace dividend that is both renewable and lasting.

### Public Witness, March 16, 2007

These preparations will culminate in public Christian witness for peace on March 16 in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere. We will share in an evening ecumenical worship service at the Washington National Cathedral, a candlelight procession to the White House, and a late night peace vigil, during which some participants may engage in "divine obedience" (civil disobedience) and risk possible arrest. We invite you to come to Washington, D.C., or to join similar public witness events in your community. We will provide resources for this invitation on our Web site <[christianpeacewitness.org](http://christianpeacewitness.org)>. We invite you to register your participation on the Web site.

We believe that until the Christian community is willing to take risks for peace, to put its words into action, to publicly witness that the war in Iraq is wrong, more people will die, more violence will shatter more lives, and we will all be less secure. Let us commit to the fullness of the gospel vision of justice, peace, inclusive community, and wholeness. Let us choose life that we and our children and the people of Iraq may live! ■

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES: *Luke 19:41–42; Isaiah 31; Luke 7:22; Galatians 5:13–15; Romans 12:19–21; Matthew 26:51–52; Matthew 7:12; Deuteronomy 30:19; Luke 1:46–55; Micah 6:8*

#### For the list of partner organizations

visit <[www.christianpeacewitness.org](http://www.christianpeacewitness.org)> and go to "partner orgs."

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*The Adventist Peace Fellowship Advisory Group has endorsed participation in this witness and a visible Adventist presence is being planned. Check <[www.adventistpeace.org](http://www.adventistpeace.org)> for more information as it develops. I would urge, though, if you feel a conviction, that you not necessarily wait for directions or permission. Act, initiate, and if you let me know ([dmorgan@adventistpeace.org](mailto:dmorgan@adventistpeace.org)) what you are doing, we will publicize it. We can also then look for opportunities to link together.*

—Douglas Morgan, Adventist Peace Fellowship

## Why I Want to Witness for Peace | BY DOUGLAS MORGAN

NOT LONG AGO, I read a story—one I had read before—but it struck me in a new way and with such force that it has kept returning to my mind ever since. And now, here it is again as I think about why I want to be part of the Christian Peace Witness for Iraq on March 16, 2007, and why I want to encourage other Adventists to support it, too.

Probably you, too, are familiar with this strange little story—more like a mini-episode, really. But perhaps you, like me, may begin to wonder whether we have allowed its explosive power to dent the confines of our familiarity.

It takes place on a mountain in Palestine—Galilee, more specifically—where a man and his followers have gathered on a spring day not quite two thousand years ago. It comes at the very end of Matthew's account of the story of Jesus (Matt. 28). Some women are giving out the story that the Jesus who had just been very publicly executed by crucifixion and buried was no longer in the tomb when they went to visit it. This despite the fact that the Roman imperial authorities had sealed the tomb shut (Matt. 27:62–66).

The women are also saying that an angel and then Jesus himself had given them a message for his disciples—meet me in Galilee. Jesus' followers find the designated mountain but, amazingly, when they see him, some doubt, or hesitate. Perhaps they have arrived in a semi-resistant frame of mind, miffed that Jesus had given them instructions through women, rather than talking to them directly.

Whatever the reason, Jesus does not rebuke their doubt. He simply makes a stupendous, audacious claim: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." All authority. Not just in heaven, certainly not just in some blissful constellation of clouds or some disembodied realm of Ideals, but *on earth*. Not just some day way off in the future, but *now*, already a done deal.

How absurd and offensive, this assertion of authority, both then and now. Plainly, Rome had full authority in Jesus' world. To say otherwise was sure to stir up trouble. As for me—and I suspect for many today—the very word *authority* grates harshly on my sensibilities. Racial oppression, subordination of women, suppression of critical

thinking, militarism, that old-time Adventist dogmatism, legalism, and judgmentalism—all these make up the stuff of “authority.” Indeed, “question authority” has long been a fundamental tenet of my personal creed.

But the man on the Galilean mountain keeps drawing me. The earlier parts of his story tell me that he taught and lived peace, love, justice, compassion, and reconciliation like none other, and that he went to a cruel death when he could have summoned twelve legions of angels to annihilate his persecutors. If that’s true, and if it’s also true that this same man came out of tomb, resurrected from the dead, then I want to join his followers in worshiping him.

Then his claim of authority becomes the good news that this Jesus—the Prince of Peace and Lord of Love—is in fact the world’s true ruler. His authority of self-sacrificing love—an authority that doesn’t coerce or lose patience even with those who doubt when the evidence is right before their eyes—becomes the basis upon which I can question all other authority.

It also authorizes me to act as an agent of his kingdom and establishes a framework for defining my mission. Having been gripped in a new way by the story that discloses his authority, I want, more than ever, everything I do to somehow, some way, bear witness to the good news of his kingdom, a gospel that calls people from every nation, culture, and ethnicity into a community of disciples who observe what he commands.

Therefore, the agenda that drives my interest in the Christian Peace Witness for Iraq (CPWI) is, in a word, *soul-winning*. I’d like to help get the word out that Jesus is the world’s true Lord. I’d like to help win souls to give their allegiance to the Lord who pronounced blessing on peacemakers, who commanded his followers to love their enemies—not to retaliate against violence or defend his cause with the sword—and who made treatment of the poor and powerless the benchmark for the behavior of those who would share the inheritance of his eternal kingdom.

As Charles Scriven has put it, peacemaking—“the making of human wholeness through the practice and preaching of the love of God”—is the heart of our evangelistic mission (see “The Peacemaking Remnant: Seven Theses” at <[www.adventistpeace.org](http://www.adventistpeace.org)>). I see March 16, 2007, as a great opportunity to evangelize. ■

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**Douglas Morgan** is professor of history and political studies at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

## Peacemaking vs. Pacifism | INTERVIEW WITH DOUGLAS MORGAN

### **Jesus didn’t get involved in politics. How can you get mixed up in a political protest and claim to be acting in his name?**

It seems to me that peacemaking, like action for religious liberty, flows directly from the gospel of Jesus and thus transcends the interests of any political party. I would point out that for a century and a half now, Adventists have addressed specific issues in the legislative and governmental arenas on behalf of these gospel principles, not on behalf of partisan political interests or for the seizure of political power

Yes, Adventists have devoted much more energy to religious liberty than to peacemaking. A significant historical record for the latter also exists, though. In fact, I can recommend a good book about that. It’s called *The Peacemaking Remnant: Essays and Historical Documents*, and it’s available from the Adventist Peace Fellowship, <[www.adventistpeace.org](http://www.adventistpeace.org)>, and at Amazon.com.

