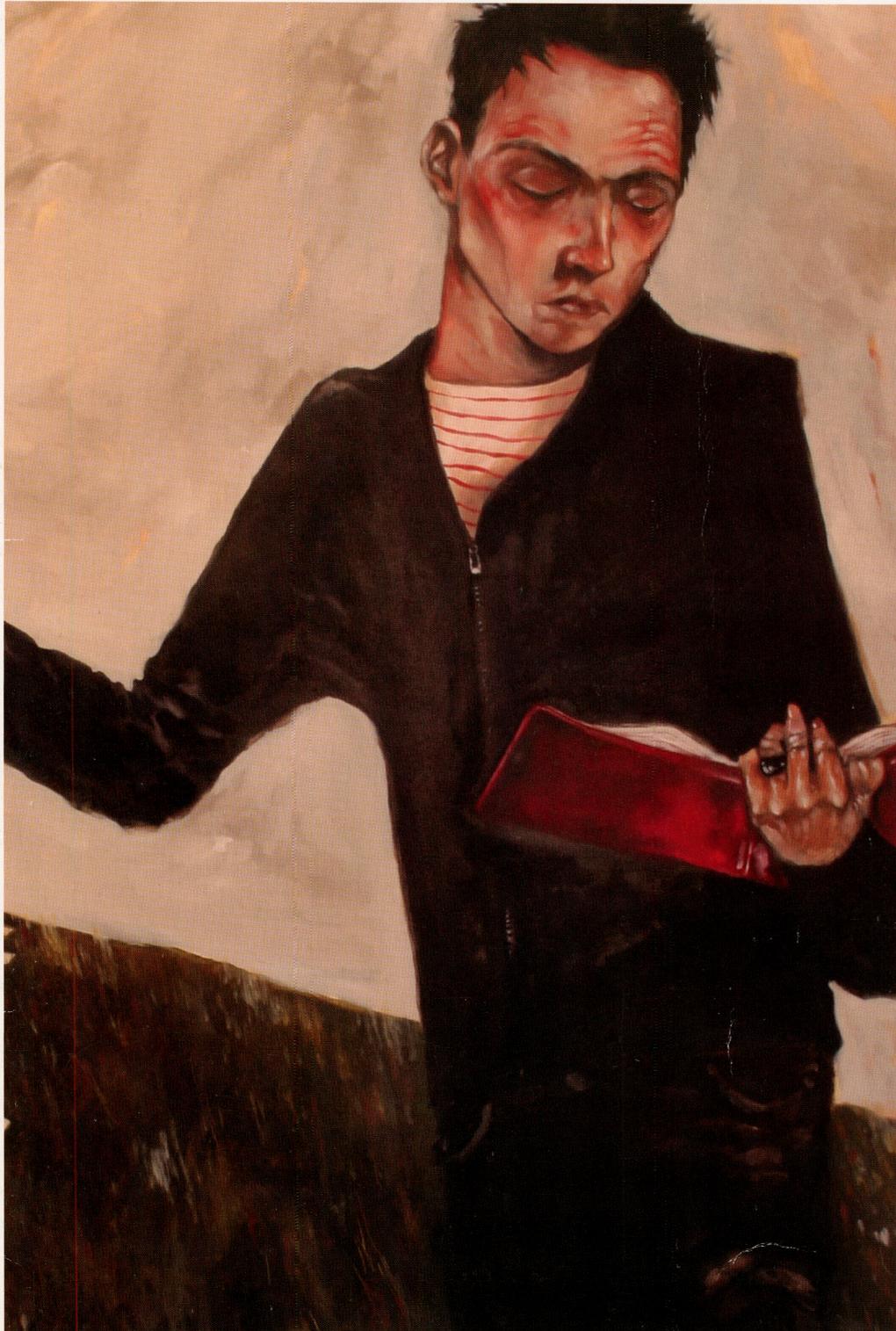




*community through conversation*

# SPECTRUM



## **Novel Thoughts**

When Adventists  
Riot

## **Small Horn with a Big Mouth**

Books on the  
Bedside Table

## **Why Bother with Cinema?**

Top Ten Movies  
Every Adventist  
Should See

## **Who Will Reinvent Adventism?**

Garden Envy

community through conversation  
**SPECTRUM**

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**ABOUT THE COVER ART  
AND ARTIST**

*Joe Hoskins, mainly a figurative painter and illustrator, draws heavily from a tradition of literature and myth for most of his subject matter. Emotional content and resonance are his chief concerns when considering a piece. It's Better to Forget portrays the wish that some memories could simply be torn out and discarded because of the pain they inflict. Hoskins lives and works in Kansas City, Missouri.*

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## EDITORIAL ■ *from the editor*

### **Kathy Jones** | BY BONNIE DWYER

I met Kathy Jones in the midst of a novel shortly after her missionary husband went missing. The setting was 1965 on the island of Mindanao, and I was with Skip Sands, an American CIA operative.

The fact that Kathy was a fictional character did not diminish my pleasure in making her acquaintance. It heightened it, because it is not often that I have the pleasure of happening upon a fellow Seventh-day Adventist in contemporary fiction. Suddenly, the book took on a new reality. I wanted to play the Adventist name game with her or author Denis Johnson. Surely, we must know someone in common. Curiosity about how she would be used propelled me forward. She was, after all, named as the hero of the book in the *New York Times* review.

I jumped to the end of the saga, read her final thoughts. Her universalistic spirit pleased me and made me want to introduce her to Fritz Guy. Then I wanted to discuss her and the book's war themes with those Adventist peaceniks Doug Morgan or Ron Osborn.

"War is 90 percent myth anyway, isn't it?" wrote Johnson. "In order to prosecute our own wars we raise them to the level of human sacrifice, don't we, and we constantly invoke our God. It's got to be about something bigger than dying, or we'd all turn deserter."

Another one of the novel's characters then suggests, "I think we need to be much more conscious of that. I think we need to be invoking the other fellow's gods too. And his devils, his aswang. He's more scared of his gods and his devils and his aswang than he'll ever be of us."

So this was the idea that Johnson would explore, explode, exploit as he moved through twenty years of American history beginning with the death of John F. Kennedy.

In this issue of *Spectrum*, we explore the world

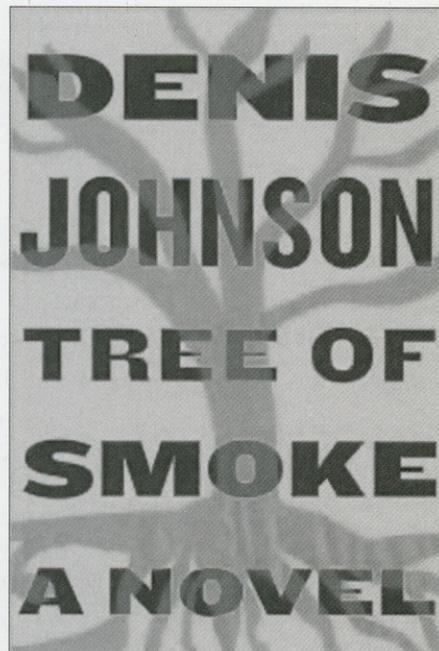
through books and movies and the people who create them.

We use them as the jumping-off point for thoughts on how we shape our present world, how we view our past, how we read our Bible, how we turn our own lives into narratives.

We are delighted to have novelists Ray Garton and Steve Spruill grace our pages. Ray has told interviewers in the past that his interest in writing horror stories began with his reaction to the beasts of biblical prophecy. The Adventist fear factor. We're glad that his humor also has Adventist origins. Learning to laugh at ourselves is such a relief.

Among the quotes on the back of the book jacket for *Tree of Smoke*, the Denis Johnson novel in which I met Kathy Jones, was one from Jonathan Franzen: "The God I want to believe in has a voice and a sense of humor like Denis Johnson's."

Would that anyone meeting my God, our God, would say the same. ■





## Who Will Reinvent Adventism? | BY CHARLES SCRIVEN

Within homeland Adventism, insecurity abounds. Too many institutions are at risk or on the brink. Too few second- and third-generation members—and fewer still of their children—are passionate about the Church. Converts too often become members without embracing the culture and sticking with it, or passing it on to their kids.

After a vivid Revelation Seminar, some people fall in love with Adventism. But it's one thing to fall in love, another to sustain the marriage. In the time-honored metaphor, the revolving door still revolves.

Only more so.

Or maybe it's that nowadays so many younger Adventists live in the foyer of the Church and hardly ever come inside. In any case, everyone—including every church administrator—has the sense that in North America (and also in the older strongholds overseas) much of what is good and beautiful about our community hangs on the razor edge of danger.

At least since the 1970s, a few theologians have wanted to reinvent the Adventist vision. They have both embraced and questioned our heritage, and have tried, using a biblical frame, to set our sights on more galvanizing goals. Usually, however, they have been at the margin. Though some are fairly well-known, only rarely, I think, have they made an impact on the camp-meeting circuit, or at the General Conference's Biblical Research Institute, or at the Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan. When they've taught in Adventist colleges, they've sometimes met with distrust, and had to worry about, or even lose, their jobs.

Now more than ever, the need for new vision is plain. Many church leaders know this well, and wonder themselves about how to ignite passion across a wider range of members, not least among the young.

Perhaps it's time to lay out the welcome mat for Adventist visionaries.

In late September, at the annual conference of the Adventist Forum in Santa Rosa, California, an extraordinary conversation took place. The catalyst was the second edition of *Seeking a Sanctuary*, the endlessly provocative rendering of the Adventist story by cultural historians Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart.

This writing duo, one a lecturer at Oxford University and the other a London journalist, argue that the Adventist experience is thoroughly, yet deviantly, American. We Adventists reflect American experience and yet keep our distance from it, sticking to our own little "sanctuary," or refuge from the wider world.

The authors show how Adventist withdrawal from the American mainstream sheds light both on our frame of mind and our record of growth. As for this latter, growth, they say, will continue into the indefinite future, both in the developing world and among blacks and the new wave of immigrants at home. But it will not occur among the Caucasians, who were the Church's backbone to begin. Their vision and ethos produced Adventist medicine and Adventist higher education, but these, say Bull and Lockhart, are likely to decline. They even predict a "de-medicalization" of the Church, with Loma Linda University no longer able to sustain itself as an Adventist institution.