### **We know that there will not be world peace before Jesus returns—“wars and rumors of war” are signs of his return as the only hope for the world. Isn’t it rather futile to work for peace between nations?**

Adventist health care practitioners engage in the arts of healing without any illusions that their work will bring about the eradication of all disease or even that their efforts will result in permanently perfect health for the individual they are treating. They heal because God is a healer and they want to make that healing tangible in the lives of suffering people, even while the world remains under the curse of disease and death.

Would not the same be true of Adventists who work for peace in complex and seemingly intractable situations of human conflict? Jesus said peacemakers would be called children of God. For me, that’s reason enough. And though whatever impact for peace we make will always be provisional and imperfect, it seems to me that the difference made in the lives of suffering people can be just as real and beneficial as successful surgery.

### **Even if this is so, peace activism seems like a diversion from the distinctive Adventist mission of preparing the way for Christ’s return by proclaiming the Three Angels’ messages throughout the world.**

I have become convinced of just the opposite. I don’t think a call to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, to follow in the way of the Lamb, can be very compelling if nonviolence and peacemaking are nowhere to be seen.

On June 12, 1898, when the United States was making its first foray into imperialism, *Review and Herald* editor A. T. Jones wrote in his paper that only

when Christians are clear about loving their enemies and not killing them will "this world have a chance to know that God has sent Jesus Christ into the world, and has loved us as he loves Jesus Christ."

I take it that Jones is saying that without something like authentic discipleship when it comes to war and killing, our latter-day Adventist message will be hampered in bringing people to a clear and definitive knowledge of Christ so that they can make the critical decision for or against him.

So I see peacemaking as intrinsic to an Adventist evangelistic witness, not a diversion from it. And there is another reason. The present war has been driven to a considerable extent by people who claim to be Bible-believing Christians, but whose vision of God's plan for history makes them trenchant advocates of U.S. dominance of the globe through overwhelming military might. America rules, and that's the way God intends it.

But read what Ellen White has written in the *Desire of Ages* about the mission that the risen Lord gave his followers:

*Christ tears away the wall of partition, the dividing prejudice of nationality, and teaches a love for all the human family. He lifts men from the narrow circle which their selfishness prescribes. He abolishes all territorial lines and artificial distinctions of society. He makes no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies. He teaches us to look upon every needy soul as our brother, and the world as our field. (823)*

**Your talk of peace and love and all that sounds nice, but it's quite naïve. Don't you realize that armed forces are necessary in an evil world and that we would not enjoy the freedoms we have without our military strength? And remember, the apostle Paul tells us that "the sword" is ordained of God for the restraint of evil.**

As I have struggled with this question, I ran across an article some time ago that made a distinction between "liberal pacifism" and "messianic pacifism" that I found useful. Liberal pacifism has as its target the total or near-total disarmament of the nations and a renunciation of war as means of resolving conflict. Messianic pacifism renounces weapons of war out of allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord, the one invested with full authority in heaven and on earth.

As a "messianic pacifist," I participate in a public witness such as that planned for March 16, 2007, with two purposes in mind. One is that we might influence public officials to "do the things that make for peace"—in this instance not perpetuate the folly and futility of war in Iraq. The hope here simply is to reduce violence and suffering and promote nonviolent means of resolving conflicts, rather than some comprehensive, utopian transformation as "liberal pacifism" might envision.

It seems to me that, as a follower of Jesus, I have to care—deeply care—about measures that move us in the direction of peace, however partial and fragile. But the basis upon which I urge governmental entities to take these incremental steps is not the Sermon on the Mount or loyalty

to Jesus as the world's true sovereign, but on the government's own claims to be an instrument of peace and justice (as found, for example, in constitutions, laws, official proclamations, and the like).

At the same time, though, there is that second and overarching purpose of bearing witness to Jesus as the Prince of Peace. The hope here is that action for peace in his name will be one means of attracting people to his kingdom and cause, to become his disciples and observe his commandments.

One more thing: Since I, perhaps foolishly, brought up the "p" word, I want to say that the Adventist Peace Fellowship, and as far as I know the CPWI, do not make *pacifism* a criterion of involvement. The key principle is *peacemaking*.

**But how do you know what particular military and diplomatic policies are best for peace? After all, the Iraq war overthrew a brutal, menacing tyrant and the United States has not incurred another terrorist attack for five and one-half years. Do you think you have the "Jesus-approved" foreign policy? Joining an antiwar march to "bear witness for Jesus" implies that you do.**

I don't know for certain that the conclusions I've drawn are the right ones, and I certainly can't claim to know the mind of God. I can only claim to act out of a desire to serve Christ, guided by convictions growing out of my own study of the evidence.

The varying reasons set forth for this war have been discredited—massively so. The public has been misled by hundreds of false public statements by high administration officials. It seems clear that the war was driven by a dangerous ideology of American empire—a sort of messianic militarism—rather than prudent and effective deterrence of terrorism. The result has been hundreds of thousands of needless deaths, a planting of seeds of hatred and resentment likely to stoke the cycle of violence for decades, and a horrible mess for which there seems to be no good solution.

And the loudest cheers for all of this, the most powerful political constituency in support of it, have come from the people in America who make the most noise about being followers of Jesus.

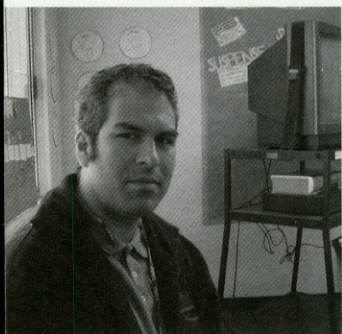
In the face of all of this, silence, for me, would be unfaithfulness to the Jesus I have come to know through my own encounter with the New Testament witness, and to whom I have pledged my allegiance.

**Even if you have some valid points, a protest demonstration like this hardly seems like an appropriate environment for Adventists. An angry spirit, strident denunciations, ridicule of public officials—often vulgar—seem to prevail at such events, not to mention consciousness-altering controlled substances.**

I think we sometimes need to stand together with people very different from us in a common cause. That said, the organizers of this action have addressed the concerns you raise with a "Nonviolence Pledge"

*Continued on page 64...*

## After the Election: An Interview with a City Council Candidate *Serving God at City Hall* | BY JOHNNY RAMIREZ



**Above: Candidate Fabian Carballo, who felt a calling to “expand my territory in Colton”; he appears at the far right with interviewer Johnny Ramirez.**

**D**oes serving God include getting elected? Here are the thoughts of one candidate from the 2006 election.

**JR** Hello Fabian! How are you today?

**FC** I'm doing great. I just celebrated my birthday on the twenty-first and get to celebrate my kids' birthdays on the twenty-second and twenty-third [of November]. It was great timing and it was great planning.

**JR** You are a La Sierra University graduate—what was your major? Any memorable teachers or personalities from your time there?

**FC** I double-majored in communication and history and political science. I remember the late Dr. Jacques, who was tragically shot at his home, and the late Clark Davis, who talked me into studying history and asking pertinent questions. I also appreciated everything that Dr. Dupee did for me.

**JR** Why did you decide to run for the fourth council seat?

**FC** As the Word says, “Many are called but few are chosen.” I live in a very diverse part of Colton [California] that includes the historical downtown and the downtrodden South Colton. I felt a calling to “expand my territory” because I was dissatisfied with my church’s current nonexistent outreach to the community. I was also dissatisfied with

myself and the fact that I wasn’t living a service-centered lifestyle.

**JR** What church are you a member of? How did it respond to your political activity?

**FC** I belong to the Inland Spanish Church located in Colton. I was baptized there as a child and served as an elder, director of religious liberty, director of education, youth leader, and so forth.... The reactions were mixed. Some members were taken aback because they never knew anyone who was involved in politics and they weren’t sure if it was kosher with Ellen G. White’s writings. Others, because of their education or open-mindedness, were very excited, and some even offered to contribute to the campaign financially.

**JR** Do you feel that Adventists should be involved in the political process?

**FC** Of course, it goes with the mission and vision to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Are we making any headway preaching to the choir, to our congregations? I just feel that God wants to call men and women who have a deep desire to serve to go out on a limb and become the policy makers and the decision makers that will affect the thousands who live in their communities. It was a joyous day for God when the king of Nineveh decided that all his people should repent and seek a better path. Likewise, God wants his people to personally involve themselves in the betterment of society as a whole.



**JR** *How much has this race cost you personally and fiscally?*

**FC** Like everything I do, I gave it my all. I am in a lot of debt right now and my wife has been great about it. I used thousands of dollars that I didn't have. Physically, I was mostly overwhelmed by my full-time job and my own kids at home, who are turning one and three this week. I praise the Lord for his Sabbath and for soccer, which allowed me to rest and replenish my energy. People kept telling me, "Are you crazy? You should campaign on Saturdays, that's when people are at home." I am glad that I knew better, and that my life experiences taught me to be loyal. How could voters trust me to be loyal to them if I can't even be loyal to my Lord?

**JR** *How close was your race exactly?*

**FC** Very close on election night, I was only down by two votes. What messed everything up was that it was a three-way race. One candidate didn't come close but he took away enough votes to make it awfully close for the rest of us. It was one of the closest races in the entire county of San Bernardino, if not the whole state.

**JR** *How did you do in the final result?*

**FC** Once the votes were certified by the registrar of voters, I accepted the defeat by three votes. Three mere votes! I congratulated my opponent and decided not to recount because it would have divided the city even more.

**JR** *How has the community reacted to the results?*

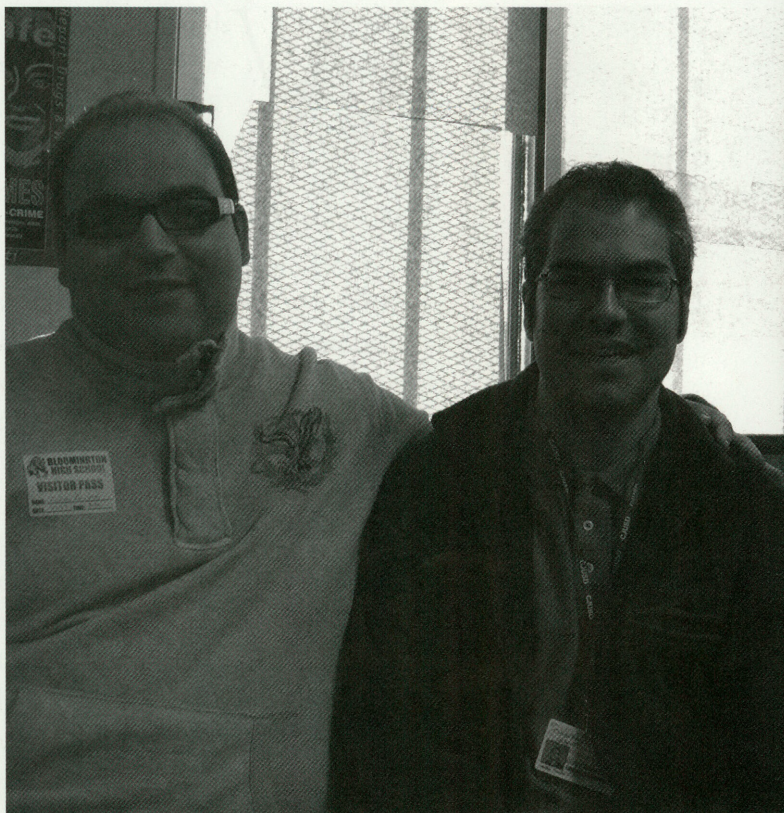
**FC** I wouldn't call it a loss. I came in second place in a pool of three candidates. My church has been really supportive, and many residents have reached out to congratulate me or encourage me to stay involved. Also, many area politicians have reached out to me and offered to help me get elected the next time around.

**JR** *Are you satisfied?*

**FC** I had some time to reflect and feel very good about the outcome. Since God is in control of my life, I feel relieved that he has bigger and better plans for me.

**JR** *Any other thoughts?*

**FC** I just want to encourage people to answer to God's call even if it seems unfeasible. Also, I want to thank my pastors, my family, and my supporters. It was great to find out that there are non-Adventist Christians in my district who have prayed relentlessly for me and for our city. Praise the Lord if even one life was changed through this whole process. ■

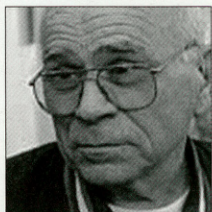


A graduate of La Sierra University, **Fabian Carballo** teaches at Bloomington, California, High School. He also directs the Religious Liberty Department of the Inland Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church, in Colton, California.