**In the time-honored metaphor, the revolving door still revolves.**

Some 160 people were spending the weekend together. Most were Caucasian and older. But thanks not only to the cast of a play called *Red Books*, written and performed by students (mostly) of Pacific Union College, but also to a modest influx of other under-forty Adventists, the conversation was decidedly cross-generational.

The play was an exploration of how Adventists have dealt with new knowledge about Ellen White. It was performed on Friday evening, and opened old wounds as well as helping, at least in part, to heal them. As you may guess, the authors of *Seeking a Sanctuary* drew blood, as well. They told us that, on balance, Adventists have never made much of a difference beyond the difference they make for themselves. Except for health and health care, we've been more or less irrelevant to the wider world's goings-on.

If Adventist medicine and Adventist higher education decline, that separatist frame of mind—little interested in changing the world—may harden, or soften into what is merely fashionable or easy. That would make the Adventism of the future, however large, even less able to be the “yeast” and “light” that Jesus hoped for.

So all weekend Bull and Lockhart's 160 conversation

partners were either arguing back, or wondering what could be done, or both.

Among the most insistent voices, especially by Sunday morning, were those of people in their twenties and their thirties. They seemed creative and engaged—clearly capable of... leadership. But mere words—propositional fat—held no interest for them. They wanted a vision for action, a church with a passion for making a difference.

A church that is merely a refuge can grow. But it cannot appeal to those it educates into prophetic, as opposed to merely sectarian, awareness. People who dare to be Daniel or Isaiah—dare to *engage* the world, to *imagine* its betterment and *resist* its evil—want more than a cloistered life, and they will leave us, if they have to, in order to get it.

I therefore issue this challenge:

Let us now lay down the welcome mat for visionaries. Let pastors and older members and church leaders lay it down. Let the welcome extend to every kind and color of Adventist. Let it extend to anyone who cares enough about the Church to venture forth with a fresh idea. Let doctrinal hairsplitting, together with distrust and suspicion, come to a halt. Let holy imagination take flight.

All this is just another way of saying Yes to the Holy Spirit and No to our besetting fears. With God's help, it could set our sights on more galvanizing goals. It could ignite new passion. It could help us defy the sociological determinism that dooms us to being less than yeast and light.

At the conference Kendra Haloviak was herself visionary in her compelling sermon on the *biblical* meaning of sanctuary. It was part of what kept young people engaged in the conversation even Sunday morning. And it showed that reinventing the Adventist vision provides not only insight but also...fizz, that elusive stuff that makes for, well, excitement.

The effect her sermon had can spread. But not unless the welcome mat rolls out to everyone. ■

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**Charles Scriven** is president of  
Adventist Forum.



## Finding serendipity *but still seeking biblical ideas*

### Fresh Air

IT WAS A SERENDIPITY to read Samir Selmanovic's article, "The Sweet Problem of Inclusiveness" (summer 2007), which expressed so beautifully conclusions to which I have been coming in recent years.

CARROL GRADY

VIA THE INTERNET

"THE SWEET Problem of Inclusiveness," by Samir Selmanovic, brought a challenge as well as a breath of fresh air!

After my retirement as a Seventh-day Adventist minister, my wife and I had the privilege of visiting countless countries and witnessing many Christian attitudes in beautiful and outstanding ways among people who may never be introduced to Christ. What is their fate?

We were happy to help build a church on the border between Pakistan and India with Maranatha Volunteers and to see it filled at dedication. It was beautiful! However, we left that country realizing that maybe 2 percent of the population is Christian, which includes Pentecostals, Seventh-day Adventists, and Catholics. What happens to the other 98 percent of more than one billion people? We felt blessed personally by so many of these people, most of whom had not been baptized.

A report by the *National Geographic* says that the world population increases by 219,000 each day! Are Seventh-day Adventists responsible for seeing that everyone in the growing population of the world is taught the Twenty-eight Fundamental Doctrines, personally—with literature, radio, television, the Internet, and so forth? Are Adventists expected to then baptize them, help them build churches, and minister to their problems? Is the timing of the Second Advent determined by the effectiveness of Seventh-day Adventists?

Can we accept the possibility that people like Billy Graham are giving at least the basics of a saving relationship

with God? Is God using everyone, as in Bible times?

DICK SERNS

Loomis, Calif.

### Poor Treatment for the Poor

IN THEIR ARTICLE "What is a Christian to Make of Our Flat New World?" (summer 2007), James Walters and David Kim urge us to strive to improve the world through "savvy global reforms." The "realistic Christian," we are told, must learn to embrace a "pragmatic" gospel of open markets, "retail reform," technology, and "democratic capitalism," all of which "can be molded for world betterment" and even the "eradication of world poverty."

But what biblical and theological resources do Walters and Kim muster in their celebration of political "realism" and the dynamism of "democratic capitalism"? The answer is: few if any.

The biblical message, they write, "must be taken seriously without the mistake of taking it literally." There is a great "cultural/scientific gulf between Bible times and our own" and "ancient cultures were relatively content with the status quo... The way to deal with the poor was simple: give them alms."

So much, then, for the prophet Amos (not to mention the radical Jubilee passages of the Hebrew Bible, Christ's teachings on economic justice, the proto-communism of the earliest Christian communities, and the countercultural social ethics of the Adventist pioneers, on to Adam Smith and Reinhold Niebuhr, that great dean of liberal Protestantism, who similarly insisted that the Gospels not be read literally, thus permitting believers to engage in violence in defense of "democracy" and capitalism in the context of cold war power rivalries.

The question that arises in the mind of this reader,  
*Continued on page 7...*



## One Reason Churches Grow | BY NATHAN BROWN

**W**hy churches grow is one of the mysterious quests of pastors, evangelists, church administrators, and many concerned church members. The allure and elusiveness of a key, catchall ingredient is evidenced by the multiplicity of books and seminars claiming to offer the answer. Many of these are well intentioned but limited in their credibility and applicability, and, of course, as with any marketing opportunity to ardent customers a variety of snake oil salesmen are always ready to promote their products and programs.

So it is refreshing to find a carefully researched and Adventist-specific study of this question. Monte Sahlin, director of research and special projects for the Ohio Conference, has spent most of the past decade asking the questions about why churches grow, primarily focused in urban and suburban areas. As part of this, he has surveyed all 647 Adventist churches in the northeastern United States megametropolitan area, stretching from Boston to Washington, D.C. Sahlin's research has previously been blogged about by Ryan Bell and Marcel Schwantes and has now been published as *Mission in Metropolis: The Adventist Movement in an Urban World* (Center for Creative Ministry).

Without wanting to dismiss or discourage traditional evangelism, Sahlin concludes that "there is no correlation between the number of Bible seminars [conducted by local churches] and soul-winning." This does not mean public evangelism is necessarily ineffective, but that such programs are run as regularly by churches that do not grow as by churches that do.

By contrast, Sahlin's research found that the strongest correlation with church growth was engaging with the community in active service. And, sadly, Sahlin concludes, "very few Adventist churches are involved in the types of programs that have the

### Books discussed in this Article:

Peter H. Ballis. *In and Out of the World: Seventh-day Adventists in New Zealand*. Portland, Oreg.: International Specialized Book Services, 1986.

Diana Butler Bass, *Christianity for the Rest of Us*. San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 2006.

Monte Sahlin. *Mission in Metropolis: The Adventist Movement in an Urban World*. Center for Creative Ministry, 2007.

This article originally appeared on the *Spectrum Blog* <<http://spectrummagazine.typepad.com>>, September 25, 2007

strongest correlation with church growth."

Perhaps not surprisingly, the significance of community involvement for church growth is not a new suggestion. In the book he edited to mark the centenary of Seventh-day Adventists in New Zealand, sociologist Peter H. Ballis comments on the significance of involvement in real social and political issues in the founding and early dramatic growth of the Church in New Zealand. He notes how "Adventists found themselves joining committees, speaking before audiences that under different circumstances would have been inaccessible to them, and, at times, co-operating with clergy of other denominations. All this has the effect of creating a favourable image of the Church. . . . Such interaction with the public served to acquaint Adventists with large numbers in the community."

Ballis cites membership figures that show a doubling in church membership in New Zealand during this period

(1911–21). “It is tempting to conclude that it was the Church’s involvement in New Zealand’s social issues that brought about this unprecedented growth rate,” he reflects.

Of course, churches grow for more than one reason. But it seems that community service works in at least two ways: attracting those benefited by the Church’s community service and those considering joining a faith community that is making a difference.

Sahlin argues that community involvement is key to gaining credibility within the community to which the Church ministers. “A church that is invisible and largely absent from the public arena will not be taken seriously by educated citizens who care about their communities,” he urges.

But such activism is also vital for those within the Church. In her survey of growing mainline Protestant churches, *Christianity for the Rest of Us*, Diana Butler Bass quotes one of her interviewees: “People are looking for a place that will enable and encourage meaningful service in the community, a way to live out the faith they hope to espouse.”

And that is the challenge for all levels of the Church. In one sense, engaging with the community is simple: whenever one walks out the front door or out the church driveway, we are involved in the community. But for this to be both meaningful and useful is not always so straightforward. Church leaders—from local church ministry leaders to the most senior administrators—must create and encourage opportunities for real community involvement and service.

And this begins with learning to listen to our communities. Sahlin points out “there is little evidence that the community service activities carried on in most cases have anything to do with the need of the community as viewed by local residents and civic leaders.”

As a church, we need to work together to find creative, authentic, practical, and ongoing ways to serve our communities. As Peter urged the early church, “Live an exemplary life among the natives so that your actions will refute their prejudices. Then they’ll be won over to God’s side and be there to join in the celebration when he arrives” (1 Pet. 2:12, *The Message*). ■

**Nathan Brown** edits the Australian edition of the *Signs of the Times*.

## FEEDBACK

*Continued from page 5...*

however, is, are they realistic enough in their analysis? Have they seriously wrestled with the oppressive and inevitable realities of processes of capital accumulation and corporate globalization? Have they offered theologically grounded principles for a distinctly Christian engagement with the inequality and exploitation that accompany corporate markets? Or have they, in fact, encouraged us to subscribe to the latest version of a familiar millenarian myth—the myth of Progress?

Any call for policies to challenge structural inequalities and benefit the poorest members of society should certainly be welcomed by socially conscious believers. But the implication that poverty can be “eradicated” and the world redeemed through sufficiently chastened capitalist mechanisms and the policy prescriptions of globalization enthusiasts and World Bank technocrats surely betrays a misplaced religious idealism.

RONALD OSBORN  
Los Angeles, Calif.

I AM GLAD TO SEE someone tackle this issue (James Walters and David Kim, “What Is a Christian to Make of Our Flat New World?”). I thought the authors presented a very balanced viewpoint. I liked the idea of responsibilities; too frequently we only hear about our rights.

As a capitalist and generally a libertarian, I believe that nothing is truly free, and that the desire to make a profit (which is a right) contains the responsibility of appropriate stewardship. Hopefully, this article will lead others, especially business leaders in our community and universities, to expand on this in future issues of *Spectrum*.

LARRY M. POWELL  
via the Internet

**Author’s query:** For a biography of Arthur Grosvenor Daniells, I am searching for correspondence and other pertinent materials held outside of Adventist archives. Please contact Benjamin McArthur, Department of History, Southern Adventist University, PO Box 370, Collegedale, Tenn. 37315, or [bmcarthr@southern.edu](mailto:bmcarthr@southern.edu)



## A Few Words with Walter | BY BENJAMIN McARTHUR

**Editor's Note:** Pacific Press has recently released a new book, *No Peace for a Soldier*, which Walter C. Utt, former Pacific Union College history professor, started before his death and Southern Adventist University associate English professor Helen Pyke later completed. The significance of the book is highlighted in this excerpted imaginary conversation that Benjamin McArthur created for the inaugural Walter C. Utt Lecture, on April 16, 1998.

It was only a few weeks ago, as I was working late one evening in my Irwin Hall office, that I had an experience so extraordinary that I haven't mentioned it to anyone—until now. As I was finishing up some student papers I had promised to have graded by the next class, the tasks of the day started finally to wear at me. Losing concentration on the essays, my mind wandered from this to that, and I decided to lay my head on the desk for a quick nap. But hardly had I moved the papers aside when I heard steps in the outer chamber of the office. I lifted my head in time to see a carefully groomed, middle-aged man leaning on two canes, peering around the corner of the door. He wore a wry smile that suggested he shared a joke I wasn't onto yet. "You're Keith Francis?" he inquired.

"No," I replied, "This is his office, but he's on leave and I'm using it presently."

"And who are you?" he continued.

"My name is Ben McArthur. I'm a visiting professor, the Walter Utt Visiting Professor of History."

My mysterious visitor seemed amused by this bit of information.

"Well, is this some new custom our colleges have taken up, hiring contract teachers at budget rates and attaching the names of long-gone professors to dignify the practice?"

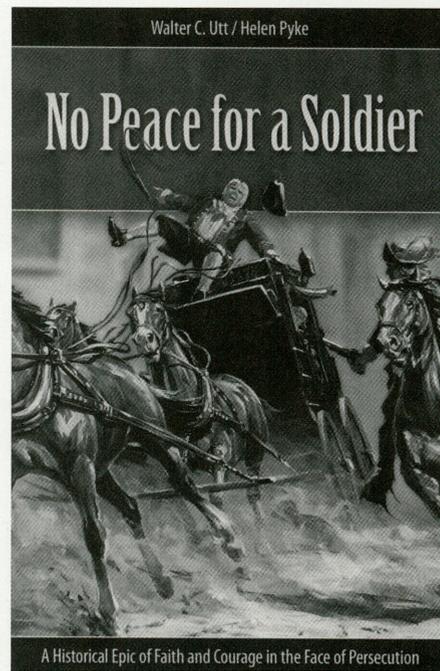
"Not at all," I replied, feeling a defensiveness creeping into my voice.

"I'm being paid a salary I only wish I were receiving at my home institution. Furthermore, friends of Dr. Utt raised an impressive sum of money to fund this chair, aided by a sizeable grant from the college."

My reply seemed momentarily to stun my midnight caller, and his manner softened; he appeared genuinely affected by the news.

"I've always enjoyed friends whose generosity far exceeded anything I merited," he replied at last. "To imagine they would do such a thing for the history department in my honor is..."

"In your honor?" I interrupted. Things were becoming stranger than I liked, and I don't even watch "X-Files." I considered pinching myself to make sure I was awake, but the thought seemed too clichéd



to merit action. "You are Walter Utt?" I responded weakly.

"Yes. Now don't get all concerned about it. I occasionally stroll the halls of Irwin late at night, purely for old time's sake. I've never even gone into an office before tonight, when I saw the door ajar. I had no idea about what had been going on."

I finally got my wits enough about me to invite my guest, the one without whom I would never have made my visit here, to take a chair. I could

**Benjamin McArthur** chairs the History Department at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee. In 1997–98, he was the Walter C. Utt professor of history at Pacific Union College, where this interview was originally presented.

tell that prolonged standing was a labor for him.

"Where's your home?" he asked after settling uncomfortably into the red vinyl padded chair.

"Southern Adventist University."

"Oh. I didn't realize we had another university. Is that a branch of Andrews or Loma Linda?"

"No. It's the school in Collegedale. You knew it as Southern Missionary College, or perhaps Southern College."

"Yes. A university you say."

"Don't ask me to explain."

"Now, isn't Collegedale the place where they make the cupcakes?"

"That's snack cakes, Yes, the Little Debbies. It's an impressive factory, helps our local tax base."

Amidst this chit-chat, I suddenly realized I had an opportunity to inquire about something I assumed I would never know. "You are the only trained historian in our church, so far as I recall, who devoted great energy to producing young adult historical fiction. How was it, with your ambitions for scholarship, and unrelenting teaching loads, that you took up that task?"

"Professor McArthur, can you think of a more important group to endow with the pleasure and instruction of history than the young?"

"No," I admitted. "But what would the history faculty at Berkeley think if they knew one of their PhDs lavished research time over such tales for children?"

"I know what they ought to think. They ought to think that if more professional historians worried about reaching the general public with narrative history of some appeal instead of one more technical monograph of

interest to perhaps eight other specialists in the world then maybe our profession wouldn't have lost the reading public to the Gore Vidals of the world."

"I agree entirely," I responded. "I admire your efforts along these lines. I recently read to my daughter both *The Wrath of the King* and *Home to Our Valleys*. And one of our best history majors back at Southern told me not long ago that he had read your works when he was young and they were among his favorites."

"I'm pleased to hear it," Dr. Utt responded. "You send a book out and often never learn whether it touches anyone. You know," he continued, "virtually every scene and even much of the dialogue is based on research. It may look like another swashbuckling historical romance, but it's solid history."

As I pondered these two popular histories of the Huguenot travail under Louis XIV, it occurred to me that its author wasn't speaking just to a juvenile audience. He was attempting to challenge the Adventist Church. His account of how many prosperous Huguenots were willing to surrender their property and lives for an unpopular faith could be read as an allegory of God's remnant in the last days, a remnant we like to think will be disproportionately Adventist.

Can we recognize ourselves in that harried and martyred band of Frenchmen? Or is similar persecution so unthinkable that we feel no kinship? Shouldn't all seventh-grade teachers in our schools be reading these books to their students?

I was getting too worked up in my own thoughts. I decided to have some

fun and bait Dr. Utt about the anti-Catholicism that some might find in his novels. "You know Walter, your portrayal of intolerant and persecuting Catholics wouldn't play well in the more progressive corners of Adventist society today. Would you change some of that now?"

For a moment, I appeared to catch him off guard. "This wasn't a controversial issue in the sixties and early seventies," he admitted, "but I never thought of myself as a Catholic basher. In my Western Civilization lectures I think I made great efforts to give the mother church its due in nurturing Western civilization. Furthermore, the most despicable people in my histories are the mercenary Protestants who became informers and spies. In any event, to ignore the travesties of any people or institutions for the sake of good manners defeats the instructive possibilities of history. An education is neither more sophisticated nor more civil by virtue of a selective memory."

Dr. Utt had spoiled my fun, but I wouldn't let go. "Still," I was rubbing my hands in anticipation of a quandary I thought I was presenting the good professor. "Your book could be used by David Mould and his cronies in their antipapal diatribes. You could be quoted in underground pamphlets circulated in odd Adventist corners from coast to coast, about persecutions behind and ahead of us, adding fuel to the already considerable fire of conspiracy theories in the Church." I knew this would get a rise out of him.

"These conspiracy nuts will be the death of our Church," he intoned solemnly. "I will never do anything to further their wild-eyed notions, and if I see myself quoted in one of their

divisive publications, I will take immediate action."

He calmed down after this bit of venting and began to reflect on the subject.

"It's a genuine dilemma, these conspiracy theories, I mean. Historians recognize that a view of reality that finds major events being orchestrated by a cabal of conspirators is almost always wrong. It's not conspiracy but incompetence and failure by our leaders to anticipate the contingencies of life that ought to concern us. On the other hand, we have to acknowledge a fact about Adventism. The eschatology at the heart of our belief system nurtures conspiratorial thinking. When we anticipate betrayal and persecution in our future, we are apt to find it in spades. It was no different with the Huguenots. During difficult times, they lived within a constant web of suspicion and rumor."

"But we are nowhere close to persecution at the present time," I countered. "Isn't the obsession with conspiracy theories more an indulgence in a sort of paranoid scapegoating than anything else?"

"There's lot of that, certainly," Walter retorted, "but there is also an ineffable sadness in the apparent vulnerability people feel. It's not just—or even primarily—an Adventist problem. Conspiracy mongering permeates American life. Many people seem to live in an atmosphere of vulnerability. It breeds suspicion and aborts clear thought. Given the situation when social tensions are relatively few, what might one expect if the wheels truly started to come off our society? What would be the atmosphere within and without the Church should the expected 'end of time'

events begin to unfold?"

"It could get ugly," I conceded. I had never before considered that the American penchant for unwarranted suspicions lent plausibility to apocalyptic scenarios.

But what I found most intriguing about Dr. Utt's historical novels was their insight into the internal dynamics of the Huguenots when they were under stress. Our Great Controversy image is of a people simple in faith and single-minded in their resolve. He told a more complex story.

"Professor Utt, the Huguenots you describe violate my idea of God's tender-hearted chosen people. These folk bicker among themselves, calculate the costs of faithfulness, even betray one another to the authorities. Then when they campaign to win back their homes in the Piedmont valley, they brutally slaughter soldiers and civilians alike. This following some of the most heartfelt prayers one can imagine."