**Johnny Ramirez** is a student at Azusa Pacific University, a pastoral intern at the Hollywood, California, Seventh-day Adventist Church, and a frequent contributor to the *Spectrum Blog*.

# Remembering the Whitecoats

*Service led to vaccines not germ warfare* | BY RAYMOND J. WEST



**Wendell Cole** (served 1954–56): “Yeah, and when I check out I’m going to have an American flag, a military funeral, and all of those other things they want to give you. I’m proud.”



**Gene Crosby** (served 1964–66): “I asked him, Major Dangerfield, when I drank that stuff, was it going to last any longer than two weeks? ‘Oh no, got the antidote, it will be all over in two weeks,’ and it isn’t over yet today.”

When “The Living Weapon” was broadcast in February 2007, by the American Public Broadcasting System, many Adventists tuned in to watch what would be said about Project Whitecoat, the 1954–73 era Army program that used Seventh-day Adventist noncombatant conscientious objectors as subjects for medical experiments. I watched and enjoyed the program; however, I was disappointed that the producers failed to admit that defensive measures were a product of the studies. They were bent on a germ warfare theme.

As I understand it, at least two new vaccines were developed from the studies, and a total of twelve were evaluated and refined in some way. Although I know that there were meetings held at the Beltsville, Maryland, SDA church after the airing of the PBS program to discuss the disgruntled feelings of some, none of the participants that I have spoken to or corresponded with have had negative comments concerning their Whitecoat experiences.

These young men were not unwitting dupes for germ warfare. Rather, they were well-informed volunteers who arguably assumed as much or more risk than if they had served in Korea or Viet Nam. I think of them as apostles of the legendary Dr. Walter Reed. He it was who subdued the yellow fever plague in America. Had he known them, Reed would have been really proud of the Whitecoats.

The saga of the Whitecoats goes back to the early 1950s and the days of the Cold War. United States intelligence was informing the

country that alien nations were culturing exotic viruses and brewing lethal chemicals. Not to be left behind in the war of the microbes and nerve gasses, American scientists manned the bioramparts. They cut to the chase, eager to begin life-and-death experiments on humans.

Desperately needed was a brigade or two of healthy young men who used no tobacco or alcohol. So how to find a gang of healthy young men who would volunteer as guinea pigs for groundbreaking research? Someone came up with the notion to make good use of army draftees. Fortunately, GIs were plentiful. Someone else offered that Seventh-day Adventist draftees were a temperate crowd, were dependable when it came to clean and healthy living. These were the unique

## Also of Interest:

“The Living Weapon,” aired on public television.

The complete program can be viewed online at [<www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/weapon/>](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/weapon/).

“Operation Whitecoat,” *Religion and Ethics*, Oct. 24, 2003, episode 708, [<www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week708/cover.html>](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week708/cover.html).

## From the Spectrum magazine archives

at [<www.spectrummagazine.org>](http://www.spectrummagazine.org)

Comments on Project Whitecoat, 25.5 (September 1996):59–61.

Krista Thompson Smith, “Adventists and Biological Warfare,” 25.3 (March 1996):35–50.

Martin D. Turner, “Project Whitecoat,” 2.3 (summer 1970):55–70.

ones, the foot soldiers who honored their commitment to "God and Country."

Army medic Ken Jones was among the first draftees who volunteered in 1954 for the Whitecoat adventures. Plucked from Houston and sent to Fort Detrick, Maryland, he promptly agreed to risk the angst and miseries of Q Fever. Fortunately, Jones, like all the men who followed him, was attended by a personal physician and a private nurse. A good thing, for Q Fever is no dish of pabulum when it comes to illnesses.

Early on, it masquerades with flu-like symptoms—fever, headache, and malaise. But it can go on to pneumonia, heart failure, and liver destruction. No doubt, Jones's nurse and physician were busy enough with their young patient as he weathered the grim Q Fever storms. After that came the payoff, a vaccine fit to knock the props from under "Query" Fever, courtesy of Jones and his Whitecoat GI pals.

Still not quite satisfied that Q Fever could be carried on benign breezes from infected cow to unsuspecting cowhand, the scientists sought another volunteer. This time it would be a medic buddy of Jones, Lloyd Long. Long was assigned to sleep on the sands of a barren Utah desert wrapped in an army blanket. His instructions: "When you hear the blast of the siren, get up, sit on the stool and face into the wind."

Just a kid in his late teens, Private Long breathed deeply of an infectious Q Fever bomb on the soft desert airs. All too soon, he was felled with headache, fever, blurred vision. Never had this army youngster been so sick.

With a shake of the head, Jones and Long could have refused to sit in as Q Fever guinea pigs. And so might all of their fellow volunteers (a few years later) when induced to man an Apollo space capsule. They would make a virtual flight to the moon while flogged with yet another fever, this time dengue.

President John F. Kennedy had set the United States off on a race to the moon. And what disasters awaited the crew should they be felled with illness one hundred thousand miles out in space? It was high time to answer that gnarly question.

So the mosquito-vectored virus of "Break Bone Fever" (dengue) was injected into the veins of Whitecoat volunteers. Wretched and ill, they sweated out a simulated earth to moon flight, and return. They performed with aplomb and made space age history.

Yet another triumph for the research done on the Whitecoat volunteers came years later during the presidency of Jimmy Carter. In 1977, when the Rift Valley Fever, a skulking sibling of West Nile virus, plagued the Middle East, Carter was brokering a peace deal between Egypt and Israel. An offer by Carter to furnish an effective vaccine sealed the agreement. Thus, a group of young American boys had played a smash hit role in Middle East peace.