Walter put on a quizzical look. "You're an historian?" he asked. "You apparently haven't read the Old Testament lately, let alone histories of the Puritans or other Calvinist groups. Piety and violence are frequent bedfellows, and we confront the limits of human understanding when we try to resolve this paradox."

"Might we not say that the Huguenots confused a human desire for their homeland with divine permission for retribution on those who opposed them?" I suggested. "After all, there has been no greater abuse in history than religion misused to sanction the oppression of others."

"Oh?" Walter's eyebrows raised a bit at my pronouncement. "Let me refer you again to some more history, specif-

ically the twentieth century's unparalleled totalitarian violence, whose inspiration was overtly secular. Certainly religion has engendered moments of sublime evil, but I think a more accurate accounting would find violence usually bound up with other motives."

I had to admit I had fallen victim to the oft-repeated canard about religion's ill effects. But there was one last point about his second book, *Home to Our Valleys*, that intrigued me. "Your conclusion was not the typical 'happy ending' we expect in our books. I had anticipated that the Huguenots would with God's help have overcome the Catholic menace and found contentment in the ancestral home. Instead, you tell a story of incomplete victory, obtained as much by the political maneuverings of Europe's great powers as by their own efforts. The future still seemed uncertain for the noble Protestant band."

"But isn't that the way of history?" Dr. Utt responded. "There are few real 'endings.' We see momentary resolutions to problems, the only promise being that the challenge will return later in a slightly different form. The experience of God's people has been no different. Israel's victory over the Canaanites was never complete; dangers always lurked. We mistake God's purposes, I think, if we expect the kind of final judgments within history that can only happen at the end of time." ■



## Meetings, Meetings, Meetings

### Colleges Confront Money Problems

BY GARY CHARTIER

Major transitions may be in the offing for at least three Seventh-day Adventist colleges: Pacific Union College, Atlantic Union College, and Columbia Union College.

PUC faces significant ongoing fiscal challenges. Administrators have sought to address them by means of a plan to develop some of the land owned by PUC and located near the college site. The planned development would lead to an "Angwin eco-village," a "a state-of-the-art 'green' community," according to the college.

Complicating these efforts has been many community members' concern that a projected residential development would disrupt the lifestyle California's Napa County has worked hard to preserve. County leaders are considering changing development rules in ways that preclude the creation of the "eco-village."

Students were excused from classes on October 16, 2007, in order to participate in PUC's efforts to lobby a joint meeting of the county's board of supervisors and planning commission. However, community opposition has led to a "no" vote by the supervisors

regarding even the limited development plan proposed by the college. Another meeting of the supervisors concerned with the issue is expected March 4, 2008.

Whereas PUC is facing "real problems," according to alumnus and former La Sierra University president Lawrence Geraty, AUC and CUC can each be said to be confronting a "crisis."

Atlantic Union College is facing immediate challenges. Administrative and financial difficulties led to serious concern about the college's future on the part of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, which accredits AUC. However, although AUC's institutional health and credibility have evidently improved during the past two years from the perspective of the NEASC, a significant revenue shortfall has led to serious concern about its continued viability on the part of at least some of its trustees.

New AUC president Norman Wendth is considering a range of options. Some apparently involve the significant redefinition of AUC's identity and the adoption of a narrower institutional focus, with the goal of staking a claim to a carefully defined market niche. Wendth has not yet publicly indicated what course of action he will recommend to the board

when it meets via teleconference on November 12, 2007, with an in-person discussion slated for December 9–10.

Columbia Union College continues to be beset by revenue problems. A recent proposal to transfer control of the college to Adventist Health met with stiff resistance at the college level. However, the college's ongoing financial difficulties have returned the question of CUC's identity to the agenda of its trustees and its acting president, Gaspar Colón. Approximately twenty-five million dollars could have been created by the sale of the college's radio license, but this plan was rejected by the trustees on September 20 after intense community pressure. Because start-up funds have not been available, the college has also been unable to move forward with plans to draw on state matching funds for new construction. A "summit" meeting regarding the future of the college is planned for the CUC trustees and the executive committees of the constituent conferences.

The challenges that confront these colleges and the diverse responses under consideration highlight the difficulties posed for Adventist higher education by substantial cost increases and the willingness of students and parents to consider a broader range of higher educational options than ever

before. They also call attention to the fact that each college seems largely to be facing the future alone, with little assistance beyond the confines of its own constituency. General Conference-sponsored educational institutions—Loma Linda University, Andrews University, and Oakwood College—may receive additional church funds this year, but additional central church support seems unlikely to be forthcoming for union-sponsored universities and colleges in North America. It remains to be seen whether creative, strategic thinking will prove able to create new and welcome possibilities for Adventist higher education at this difficult time. ■

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## Forum Meeting Includes Response to Bull and Lockhart

BY GARY LAND

Review of *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*, 2d ed., by Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007)

When published in 1989, the first edition of *Seeking a Sanctuary* established itself as the best available study of American Seventh-day Adventism. Now updated and enlarged, the volume remains the foremost work on this denomination. Combining historical, sociological, and cultural studies methodologies, Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, respectively a teacher at Oxford University and a London-based journalist, offer a readable and

penetrating analysis indispensable to scholars and general readers wanting to understand Adventism. For Adventists themselves, it offers a sympathetic outsider's perspective that increases self-awareness.

The authors argue two intertwined theses. First, as indicated by their title and subtitle, they believe that Adventism provides an alternative means of achieving the American dream of spiritual fulfillment and material progress. Second, they dispute the interpretation put forward by scholars within and outside the denomination that Adventism is in the process of transforming from a sect into a denomination; in contrast, they believe that it remains a sect.

In presenting these arguments, the authors divide their book into three parts. The first, "Adventist Theology," addresses authority, identity, eschatology, and the sanctuary doctrine. Although they do not use the term, the authors see several dialectics at work in Adventist theology: the Bible as the source of Adventist belief over against Ellen White as the final interpreter of the Bible; the hope for versus the delay in Christ's second coming; identity tied to specific beliefs in contrast with identity expressed through loyalty to denominational structure; and the Arian tendencies embedded in the sanctuary doctrine in conflict with the Church's twentieth-century trinitarianism.

Viewing these issues historically, *Seeking a Sanctuary* incorporates them into an almost Hegelian pattern: the thesis of Adventist radicalism produced the antithesis of fundamentalism, out of which came the synthesis of evangelicalism. Interestingly, however, and in keeping with the argument that

Adventism is not progressing to denominational status, as this synthesis became the new thesis, the antithesis that it produced was a return to fundamentalism rather than a step to a higher stage of development.

Part 2 examines "The Adventist Experience and the American Dream." Here again, we see some dialectics at work, beginning with the concept that in opposition to a flawed republic, Adventism has developed an "alternative social system" (114). Although the Church originated in the United States, most of its growth is now taking place in other parts of the world; in its homeland the Church is disproportionately female, old, black, and immigrant. As health and family life (sexuality) lost their eschatological meaning and became ends in themselves, they became optional behaviors. The Church's orientation toward time as embodied in the Sabbath and the eschaton placed it in opposition to American society but also produced internal schisms and shapes artistic expression.

Contrasting Adventism with Mormonism, another indigenous American religion, the authors state, "In Adventism the American dream is reinterpreted, in Mormonism, Christianity is reinterpreted. Adventists have become un-American in an effort to become more truly Christian. Mormons have become un-Christian in order to become more American" (254).

In Part 3, the authors examine the "Adventist Subculture," including gender, race, ministry, medicine, education, and the self-supporting movement. This portion of the book might be understood as a subset of Part 2, exploring in more detail

important elements of this "alternative social system." Again, a number of dialectics emerge (I hope I am not pushing this concept too far, but it is something that struck me when reading my notes before writing this review). Adventism, according to Bull and Lockhart, is a women's movement that goes against traditional male values; as a result, men find entering into the church bureaucracy the only acceptable way to express their masculinity.

Although Adventism represents the ethnic variety of American culture to a degree not found in other churches, it still practices segregation, most fully illustrated by regional conferences.

Ministers, who personify the Adventist response to the American nation, are often misunderstood and underappreciated by the laity and receive inadequate support, especially during personal crises, from their conferences.

The Adventist health system constitutes an alternative administrative and economic structure—for doctors and hospital administrators are the only church employees with the financial resources to successfully challenge clerical control.

Adventist education did not develop a distinctive philosophy until a couple of decades after the founding of Battle Creek College; today that philosophy may inform long-term goals as expressed in mission statements but has little influence on short-term operations, which are very similar to those of other schools.

The ultimate dialectic, however, is that the most distinctive or pure expression of Adventist values appears in the self-supporting movement that exists outside the control

of the institutional church. But even this movement, the authors write, "which represents the ideal of egalitarian cooperation, has been promoted by the power of individual capital concentration, while mainstream Adventism, which espouses a set of values a little closer to the American ethos, is founded on centrally managed schemes of funding" (346).

The authors' arguments are grounded in prodigious research, documented in almost a hundred pages of notes. Sources include almost every imaginable type of work published by the denomination and independent publishers related to Adventism, as well as those published by commercial and academic presses. The bibliographical essay that closes the book helpfully sorts out and comments on the most helpful of these sources.

Compared to the first edition, there are some significant changes in the second. In addition to updated statistical information and accounts of recent events such as the Branch Davidian tragedy and General Conference votes on the ordination of women, the authors have added a chapter on "The Ethics of Schism."

They have also revised their original chapter titles "Women" and "Blacks" to "Gender" and "Race," the latter change opening space for discussion of Hispanics and Asians as well as Blacks.

The visual appeal of the new edition is enhanced by the inclusion of several illustrations. There does not seem to be any major revision of the book's arguments, however.

Any book of this scope is bound to raise questions. Because the authors' discussion of the "revolving door" is primarily sociological, it

does not address the role that theological disagreement has played since the 1980s in departures from the Church. Is there a connection between the grace orientation of those former Adventists for whom the magazine *Proclamation!* is published, and rising social status? Or is the issue truly theological?

Also, what is meant by the Church? Is it the official bureaucratic structure or the membership? Although Bull and Lockhart are sensitive to this distinction, I have often wondered how many lay members really understand or deem important the inner workings of the sanctuary doctrine or the details of eschatology that appear in Adventist publications.

Finally, while I appreciate the reasons why the authors challenge the sect-to-denomination interpretation of Adventism, I am not fully convinced. The very Adventist theologians, for example, who represent a return to fundamentalism appear to be aligned with the Evangelical Theological Society. There is also evidence that Adventist scholars, in biblical studies as well as other fields, are increasingly writing for nondenominational publishers.

None of this belies *Seeking a Sanctuary's* thesis, but it does suggest that Adventism's trajectory may be moving in several directions at once. These questions are minor, at best, and in no way lessen Bull and Lockhart's monumental achievement. Hopefully, the appearance of this new edition will draw the attention of a new generation of readers and push scholars to more fully incorporate its interpretations into their studies of Seventh-day Adventism.

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## "Golden Age" Distortions

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BY DOUGLAS MORGAN

The following two articles are responses to the series of presentations titled, "Adventism's Futures," by Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, authors of *Seeking a Sanctuary*, on September 29, 2007, at the Adventist Forum Conference, Santa Rosa, California.

Although I hope to show that it has serious limitations as a treatment of the Adventist experience in historical perspective, *Seeking a Sanctuary* is nothing short of a spectacular achievement.<sup>1</sup> No other work on Adventism comes close to its scope, imaginativeness, and interdisciplinary agility.

Anyone interested in better understanding Adventism—whether reflecting on it from within or observing it from without—owes Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart an enormous debt of gratitude, both for a vast wealth of information and for provocative interpretations that open seemingly endless possibilities for further investigation and advances in understanding.

One critically important aspect aside, I think the central argument of the book is not only accurate, it is extraordinarily insightful and important—even urgent—for those who care about the future of the Adventist movement. *Seeking a Sanctuary* shows how Adventism rejected America as a vehicle of redemption and offered a comprehensive, socially embodied alternative based on its apocalyptic vision of the future. In our present era

of the American empire's global dominance and Adventist internationalization, this relationship to the nation takes on the heightened significance, touched upon in the Prologue and Epilogue, of Adventism being something of a counterglobalization movement.

I could go on at length about points of agreement, appreciation, and admiration. Not wishing, however, to go overboard in providing further evidence to support the authors' frequently made point about the Adventist tendency to avoid confrontation and mask dissent with a quiet, unobtrusive presence, I should move quickly to points of contention.

My central dispute with *Seeking a Sanctuary* has to do with the designation of "sanctuary" as the dominant metaphor for the alternative Adventism created, which, in turn, has to do with making the early middle decades of the twentieth century (approximately the 1920s–1950s) the prism for interpreting the Adventist experience through its entire history.

"Sanctuary" in *Seeking a Sanctuary* points to refuge, escape, avoidance of defilement and conflict, and insularity. These connotations of "sanctuary" may indeed go quite a way in an analysis of the 1920s–1950s, which the authors designate as the period of "fundamentalist Adventism" and its "Golden Age." However, making "sanctuary" the controlling metaphor for the Adventist story in the nineteenth century—which the authors term the era of "Adventist radicalism"—results in confusion.

In that period—which extends into the first two decades of the twentieth century—we see what strikes me as

impressive initiative, energy, and boldness in formulating a path to restoration of human wholeness. Adventism structured a comprehensive alternative that offered reintegration of the spiritual, physical, and intellectual dimensions of life that had been separated by Enlightenment modernity.

Thus, historian Martin Marty places Adventism (with Christian Science, the Social Gospel, and therapeutic philosophies) in the category of "trans-moderns," as opposed to more predominantly reactive "counter-moderns," such as the Protestant fundamentalists.<sup>2</sup> This alternative did offer a nurturing haven from the assaults of modernity, but it was established and sustained only through robust engagement with the surrounding society through medical missionary and benevolent work, endeavors for religious liberty, and public health, as well as evangelism.

Although I find much that is rewarding, even brilliant, in Bull and Lockhart's treatment of nineteenth-century Adventism, the recurring tendency is to view that history in much the same way as Adventists themselves often did by the mid-twentieth century, with much of the creative vitality and contextual richness strained out. The result is a greatly diminished and, at times, inaccurate view of the Church's history.

A good example of the mixture of acute insight and serious deficiency comes in Chapter 3 ("The End of the World"). Here we find excellent contextualization of early Adventism's critique of the American Republic. The Adventist protest against Sunday laws originated at a time when leaders of the culturally dominant Protestant denomi-

nations (sometimes termed the "Protestant empire") regarded such laws as crucial to preserving the morals of the citizenry and the well-being of society.

The Adventist view of the nation, fitting the profile of the second beast depicted in Revelation 13 by sustaining the practice of slavery in violation of its principles, paralleled the radical views of the nation's foremost abolitionist, William Lloyd Garrison. Both Garrison and J. N. Andrews, who, in 1851, was the first to set forth the Adventist understanding of America in apocalyptic prophecy, characterized slavery as evidence of fatal moral compromise that placed the nation under divine judgment (57–59).

But then, as if taking once again the lens of twentieth-century "fundamentalist Adventism," the authors blur Andrews's 1851 treatise with later-elaborated conceptions of the heavenly millennium, and then the emotional turbulence experienced by late twentieth-century Adventists as a result of reading Ellen White's frightening depictions of the time of trouble. Andrews own message in the 1850s is thereby not only distorted, but also cited in support of a point that is, in an important sense, the opposite of his meaning.

Andrews, we are told, opposed the prevailing postmillennial view of America's glorious progress with the Adventist teaching about a "heavenly millennium" (59). This is important for the book's overall argument because Bull and Lockhart contend that Adventists drew inspiration and ethical guidance for the "sanctuary" they created in America from the heavenly life in which they expected to share during the millennium.

The determinative features of the

heavenly realm are rigid order, hierarchy, and restraint of passions. Preparation for this realm required such behaviors as political passivity and minimal indulgence in sex, in short, the "refined morality of the angels" as opposed to "the robust ethical code of the ancient Hebrews" (219; see also 70, 201–3, 236, 249–50).

But this conception of the "heavenly millennium" is not what J. N. Andrews wrote about in 1851. The quotes cited on page 59 themselves clearly indicate that he was talking about a very robust and revolutionary turn of affairs on earth. The "Just One" is soon to come and check the "astonishing career" of the slave-holding republic, and then "the Lamb" will "reign *in person* over the whole earth (emphasis mine)."

Twenty-first century Adventists may be frightened or repelled by Andrews' stark assertion that Jesus will soon return to overthrow the American government (and all earthly powers) and set up his personal reign over the earth. We may also be confused as to where the anticipated thousand years in heaven fits into this picture. A few may find it useful for developing a renewed counterimperial witness in our time, though this may be largely wishful thinking on my part. The point here is that the twentieth-century filter makes for an inaccurate reading of history, and thus of the Adventist story as a whole.

Although nineteenth-century Adventists did conclude that the millennium would be spent in heaven while the earth remained desolate, they never forgot that was not the end of the story. The "world to come," or the "new earth," mentioned only in passing by Bull and Lockhart,

seems to have been more prominent in their thinking. Ellen White envisioned that in this new earth,

*immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.<sup>3</sup>*

The innovative, progressive, and enterprising dimensions of Adventism suggest that anticipation of this kind of future had at least as much influence as the more static and restrained features of the heavenly realm that Bull and Lockhart highlight.

Chapter 10 ("The Politics of Liberty") is similarly problematic in its treatment of several aspects of Adventist interaction with the wider society. Bull and Lockhart assert that the Church never reached "an agreed moral stance on participation in the Civil War" (187), and that "Adventists did not start out as pacifists" (417). These statements run contrary to clear historical evidence.

In August 1864, the Church appealed to the U.S. provost marshal general for exemption from participation in combat "because of their views of the ten commandments and the

teachings of the New Testament cannot engage in bloodshed." In this appeal, the Adventists leaders explicitly placed themselves in the same category as the Quakers as "a non-combatant people." This agreed-upon stance and its theological grounding in both "the commandments of God" and the "faith of Jesus" was reaffirmed by General Conference resolutions in 1865, 1867, and 1868.

Bull and Lockhart dismiss the application for noncombatant recognition in 1864 as a matter of "expediency," prompted by passage of a law "that contained special provisions for those not prepared to bear arms." They emphasize James and Ellen White's rebuke of Iowa Adventists who declared their pacifism in 1862 as evidence for absence of commitment to pacifism on the part of the church leadership.

This interpretation ignores the fact that the dispute with the Iowans was a matter of timing and approach, not over the noncombatant ethic. In 1862, no draft law compelled Adventists (or anyone) to engage in military combat. The Whites indeed did not wish to draw public attention to the noncombatant convictions prevailing in the Church because they did not want Adventists to be identified as proslavery or sympathizers with the Confederate rebellion.

After the draft law was enacted in March 1863, it remained possible to avoid conscription by paying a commutation fee. The Battle Creek-led Adventists took advantage of the commutation provision, rather than seek governmental recognition, until revisions to the draft law in July 1864 restricted that option to members of a recognized pacifist church. Such

members would also have the options of alternative duty in hospitals or caring for freedmen, as provided for in a February 1864 amendment to the draft law.

Faced with a law that made it impossible for them legally to follow their convictions without government recognition as a pacifist church, the Adventists moved swiftly and vigorously. In addition to the recognition gained in August 1864, they published a twenty-seven page pamphlet, *Extracts from the Publications of Seventh-day Adventists, Setting Forth Their Views of the Sinfulness of War* in March 1865, a point at which the duration, if not the outcome, of the war was still very uncertain.

The success in gaining recognition as a "non-combatant people" at the federal level, however, provided no easy "out" from service in the Union army. Some Adventists who sought to claim the hospital or freedmen's aid alternative faced severe hardship from uninformed or hostile officers and local officials. In the absence of "agreed moral stance" behind all this, the "expedient" thing would have been to do nothing. As the late historian of pacifism Peter Brock put it, the Adventist leaders' concern to preserve their movement's noncombatant position was "entirely genuine."<sup>4</sup>

As with the question of pacifism, *Seeking a Sanctuary's* treatment of such matters as race relations, political action, and religious liberty centers on Adventism's preference for a "quiet" approach to controversial matters in the public arena. On race relations, Bull and Lockhart emphasize that, in his mission to evangelize black com-

munities in the South during the 1890s, Edson White "took great care not to antagonize whites in doing so" (279). If this was a goal of White's mission, however, he failed.