Abram Benenson, a founding Whitecoat scientist said, "We told them we were going to make them sick and even though we could take good care of them, you never know for sure. They were fully conscious of the risks they were taking." His words rang true for the group of medics who volunteered for the tularemia ("rabbit fever") project. One man jotted the following:

*We were placed in the hospital ward for two weeks before being injected with the virus... During the four weeks of the project, we were given measured amounts of fruits, charcoal, and other foods to eat. We were also required to drink a prescribed amount [either one half or one gallon] of an oily liquid-drink-mix each day. The six who were injected at the end of the first two weeks got really sick with nausea, vomiting, aches, and cramps. One man got so sick that even on his leave time after the initial project testing, he was readmitted to a hospital in Indianapolis and spent much of his four weeks leave there.*

So where are they now, these Whitecoat warriors? They are managers, administrators, educators, dentists, physicians, and more. A recent survey revealed that almost 50 percent completed college, and close to one-third had master's or doctor's degrees. Appropriately enough, they have collected their kudos: a certificate of appreciation from the U.S. Congress, a medallion from the U.S. Army, a splendid memorial erected by the members of the Seventh-day Adventist church close by Fort Detrick, where they served, in Fredrick, Maryland.

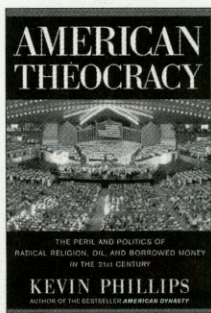
Operation Whitecoat ended, along with the draft, in 1973. President Richard Nixon closed down the American bioweapons research. The men and the army they served hold pride in their mission as accomplished. Vaccines, a variety of treatments, along with protective gear have saved thousands of lives, both human and animal, because these young warriors willingly took a walk on the wild side. ■

**Physician Raymond D. West** resides in Belfair, Washington.

## BOOK REVIEWS

## American Imperialism

Reflections on religion and American policy | A REVIEW ESSAY BY TERRIE AAMODT



Kevin Phillips, *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century* (New York: Viking, 2006).

Suppose someone handed you three books in plain brown wrappers. They are, you are told, reflections on the relationship between religion and American policy written by a Republican pol, an evangelical, and a cabinet official from a Democratic administration. Suppose the book on the top of the stack has singed pages and is smoking around the edges. You might guess it would be the book written by the Democrat. If the books were the three illustrated on these pages, though, you would be wrong. But of course there is more to the story.

Kevin Phillips, the number-crunching political analyst who engineered the Nixon majority, identified the impending resurgence in conservative values and named the Sun Belt, is no longer a Republican. Now registered as an independent, he is hopping mad about what has happened to the political party he helped to refashion. Randall Balmer, although he describes himself as an evangelical, is a political liberal who was propelled by the bitter taste left in his mouth after the 2004 presidential election to research and write *Thy Kingdom Come*. He expects the book will make him a pariah among most of his evangelical friends and family members.

Ballmer describes his relationship to American evangelicalism as that of a "jilted lover." Phillips appears to feel that way about the Republican party. With the kind of exhaustive research that characterized Phillips's pathbreaking 1969 book, *The Emerging Republican Majority*, he demolishes his target in *American Theocracy* with a barrage of statistical analysis and coolly calculated arguments that have impressed most reviewers. Ballmer, wielding

the fierce sorrow of a lover's quarrel, weaves a polemic that leads to a set of conclusions unlikely to ingratiate him with conservative evangelicals.

Madeline Albright's book grew out of a speech of the same title she made at the Yale Divinity School in the spring of 2004. The speech led her to additional research and to this volume, which combines history, diplomatic analysis, and her personal experiences as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, secretary of state during Bill Clinton's second term, and a continuing participant in bipartisan symposia on American foreign policy. Although clearly concerned about the present relationship between religion and foreign policy in the United States, Albright is less harsh on the current regime and more optimistic than the other two authors.

Before peering between the covers of these three books, a few definitions are in order. Aware that the growing presence of evangelical religion in American public spaces has created more alarm than understanding, Walter Russell Mead, who is Henry A. Kissinger Senior Fellow for U.S. Policy at the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote an article titled "God's Country," a tutorial on the current state of American Protestantism and politics that appeared in the September/October 2006 issue of *Foreign Affairs* (24-43).

The liberal Protestants Mead describes are most at home discussing the ethics of Christianity and believe that every religion has some truth. He identifies "separatist" funda-

mentalists as those who seek to withdraw from American politics and culture and contrasts them with “neo-evangelical” fundamentalists who claim the label “evangelical” and seek continual engagement with the world. In spite of the elevated concern about where Christian conservatism will take the United States, Mead faces the future with “measured optimism” that these groups and secular society will be capable of achieving constructive dialogue.

Kevin Phillips does not partake of “measured optimism.” He identifies an incipient theocracy brewing in the United States, and he believes it is likely to strengthen. Phillips is impressed by the tenacity and pervasiveness of conservative American Protestantism within the American religious experience. He notes that while 92 percent of Americans believe in God, 60 percent also believe in Noah’s Ark, and 61 percent in a literal six-day creation. He notes as well that 83 percent of Evangelical Protestants in America believe the Bible is literally accurate and 77 percent expect the events in the book of Revelation to be fulfilled in the future (102).

The extent of these attitudes, Phillips contends, is owed to a religious mindset that sprang out of the post-Civil War South. He describes how southern Protestants redirected their literalistic Bible-reading habits from the topic of slavery to a host of other issues. The eleven former Confederate states, plus Oklahoma, Missouri, Kentucky, and Maryland, are home to religious-political groups ranging from the League of the South to Christian Reconstructionism.

The dominant force in this regional powerhouse, Phillips asserts, is the Southern Baptist Convention, “an eight-hundred-ton dinosaur in the parlor of American Protestantism” (149). Southern Baptists led in drafting “The Fundamentals” from 1910 to 1915 that gave fundamentalism its name. They promoted Prohibition, led the anti-evolution movement, and became an important part of the Republican Party base.

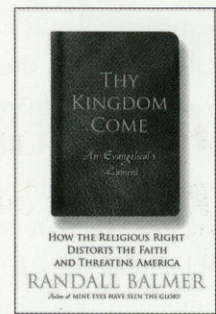
The fundamentalist takeover of the SBC began in 1979 when denominational conserva-

tives turned their scrutiny on the Old Testament classes at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. What resulted, says Phillips, is that the “church of the Southern Cultural Memory” became a “Church of Biblical Inerrancy and Republican Ascendancy...and, perhaps, the closest approximation to an official church in the United States” since eighteenth-century Congregationalism (156). It provides a well-organized power base for an eventual theocracy.

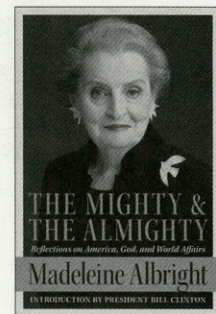
The new religio-political border between secular and sacred, between North and South, runs from southern Pennsylvania across Ohio, through southern Indiana and Illinois, to Iowa. Not surprisingly, in 2000 and 2004, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Iowa were all battlegrounds. And conservative Protestants in all those states, according to Phillips, partook of five fundamentalist tendencies: “claiming absolute truth...seizing upon an ‘ideal time,’ as in claims for imminent cataclysms or fast-approaching end times; fostering blind obedience; using ends to justify means; pursuing ‘holy war’” (205). These forces enable the Republican Party to have a religious base, a condition unprecedented in American politics.

Although Phillips never discloses his own religious orientation, or even whether he has one, he sounds pretty apocalyptic himself as he connects his disturbing portrait of the Religious Right with his thoughts on the United States’ dependence on oil and a deficit-driven economy, points that occupy two-thirds of his book. Phillips clearly takes these perceived threats very seriously and thinks there is a good chance they will lead the United States to disaster. He assumes a prophetic role as he warns that the current trajectory of the United States seems to be tracking the path of other great powers that have collapsed.

**R**andall Ballmer is every bit as upset as Kevin Phillips about the Religious Right, but his response is more personal and autobiographical. The son of an evangelical minister who deviated from the family occupational path to become a religious historian at Barnard College, Columbia University,



Randall Balmer, *Thy Kingdom Come: How the Religious Right Distorts the Faith and Threatens America; an Evangelical's Lament* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).



Madeleine Albright with Bill Woodward, *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God, and World Affairs* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006).

Ballmer asserts that the evangelical stream of American religion has forsaken him and its nineteenth-century roots.

Whereas Phillips delves into European history to contextualize what is happening in the United States today, Ballmer reviews the history of American Protestantism, from Roger Williams, "the founder of the Baptist tradition in America," to Jefferson and Madison's concerns about religious freedom, to the creation of the Bill of Rights, to the function of nineteenth-century evangelicals as a voice of national conscience, speaking truth to power from the cultural margins. He tweaks the tendency of the Religious Right to celebrate capitalist economics by referring to the "free market" of religious expression in the nineteenth century that enabled evangelical faiths to flourish.

Like Phillips, Ballmer sees the Religious Right striving to create a theocratic America, a place where the free market of religious pluralism is devalued, a place "where public prayer is mandated in public schools, where school vouchers support religious rather than secular public education, and where religious texts, such as the Ten Commandments, are prominently displayed in government-funded spaces such as courts and schools" (49).

Ballmer describes the activities of Judge Roy S. Moore, who was forced from his seat on the Alabama Supreme Court because he refused to remove "Roy's Rock," his Ten Commandment monument, from the state Supreme Court building in 2003. The rock, says Ballmer, "represents an utter repudiation of Baptist principles," which preferred religion to function without state endorsement.

Ballmer is puzzled by what he terms the "selective literalism" of the religious right, which allows its practitioners to hear the silent screams of the unborn but to support capital punishment and torture. He puzzles over the tendency of many evangelicals to highlight the few biblical references to homosexuality while overlooking the many texts related to divorce. (He thinks evangelicals pretend that abortion and homosexuality happen to others, while they treat divorce with a lighter hand because it permeates their own ranks.) He marvels at the easy acceptance conservatives give ideas that seem inconsistent with the teachings of Jesus Christ.

In order to make theocracy a reality, its adherents must transmit their values to each new generation. According to Ballmer, conservative Christians hope to defeat secularism by obtaining government support in the form of tuition vouchers to attend private Christian schools, a practice that has been underway in Cleveland, Ohio, for several years.

Rather than making private education affordable to the poor, however, vouchers appear to benefit disproportionately the people who were wealthy enough to send their children to private school already. Furthermore, Ballmer is also disturbed by the way vouchers blur church-state lines.

In areas where vouchers are unavailable, what is a conservative parent to do? Home school, say a growing number of religious conservatives. Ballmer doesn't like that option either, particularly since a conservative group, called the Home School Legal Defense Association and headed by educator Michael Farris, has succeeded in exempting home schoolers from most state educational requirements.

Fundamentalist parents of home schooled children are particularly concerned about how their offspring will transition to a college setting. The Religious Right has produced an array of Bible colleges to meet these needs, but Ballmer particularly examines another Farris creation, Patrick Henry College, in Purcellville, Virginia. Designed primarily for children who were home schooled until college, Patrick Henry College was created with a goal of training an elite group of young leaders for the conservative-friendly American government they hope to help create.

Ballmer contrasts the education offered at Patrick Henry College with his alma mater, Trinity College, in Chicago. The small Christian college Ballmer attended was, he says, "a kind of halfway house between the sectarianism of my childhood and the wider world. It provided a safe harbor for my tentative forays into the sea of pluralism and secularism; I was seldom beyond the reach of a life buoy in the hands of someone who was learning to navigate the same waters, someone seeking to remain faithful to his evangelical religious convictions while at the same time engaging the larger culture critically" (105).

Patrick Henry College, in Ballmer's view, seems to offer no such challenges; students are affirmed in things they were taught since childhood, including biblical inerrancy and the supposed Christian origins of the United States. "Such an environment," says Ballmer, "produces ideologues, and ideologues, sadly, are in great demand these days" (106).

What would the United States look like if the religious right got its way? Ballmer asks. His answer resonates with Kevin Phillips: "the kind of homogeneous theocracy that the Puritans tried to establish in seventeenth-century Massachusetts" (181). A better path, he asserts, would put churches back at the margins, outside

the circles of power and uncorrupted by them. They would emphasize care for the earth and for God's creation, denounce torture, and accompany their concerns about abortion with caring for the poor, feeding the hungry, advocating human rights, and opposing capital punishment. Creationism and intelligent design would be taught at Sunday school or at home.

Randall Ballmer, like Kevin Phillips, offers a prophetic voice calling on Christian conservatives to re-examine some foundational beliefs and practices and turn away from them. Whether it is realistic to expect a large group of spiritually committed, politically powerful people to give up defining characteristics remains to be seen.

**M**adeleine Albright has more modest goals and seems hopeful of achieving some of them; in fact, some of them have already been accomplished, such as the bipartisan work that has created friendships between her and a Republican senator, Sam Brownback of Kansas, and a widely respected former congressman, Republican Vin Weber.