Responding to his mother's repeated calls for a multidimensional mission that would empower southern blacks with education and economic opportunity, Edson took a risky initiative that provoked a violent reaction from the white power structure.<sup>5</sup> In response, White and his colleague F. R. Rogers (285) indeed made clear that the Adventist mission was not about a frontal assault on the social order of the South.

This approach paralleled that of the foremost black leader of the day, Booker T. Washington, whose Atlanta Compromise speech in 1895, the same year White launched his mission, advocated concentration on gradual educational and economic uplift and deferral of demands for immediate social and political equality.

The fact that the Adventists favored Washington's approach does not prove either them or him right, but recognition of the parallel, as well as the transformational purpose driving a courageous initiative, brings greater depth and nuance to the depiction of this historical episode. In other words, understanding Adventism's relation to this and other public issues requires close attention to two contexts: (1) that of American society at the time under discussion; and (2) that of the full story of the Adventist experience with that issue through time.

In this instance, consideration of these contexts makes it difficult, if not impossible, to see accommodation to injustice as the determinative or preeminent feature of Adventism with regard

to race relations. The radical and benevolent impulses for equality widely evident in Adventism during the 1890s are just as much a part of the story.<sup>6</sup>

A distorting emphasis on Ellen White's admonitions about avoiding unnecessary provocation of governmental authorities also leads to one of a number of puzzling assertions in *Seeking a Sanctuary* about Adventists and religious liberty. Adventists, with their quiet approach to public issues, are contrasted with Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, "who were not afraid to impress themselves on society" (193).

Other than a more confrontational proselytizing style, one wonders what evidence would support such a statement, particularly in view of the impress on society made by Adventist medical and educational institutions alone, which find no parallels among the Witnesses.

Beyond that, there is the Adventist record of close to 120 years of unrelenting and often intensive, if rarely flashy, activism for religious liberty. In their chapter, "The Politics of Liberty," Bull and Lockhart provide illuminating material on that record, but their effort to fit the historical evidence into the book's themes appears to have generated further puzzling statements.

We are told that the changing titles of the denomination's religious liberty journal from *Sabbath Sentinel* to *American Sentinel* to *Liberty* "indicated the Adventist equation of the freedom to worship on Saturday with the Declaration of Independence" (196), and that for Adventists in America, "religious liberty was at root the freedom

to worship on Saturday" (195).

It is genuinely difficult to know what to make of such statements. They may simply intend to convey the accurate message that for Adventists, Sabbath-Sunday was the crucial, central issue at which religious liberty was at stake and the starting point for their activism on behalf of liberty. But they seem to be saying something else, something carrying the implication that Adventists were so preoccupied with the Saturday Sabbath that they had no vision of or interest in underlying principles of human rights and religious liberty, or a broader range of specific issues regarding which those principles needed defending.

Other than a brief nod to one of the voluminous works of A. T. Jones, no analysis is given of the principles that Adventists developed and articulated as the grounding for their advocacy. As for the reasons for changes in the name of the religious liberty journal, the stated purpose in the change from *Sabbath Sentinel* to *American Sentinel* indicated a broadening of the scope of concern and action beyond the Sabbath-Sunday issue.

The observations I offer here do not constitute a review of *Seeking a Sanctuary*, but deal only with some historical aspects about which I feel best equipped to comment. The book as a whole, just as the superbly crafted presentations at the conference, offers an abundance of insights to which anyone interested in the directions taken by the Church in the era of globalization would be foolish not to give careful consideration. In tak-

ing its bearings for historical analysis from the period of "Adventist fundamentalism" while minimizing the earlier era of "Adventist radicalism," however, *Seeking a Sanctuary* fails to convey the richness and range of historical resources upon which the Church can draw as it faces the future. ■

## Notes and References

1. The text published here has been developed from an outline and partial manuscript used for my response to the authors' Saturday morning presentations at the AF conference and contains material omitted from the oral presentation due to time limitations. Though Keith and Malcolm graciously provided an advance listing of the topics for their presentations, my response necessarily draws primarily on the book itself.

2. Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion, Volume 1: The Irony of It All* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 255–57.

3. *The Great Controversy*, 677.

4. John N. Andrews, "Seventh-day Adventists Recognized as Non-combatants," *Review and Herald* (Sept. 13, 1864): 124–25. See also Peter Brock, *Freedom from Violence: Sectarian Nonresistance from the Middle Ages to the Great War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 230–58; and Douglas Morgan, "The Beginnings of a Peace Church: Eschatology, Ethics, and Expedience in Seventh-day Adventist Responses to the Civil War," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 45, no. 1 (spring 2007): 35–44.

5. Ronald D. Graybill documents shootings, armed intimidation, and threats of violence, as well as vitriolic denunciation in the press in *E. G. White and Church Race Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1970); and *Mission to Black America: The True Story of James Edson White and the Riverboat Morning Star* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1971).

6. In addition to Ellen White's 1891 mani-

festos against discrimination and indifference, "Our Duty to the Colored People," published in *The Southern Work*, examples would include the work of John Harvey Kellogg and collaborators, and the holiness revivals led by Albion F. Ballenger, which led to testimonies of victory over "race prejudice." On Kellogg, see Richard Schwarz, *John Harvey Kellogg, M.D.* (Nashville: Southern Publishing, 1970). On Ballenger, see Calvin W. Edwards and Gary Land, *Seeker After Light: A. F. Ballenger, Adventism, and American Christianity* (Berrien Springs, Mich: Andrews University Press, 2000).

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## Thoughts on the Future of Adventism: A Response to Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart

BY JULIUS NAM

Malcolm and Keith, thank you very much for being here, for being engaged in conversation with us, and, of course, for your book. Your new edition is as compelling and captivating as your first edition was when I encountered it as a senior religion major at Andrews University. Adventism, to me, was very much an either/or proposition at that point. For example, either you read the prophecies as Uriah Smith did, or you really had no business being Adventist, much less an Adventist pastor. Either you take Ellen White seriously as a prophet and obey all her counsels literally as God's continuing mandate for your life, or you live the rest of your life fighting her and feeling guilty for it. Either... I don't think I need to go on.

There weren't very many appealing options within Adventism. I could not accept what was presented to me as normative Adventism. I did not want to live the rest of my life bitter and angry, yet faking it. I'd rather leave Adventism than live the rest of my life worrying about others finding out what doubts I had in my closet and what theological aberrations I hid beneath my rug. Was there some other way of being Adventist and being true to who I was and who I was becoming?

In August 1992, as I was walking out of Pioneer Memorial Church on the Andrews University campus with a master's degree in religion, I did walk out that revolving door for what ended up being a rumspringa in Paris. But for some reason, your book was among a handful of Adventist-related books I brought along. And when I was ready to re-engage with God, faith, and Adventism, it was instrumental in showing me that there can be other ways of understanding Adventism, and that Adventism as a culture and a historical phenomenon was worth taking seriously.

In the process, I walked down a new path of discovering what I could become within Adventism and what Adventism could become in the world. Amid my struggle between finding my sanctuary within Adventism and needing to seek a sanctuary from Adventism, your book helped me find new reasons for remaining Adventist and creating new possibilities within Adventism by demonstrating a third way of engaging with Adventism.

It is that third way that I'd like to dwell on in my following comments.

I must say that my reaction to the new edition of your book wasn't quite the same. I'm now at a different place in life with a different set of issues and struggles. My questions no longer revolve around whether to accept Adventism or abandon it, but around how to relate with the complexity of Adventism and the variety of Adventisms and how to involve my community, especially the younger generations, with the larger world.

As delicious and delightful as your book was this time around, I found the undercurrent of sociological determinism (perhaps even fatalism?) frustrating. I appreciated the sympathetic treatment of Adventism that continues in this edition. But was I correct in detecting traces of measured cynicism about the future of Adventism? That Adventism is caught between the entering first generation and exiting third generations? That the "Golden Age" of Adventism was the first half of the last century and that Adventism's greatest promises reside in its "sectiness"?

Frankly, I didn't like it. So I began to think about why I chose to stay (in part, helped by your book, I might add), and why many of us in this room are choosing to stay. I also wondered why I'm reacting viscerally and defensively. And I think I understand why.

Eighteen years ago, you caught me gazing at the rhythmic swishing of the revolving door and pondering what direction to take. As you astutely argue, it is a real door. No question about that. But now, I'm no longer at the door but somewhere inside, working on the house. (I can only use this analogy away from home, because my family would roll their eyes if they

heard it.)

There's more to Adventism than the revolving door, the theological turf wars, the institutional malaise, and the massive mission machine. You've documented many, many features of Adventism and provided us with brilliant insights that will no doubt get us talking for decades to come. But I can't shake the sense that you've discounted true believers and devoted members of the household who, according to your thesis, should be in the pre-exit phase of their Adventist experience but are up there in the attic, down in the basement, underneath the kitchen sink—working.

It's not that we don't know what's going on in the world; it's not that we can't make it out in the world; it's not that we don't understand the socio-anthropological dynamics and dys-functionalities that continue to shape and inform our community. Yet we've stayed and chosen to reaffirm our commitment to this church for reasons that reach far beyond the need for a biweekly paycheck, reputation, social advancement, and psychosocial balance.

I don't deny that these are all important factors. But we do what do and we are who we are because we believe in Adventism and its future. We're here right now listening to you and interacting with you—most of us second, third, fourth, and fifth generation Adventists—because we believe in Adventism and its mission.

I wish that you had given us more credit for joining and remaining in Adventism because we, as you note in one place, love the "beauty of the truth" that is in Adventism (though we may differ widely on what is truly beautiful

about the truth as conceived by Adventism).

While we're on the subject of giving credit, I wish that you had given more credit to what today's Adventists are doing to redefine, expand, and enrich their identity and beliefs and less credit to the supposed adroitness with which Adventism's pioneers reappropriated Americanism. "Our pioneers couldn't have been that clever and cunning," I thought as I read your book this time around. I felt that you may have missed the opportunity to step back a little from your original thesis, let up a little on the relentless demonstration of that thesis, and show greater appreciation for the changing face and heart of Adventism and the emerging complexity within Adventism.