Although Albright criticizes actions of the Religious Right that she feels are unhelpful, her primary task is to outline a positive description of the way she thinks the United States ought to operate. She asserts that Americans, religious or not, need to know more about the religions of the nations they deal with. Current textbooks have "no place where a sophisticated understanding of religion as a public force in the world is dealt with" (66). (Hence the decision of *Foreign Affairs* to publish the Walter Russell Mead article cited above.)

Albright quotes a Harvard professor, Joseph Nye, who describes a country's moral reputation as an asset, a source of "soft power" that makes the country stronger and more secure. She also urges government officials to resist painting issues in stark contrasts of black and white, good and evil. The moral issues she describes can sometimes be murky, and the choices available tend to be mixed. She believes good and evil are not often separately packaged or easy to isolate.

*The Mighty and the Almighty* creates a primer on the history of American international relations, the development of the just-war theory, and the history and characteristics of Islam. Albright intersperses these tutorials with narrations of recent events and passages of personal memoir. An example of less-than-helpful involvement from the

religious right occurred in 1998, when President Clinton invited Benjamin Netanyahu and Yasser Arafat to the White House. Leaders of the Christian right bestowed the honorific "Ronald Reagan of Israel" on Netanyahu "and encouraged him—irresponsibly, in my view—not to compromise" (137). Such anecdotes dovetail with descriptions from all three authors on the relationship between the Jewish state and certain American Protestants.

Albright combines idealism and pragmatism in her remarks. Her own Roman Catholic upbringing has led her to share much of the ground occupied by liberal Protestants as defined by Mead. She deplors warfare but says that it is sometimes unavoidable: "Sometimes the only way to achieve peace is to fight for it" (61). She offers the U.S. intervention in Kosovo in 1999, when she was secretary of state, as an example of entering a conflict with the unanimous support of NATO, the public approval of the UN secretary general, and efforts to abide by the Geneva Conventions. According to Václav Havel, the intervention occurred "because no decent person can stand by and watch the systematic government-directed murder of other people.... This war places human rights above the rights of states" (64).

Albright identifies three areas where the Religious Right and the secular left could cooperate: support for the principle and practice of religious liberty, the fight to alleviate global poverty, and the prevention of genocide. She cites President George W. Bush's support for antipoverty statements at the 2005 G8 summit in Edinburgh and his "not on my watch" stance on Darfur as examples of where such constructive engagement can occur.

Albright praises certain actions by President Bush, particularly his statesmanship in the weeks after 9-11 and his calls for religious understanding during that time. Her catalogue of Bush's merits underscores her criticism of his subsequent actions, including the catastrophic change within Muslim countries that had initially been sympathetic to the United States. Within two years, opinions changed from 75 percent favorable to 83 percent negative in Indonesia. Positive perceptions of the United States sank to 16 percent in Pakistan, 12 percent in Jordan, and 17 percent in Turkey. Large majorities in Egypt, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia now view "George W. Bush as a greater threat to the world order than Osama bin Laden" (159).

Albright is concerned that, despite President Bush's insistence that the United States is not fighting a religious war, his

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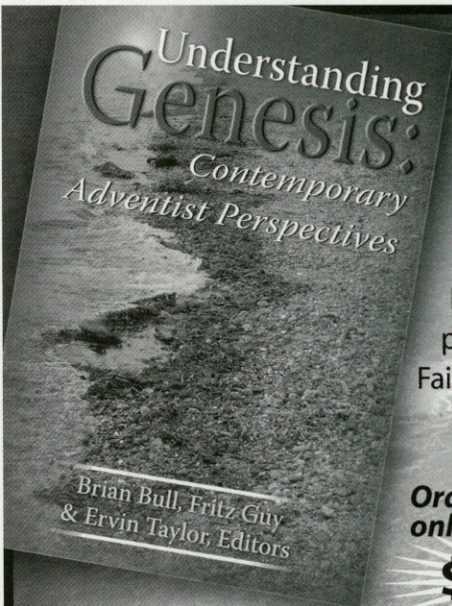
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rhetoric, steeped in religious imagery and calibrated to resonate with his political base within the Religious Right, has revived images of the Crusades in the minds of many people in the Muslim world. The rhetoric of the United States, she states, "has come close to justifying U.S. Policy in explicitly religious terms... These are precisely the grounds upon which Al Qaeda would prefer to fight... We will never unite anyone around the proposition that to disagree with the president of the United States is to pick a quarrel with God" (160–61).

Albright takes issue with the comments of the neoconservative writer William Kristol: "What's wrong with dominance, in the service of sound principles and high ideals?" She notes that this is the question Americans asked a hundred years ago while sweeping across the Philippines. President William McKinley, claiming to have acquired divine inspiration, said that Americans had a divine mandate to impose their will. "Whether or not that was the right reply then," says Albright, "it is the wrong answer today" (288).

Albright sees America as exceptional not because it is powerful but because it has usually exercised its power with restraint. For Albright, the best hope for the future lies in outreach efforts between faiths and between cultures: Bill Clinton's Global Initiative; the UN's Alliance of Civilizations High-Level Group; Meaden, an Arab entity that has created a series of online conversations; the Cordoba Initiative, a multifaith, multinational project named for the Spanish city that housed Muslims, Jews, and Christians in peaceful proximity. Yale University, in concert with evangelicals and the Moroccan government, has launched a Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Albright cautions that theological presuppositions are not good bases for conducting international relations: "It may be that Armageddon will settle all our accounts. It would be inexcusable, however, if our leaders relied on that supposition to justify their own inaction, only to be proved wrong, leaving us with all the destruction and none of the paradise. Setting the stage for Armageddon is not a defensible foreign policy. Peace is" (137).

**A**ll three of these authors may have to wait a long time for their preferred vision, or even a part of it, to unfold. Their thoughtfulness, depth of research, and passion, however, are bound to make an impact on the current debates about American religion. ■

**Terrie Aamodt** is professor of English and history at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.



## MOVIE REVIEW

## Amazing Grace

*The Movie, the Music, the Movement* | BY AUDREY DECOURSEY

**D**o you know who wrote the hymn "Amazing Grace," and why? I do. I recently saw the sneak preview of the movie *Amazing Grace*, about the activist life of William Wilberforce. He was the man the British abolition movement coalesced around at the turn of the nineteenth century, the movement that

eventually (through two decades of work) got the slave trade banned in the British Empire. I heartily recommend the movie, which lived up even to its producer's hype. It comes out February 23, 2007, and you should go see it.