What's exciting for me about being an Adventist today, and even more about Adventism's future, is its commitment to the "present truth" and its capacity for reappropriation. All the problems you've identified and warnings that you've placed in our hearts concerning the future are real. At the same time, I'm encouraged that Adventism itself is being further reappropriated as a movement that seeks to create a sanctuary in the world. Actually, I mean, for the world—through the expansion of our Sabbath ethic throughout society; through our witness of peace both during and between wars; through our preaching of the everlasting gospel to every nation, tribe, language and people, thereby bringing righteousness/justice to all races, ethnic groups, classes, and genders.

For sure, the problems are there. But I don't think our problems can

either define us or detract us from what we believe in, hope for, and have been called to do. The very real issues that you've so brilliantly identified for us can be the foundation and resource of our strength in the twenty-first century. So thank you for helping set the agenda for the future!

Frankly, I'm not too concerned about the revolving door and the self-interest that is part of the drive into and within Adventism. It's not that I don't care; I'm just not too concerned. What would be the acceptable rate of apostasy or attrition? Is 100 percent retention rate ideal? Ninety percent? Eighty percent? What would be the healthy thing? In a backhanded sort of a way, perhaps the 40–50 percent retention rate of North American Adventism may be the very sign that Adventism has come of age—that it is no longer a sect that finds validation in how many join its ranks, but a mature community whose identity isn't threatened by those who choose to leave.

At the same time, I would consider redefining retention and apostasy—and what it means to be Adventist. For me, one of the moving moments in last night's performance of the play *Red Books* was the part when Tim, the Badventist, says: "I've been to a thousand camp meetings, but you'll never find me colporteur. . . . Intelligent design is a joke, and once in a while I'd like to get down. . . ." He wonders out loud whether he, though a fifth-generation Adventist, can still claim the label "SDA" as a non-churchgoer. To you, he may be on the other side of the revolving door, but I, for one, would claim him as an Adventist whether or not his name is in the church books.

As a pastor and a teacher, I hope that even if my students are not in physical attendance at an Adventist church, their Adventist education and the values inculcated in them through their Adventist experience will have had sufficient meaning for them that those basic values would always be part of their self-understanding. They may no longer be regular members at an Adventist Church, but they will still be part of the Adventist world because they practice and personally appropriate Adventist perspectives and philosophy in their lives.

The Church will always be there for them. Part of our task is to keep up with our honest engagement with our own heritage and the world, to keep growing along with those students, and to help them find a room of their own if and when they return through that revolving door. We've got to widen our conception of Adventism to include those who have been significantly touched and shaped by it—and those who are engaged with us in meaningful ways. Just because Tim is out of the door does not mean he has left the Adventist world.

In that sense, Malcolm and Keith, I'd like to consider you still as Adventists. Obviously, you care about Adventism so much. You may be formally outside the veil, but you're part of our encampment. So I still claim you as our own—as fellow sojourners, better yet, brothers, in our journey to the Promised Land.

I can't fully understand how it looks from where you're standing, but I believe Adventism is entering into a beautiful and exciting time when our community—helped by individuals

such as you and your book—is growing into a movement of sanctuary providers, not only for ourselves, but also for the world. ■

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**Julius Nam** is an assistant professor in the School of Religion at Loma Linda University. An earlier version of this article was published in the author's blog at <<http://progressiveadventism.com>>

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## After Twenty-five Years, AAW Celebrates a Legacy of Service

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BY LOREN SEIBOLD

Among the original goals of the Association of Adventist Women was the desire to secure ordination for women in ministry. But for those of us who attended AAW's twenty-fifth anniversary conference, October 24–28 in Silver Spring, Maryland, ordination seemed less interesting than the achievements of some amazingly talented and energetic Adventist women. Six were 2007's Adventist Women of the Year:

New Zealander Joy Ford Butler was a pioneering minister to women in the South Pacific Division. She's particularly passionate about combating human trafficking, sex slavery, and domestic abuse, which has led her to open a refuge for exploited girls in Thailand.

Karen Hanson Kotoske formed Amistad International Foundation in 1980 to respond to the needs of the Huichol people of Mexico. Now Karen raises half a million dollars annually for projects in ten countries.

In 1985 ADRA chose Rigmor

Mari-Anne Nyberg to open its first Swedish office. Over more than twenty years of service, she took the budget from two hundred thousand dollars to two million dollars.

An elderly Adventist minister loaned Qin Zheng Yi a copy of the *Desire of Ages*. In the face of opposition from China's communist government, as well as from other Christian faiths, she grew a church of five hundred members. By 2003, through her influence, there were four thousand Adventists scattered over Sichuan Province. To validate her pastoral leadership, Adventist pastors from East China ordained her and three other women ministers. Today there are six thousand Adventists worshipping in this province.

(Qin Zheng Yi is the only honoree who wasn't able to attend; the award was accepted for her by her daughter Rebekah, a biblical scholar and Ph.D. student at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, who is preparing herself to open an Adventist seminary in China.)

Nancy Weber Vyhmeister is one of the Church's most accomplished scholars in biblical studies, missiology, and biblical languages. She has been a professor at the Seminary, chair of the ad-hoc Seminary Committee on Hermeneutics and Ordination, and editor of *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*.

As a pastor's wife and missionary, Dorothy Eaton Watts has taken the initiative in ministry to children by starting schools and orphanages in India, and in an expanding program for women's literacy. Under the

leadership of and her husband Ron, the church in India has more than doubled in size.



Qin Zheng Yi

The Association of Adventist Women shows itself to best advantage by bestowing these awards, and for that reason alone the organization



Joy Butler

deserves to live long and prosper. The accomplishments of these women are astonishing.

If a man in a suit had done what they have (and I speak authoritatively, being myself a man in a suit), he would be displayed on a pedestal—which makes it all the more disappointing that so few of my fellow suited-brethren were there to see what these women are accomplishing for God, generally without the full benefit of the titles and positions that under gird us men.

Perhaps it is not so surprising. Perhaps we men in suits don't like to be reminded how much our success is made by our titles and positions. As female friends often remind me, you have to work twice

as hard to make it as a woman; these recipients have worked several multiples harder than that. Why isn't the whole church recognizing these women, rather than just AAW?

Yet as AAW begins its next twenty-five years, its continuing existence is uncertain. It isn't hard to see that its base membership is nearing or past retirement. Leadership in recent years has fallen mostly on the devoted, indefatigable Verla Kwiram (who this year asked the board to search for a new president.) The Adventist News Network's story of the conference has General Conference associate secretary Rosa Banks suggesting that AAW has become irrelevant. (I



Rigmor Nyberg

thought this was somewhat ungracious on her part, especially since the continuing need for successful women to support aspiring women was talked about more than once at the conference.)

I prefer to think that young women either don't



Dorothy Watts

know about AAW, or are so accustomed to equality in the workplace that they don't know their church is half a century behind the curve. There are some, too, whom we've lost through these decades of foot-dragging. Or maybe AAW still carries the reputation of



Nancy Vyhmeister



Karen Kotoske

merely pounding on the gate of ordination, while the institutional walls that kept women out of ministry have effectively fallen—though practical barriers, such as the reluctance of churches to accept a female pastor, still challenge us.

Although the continuing refusal to ordain women is a disappointment, what comes through clearly at events like the AAW conference is that it is not a barrier to serving God, as Calimesa Adventist Church senior pastor Chris Oberg, who need not take a back seat to any male preacher, proved in the AAW Sabbath sermon at Sligo Church.

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

# BIBLE



## Small Horn with a Big Mouth:

*An Appreciation of Literary Features from Daniel's Book* | BY ZDRAVKO STEFANOVIC

In the past, most scholarly studies and popular presentations about the Old Testament book of Daniel have focused on proving or disproving the historical value of certain statements found in it. Attempts to show that Daniel's text and claims are trustworthy is a task worthy of scholarly investigation and writing. Yet to limit one's research to this aspect of the book does not do full justice to its rich and multifaceted contents. In this article, I argue that it is possible, even necessary, to see Daniel's messages as attractive, beautiful, and applicable in people's lives. For this reason, I intend to demonstrate that the book of Daniel is nothing short of a literary masterpiece.<sup>1</sup>

### Genres in Daniel's Book

The study of any piece of literature begins with a definition of its genre, which is defined in English as "literary form or type."<sup>2</sup> The presence of captivating stories in Daniel's book, as well as of graphic visions that contain details of colorful symbolic images, is foremost among its genres. Among the best-known stories are King Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (chap. 2), the Fiery Furnace (chap. 3), the Writing on the Wall (chap. 5), and Daniel in the Lions' Den (chap. 6). Each story is characterized by a plot (or a conflict), characters (or heroes), and a setting (or context). The message of these stories centers on God, who has power to save lives and control events.

The best-remembered visions from the book are the Four Beasts and a Son of Man (chap. 7), a Ram and a Goat (chap. 8), and the Rise of Michael (chap. 12). Although the message of the visions centers on God, the visions also focus on the Messiah, who, throughout earth's history and especially in the time of the end, provides deliverance for a faithful remnant of God's people.

Stories and visions in Daniel are given in narrative as well as poetic form. Narrative is the most common genre in the Bible. Due to its strong presence in Daniel, the book has been called "a gallery of memorable narrative moments."<sup>3</sup> Biblical narrators not only tell stories but also interpret them. In the case of Daniel's book, the narrator selects certain events but ignores others.<sup>4</sup> He also uses a lot of repetition. The presence of poetry in Daniel's book is easily discerned in contemporary versions of the Bible because poetic passages are indented. In the visions of Daniel 7, for example, the book uses poetry in reporting about events that take place in heaven (vs. 9–10, 13–14), in contrast to prose, which relates to events that happen on earth.

The first half of the book contains several hymns of praise to God. Daniel himself composed the first:

*Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;  
wisdom and power are his.  
He changes times and seasons;  
he sets up kings and deposes them.  
He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.  
He reveals deep and hidden things;  
he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.  
I thank and praise you, O God of my fathers:  
You have given me wisdom and power,  
You have made known to me what we asked of you,  
You have made known to us the dream of the king. (2:20–23)*

The hymns that follow come from the mouths of two pagan kings, Nebuchadnezzar and Darius the Mede (but not Belshazzar). The hymns of praise composed by these two kings echo Daniel's hymn. In King Nebuchadnezzar's case, we see a ruler who had previously issued cruel and vindictive orders changed into a

poet who composes a song about the Most High God:

*Signs, how grandiose!  
Wonders, how mighty!  
His kingdom is an eternal kingdom,  
His dominion from generation to generation. (4:3)<sup>5</sup>*

The king's words in this passage touched ancient Jewish scholars, and they commented that he "has stolen all the songs and praises from David."<sup>6</sup>

Only in recent times have scholars devoted significant amounts of attention to the topic of prayer in Daniel's book.<sup>7</sup> The best example of this genre is found in chapter 9, where Daniel confesses the sins of his people and presents a petition to God to intervene on their behalf. The following list of examples shows the presence of this and other genres.