February 17–18 is Amazing Grace Weekend, so if you're in a church, Adventist or otherwise, you should lobby to get the folks singing the song that day. Ideally, you could also tie the song into its origins as a voice of protest against slavery, and use it as a protest against modern-day slavery—twenty-seven million people are enslaved today.

One of the most remarkable strengths of the movie is that, like *Iron-Jawed Angels* (about U.S. women's suffragists), it glamorizes political activism without obscuring the realities of the struggle's difficulties. There is pain; there is hopelessness; there is self-doubt; there is loneliness; there is mistrust among members of the community.

There are people who say "Go slower"; "It's bad for the economy"; "People are too fearful for change"; "You'll be called a traitor"; and most damaging of all, "Yes, I agree with you, but I don't think yours is quite the right way to act, so I will work against you and support the status quo out of my own unoriginality."

The story also makes a great case for overcoming the typical division between political and spiritual life. It shows convincingly that the best way to live as a Christian is to struggle to end injustice—that political activism is no less Christian than is a life of solitude.

The parallels between the movie's time in



**The movie Web site (see box at left) is chock full of facts about "Amazing Grace," the song: 972 arrangements exist; it was included in soldiers' hymnals during the Civil War; the song appears in eleven hundred albums.**

**For more information:****Movie Web site:**

[www.amazinggracemovie.com](http://www.amazinggracemovie.com)

**Movie's modern-day abolition campaign****Web site:**

[www.theamazingchange.com](http://www.theamazingchange.com)

**Official book of the movie, about modern-day global slavery:**

*Not for Sale: The Return of the Global Slave Trade—and How We Can Fight It* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), by David Batstone

**Film clips about the book and campaign:**

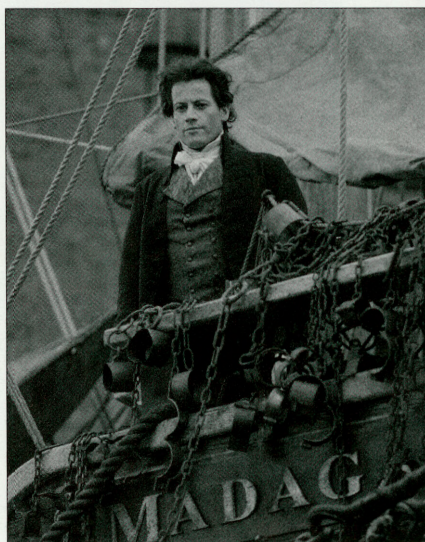
[www.youtube.com/profile?user=NotforSalecampaign](http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=NotforSalecampaign)

**Internet trivia:**

A Google search for "Amazing Grace, sheet music" yielded more than 1,040,000 results, offering sheet music, music downloads, books, and more. Just for comparison, a similar search for "Elvis, sheet music" yielded 1,150,000 results.



**Ioan Gruffudd stars as William Wilberforce, a pioneer abolitionist—but not the author of the song, which became an anthem for the antislavery movement. It was composed by John Newton, a former slave and one of Wilberforce's friends.**



history and our own are incredible. I don't know how hard the filmmakers had to work to draw out those matches, but it's pretty blatant. There's a world power defending its empire abroad in a war against insurgents (these ones are in America); the people are kept in too much a state of fear to be amenable to social change; economic hardship is cited as a justifiable excuse for inaction against injustice; understanding the evils of chattel slavery leads activists to realize the evils of the entire economic system that creates rich and poor; anyone who speaks out against the national leader is labeled unpatriotic and seditious; people are always hatin' on the French....

The movie is also packed with tight one-liners. I may have to watch it again with a pen and notebook in hand to jot them all down.

Of course, it's a shame that the movie focuses so

much on white people's work to end slavery, and that there is all of one African character. Presenting the good activism of white abolitionists is the goal of the movie, and it meets its goal. But I am consistently disappointed in us white people that we seem to need to have our hands held through antiracist work, and that we can't just hear the stories of racist oppression and figure out how to act.

The makeup in the movie is amazing; the actors really do look twenty years older than their younger selves. And, yes, the movie has a love story, and, yes, it has busty cleavage and tight pants, if you need that sort of thing in your movie-going ventures.

Oh, and about the song? It was composed at the end of the eighteenth century by John Newton, a former slave ship worker, who wrote it as a sort of confession about the sins he had committed against fellow creatures of God. Newton was one of Wilberforce's friends and role models, and the song became an anthem for the movement. Watch the movie and you'll know even more. ■

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**Audrey deCoursey** is a member of the Church of the Brethren and a M.Div. student at the Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, California.

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## Questions

*Continued from page 53...*

that all participants are expected to affirm. I think it's rather impressive.

- We will be open and respectful toward each person we encounter.
- We will be positive examples of Christ's love for all people. Whenever possible, our witness will be for the power of that love rather than against the evil that we deplore.
- Our actions will be grounded in our shared worship, prayer, study of the Bible, and reliance on our historic confessions. These are the fundamental building blocks of our faith.
- We will use no violence, verbal or physical, toward any person, especially those with whom we disagree or officers of the law who feel compelled to arrest us as we carry out nonviolent, peaceful protest.
- We will not destroy or damage any property.
- When engaging in nonviolent acts of "divine obedience" that may be seen as breaking the law, we will accept the consequences of our actions.
- We will not carry anything that could be construed as a weapon.
- We will not bring or use alcohol or drugs (except for medical purposes). ■

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**Note:** The pledge is posted at <[www.christianpeacewitness.org](http://www.christianpeacewitness.org)>



**Her Body Sprouted Wings** | BY HEATHER ISAACS



LYLE MADESON

Her body sprouted wings  
like a heron springing into flight  
even as the tumor leaped with life,  
red and awake with meanness.

Holy God, we die hard.

In snow drifts and automobiles,  
behind hospital curtains,  
alone in a field, or a bed,  
all at once,  
or piece by piece,  
too young or too old,  
against our will or by choice,  
with surprise or secret recognition,  
on machines that breathe for us,  
surrounded, forgotten, even embraced,  
we are wounded and diseased  
until

Until then,  
that point in time, which hovers over us all,  
descends, and we are plucked from the earth  
and returned to it in the same breath  
a simple throaty sigh  
or gasp, a gurgling for another,  
where do the beloveds go?