1. Story (chaps. 2, 3, 6)
2. Dream (chaps. 2, 4)
3. Apocalyptic vision (chaps. 7, 8, 10–12)
4. Interpretation of a dream/vision (chaps. 2, 7, 8, 9)
5. Audition (8:13–14; 11:2–12:4)
6. Riddle or cryptic writing (5:25–28)
7. Prayer (6:16; 9:4–19)
8. Hymn of praise (2:20–23; 4:1–3, 34–35; 6:26–27)
9. Royal edict (3:29; 6:7–9, 26)
10. Royal proclamation (chap. 4)
11. List (3:2–6; 5:4, 23)
12. Dialogue (4:9, 18–20; 10:12–20; 12:8–13)
13. Oath (12:7)

### Plan of Daniel's Book

Generally speaking, balance and symmetry characterize the structure of Daniel's book, and are best evidenced through the use of chiasm, especially in the first half. Chapters 2–7, originally written in Aramaic (chaps. 1, 8–12, are in Hebrew) are clearly arranged in this manner:<sup>8</sup>

- A. Vision of world kingdoms (chap. 2)
- B. The faithful tested (chap. 3)
- C. Judgment on a king (chap. 4)
- C'. Judgment on a king (chap. 5)
- B'. The faithful tested (chap. 6)
- A'. Vision of world kingdoms (chap. 7)

### Artistic Imagery

Another important literary feature in Daniel is rich artistic imagery characterized by the use of metaphor and simile. The imagery is presented on at least three distinct levels: terrestrial, extraterrestrial, and celestial.

**Terrestrial** Following King Nebuchadnezzar's command, provincial administrators assembled in the Plain of Dura, and everybody except three Hebrew men bow down and worship the image of gold. The text from Daniel 3:8–12 says that this act of insubordination did not go unnoticed:

*At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! You have issued a decree, O king, that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, O king. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up."*

The act of denouncing the Hebrews is presented in much more graphic language in Aramaic. The original text literally says that the Chaldeans "ate their pieces." The concept here is that the talebearer ate his victim's flesh, a sort of verbal cannibalism. A modern equivalent would say that the astrologers "chew out" the Hebrews. In the story of Daniel's rescue from the lions, the same expression is translated "falsely accused" (Dan. 6:24).

Daniel 7 describes the second in the series of four ferocious beasts the following way:

*And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, "Get up and eat your fill of flesh!"*

The impression that this picture makes is that an "insatiable monster" has eaten another creature and that some of its bones are still in the monster's mouth. The same chapter presents a small horn with a big mouth (v. 8) that will oppress the "Saints of the Most High God" (v. 25). The long persecution is expressed in this passage through a familiar picture of garments that people wear.

**Extraterrestrial** The story of Belshazzar's banquet is found in chapter 5. In response to the king's blasphemous behavior,

*Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his knees knocked together and his legs gave way. (5:5–6)*

Belshazzar's vision of a detached hand writing on the wall before him "remains one of the most haunting images in literature."<sup>9</sup> Generally speaking, a disembodied palm of the hand represents a defeated enemy. The effect of this eerie scene might be similar if "the head of a decapitated victim began to speak."<sup>10</sup>

Contrast this scene with Psalm 119:73a, where the psalmist sings praise to God's powerful hands: "Your hands made me and formed me." What is fascinating in Daniel's book is that a similar (possibly the same) hand touched the prophet and restored life-sustaining strength to him no less than three times during his vision of the person "dressed in linen" in chapter 10.

The book describes Belshazzar's fear graphically and in detail, in contrast to his pride and arrogance, as seen in preceding verses. "The noble silhouette of the king crumbles to a heap of bones rubbing against each other in fear."<sup>11</sup>

**Celestial** One of the richest imageries in the book (7:9–10) is the passage that describes God's throne in heaven:

*As I looked, thrones were set in place,  
and the Ancient of Days took his seat.  
His clothing was as white as snow;  
the hair of his head was white like wool.  
His throne was flaming with fire,  
and its wheels were all ablaze.  
A river of fire was flowing,  
coming out from before him.  
Thousands upon thousands attended him;  
ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.  
The court was seated,  
and the books were opened.*

Whereas whiteness symbolizes purity, fire is a standard biblical metaphor used to represent divine presence and judgment (Ps. 78:14, 21; Heb. 12:29).

In Daniel 12:3, God's messenger tells Daniel what will happen once Israel's patron angel, Michael, arises:

*Those who are wise will shine  
like the brightness of the heavens,  
and those who lead many to righteousness,  
like the stars for ever and ever.*

**Parallelism** Semitic (Hebrew and Aramaic) literary style is most commonly characterized by the presence of parallelism. A good example can be found in the following two verses:

*Those the king wanted to put to death, he put to death;  
those he wanted to spare, he spared;  
those he wanted to promote, he promoted;  
and those he wanted to humble, he humbled. (5:19b)<sup>12</sup>*

Synonymous parallelism is illustrated in 12:3:

*Those who are wise will shine  
like the brightness of the heavens,  
and those who lead many to righteousness,  
like the stars for ever and ever.*

Similarly, according to Daniel 6:26c, Darius praises God, saying:

*his kingdom will not be destroyed  
his dominion will never end.*

Antithetic parallelism is found in 9:7:

*Lord you are righteous,  
but this day we are covered with shame.*

Inverted parallelism or chiasm can be seen in Daniel's report about the king's dream, in chapter 2.<sup>13</sup> The composite statue is made of elements given in descending order in verses 32–33: gold, silver, bronze, iron, and clay. After the rock strikes the statue, all of these elements are destroyed but listed in ascending order in verse 35: iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold.

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## Literary Figures

A number of literary figures are found throughout Daniel's book. The first of these is a play on words (or pun) already found in the opening chapter. Daniel 1:7, says that the chief official determined (Hebrew *waryāšem*) new (that is, Babylonian) names for the four young men, which would replace their Hebrew names.<sup>14</sup> In verse 8, the same Hebrew word is used to express how Daniel determines not to defile himself with the rich food and drink served at the king's table. In fact, both verses begin with the identical verbal form preceded by a consecutive *waw* ("and").

Another example of wordplay is found in chapter 9, where Daniel prays and fasts regarding the end of seventy years of exile in Babylon. Yet when Gabriel arrives in response to the prayer, he delivers God's revelation, which concerns "seventy weeks" of years (compare 10:2 "three weeks [of days]").

The most elaborate set of wordplays is found in 5:25–28, where the divine judgment pronounced on Belshazzar is presented through "the rhythm of four." Thus, each of the four words that formed the cryptic writing on the wall (Mene "numbered"; Mene "numbered"; Tekel "weighed"; Peres "divided") is explained in the original Hebrew through four-word statements.

Closely related to wordplay are *paronomasia* and *hendiadys*.<sup>15</sup> *Paronomasia* is one of the most frequently used literary figures in Semitic languages. It is characterized by the recurrence of the same word stem in close proximity.<sup>16</sup> Thus, for example, Daniel 1:4, says that one characteristic of the choice captives was that they were "well-informed" (NIV) (in the original Hebrew, *yōd'ê da'at* "knowing knowledge").

Another example is found in Daniel 2:1, which says that the king "dreamed dreams," which is to say that the king had dreams. *Hendiadys*, in contrast, occurs when two different words are combined to express a single concept.<sup>17</sup> Thus, in 2:14, Daniel addresses Arioch, the royal executioner, with "wisdom and tact." These two words could be rendered as "tactful wisdom." In 7:25, the hostile king, represented by the symbol of a little horn, tries "to change the set times and the laws" (NIV). A better rendering of the original Aramaic statement would be "the set times which are regulated by the law."

Another literary figure related to wordplay is *merism(us)*, which is characterized by the use of two or more contrasting (or opposite) elements to express the concept of totali-

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ty. In his hymn of praise to God (2:21–23), Daniel states that he sets up and deposes kings, which is to say that the power of earthly monarchs is under God's sovereign control. Daniel goes on to say that darkness and light are known to God, another way of saying that God knows everything.

In his hymn of praise, King Darius sings about God, who "performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth" (6:27), meaning everywhere in the universe. In his prayer, Daniel confesses that God's people, who live "both near and far" (9:7), had sinned against him.

Merism is also found in chapter 11, which talks about earthly conflicts between north and south, and in chapter 8, which describes conflicts between east and west.

*Hyperbole* may be defined as "making emphasis by overstatement."<sup>18</sup> Among many examples of hyperbole in Daniel is the statement from 1:20 that says the Hebrew young men's final grades were ten times better than those of all other wise men in the kingdom. Another example is found in Daniel 8:5, which describes the coming of a goat that crossed the whole earth "without touching the ground."

In common parlance, *irony* is "the statement of one thing with the intention of suggesting something else."<sup>19</sup> In Daniel, irony is used mostly as an intentional literary device. The presence of irony is attested in 2:33–34, where the imposing statue seen by the king in the dream is struck by a stone "on its feet of iron and clay," its weakest part. According to 3:8, the same Chaldeans whose lives Daniel's intervention had spared (2:24) come forward and denounce the Jews. In the same chapter, irony can be found in verse 19, where the king orders the furnace to be heated seven times hotter, although punishment is greater when a person is burned with a slow fire.

Numerical progression can be found in several places. One well-known example is the description of the innumerable angelic host that surrounds God's throne:

*Thousands upon thousands attended him;  
ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. (7:10)*

Another example can be seen in 12:7, 11–12, where three periods are given: "a time, times and half a time," which total 1,260 days, followed by 1,290 days and 1,335 days. Moreover, some examples of broken numerical progression are also found in the text. The best known comes from 7:25, where temporary progress of the little horn is conveyed through the

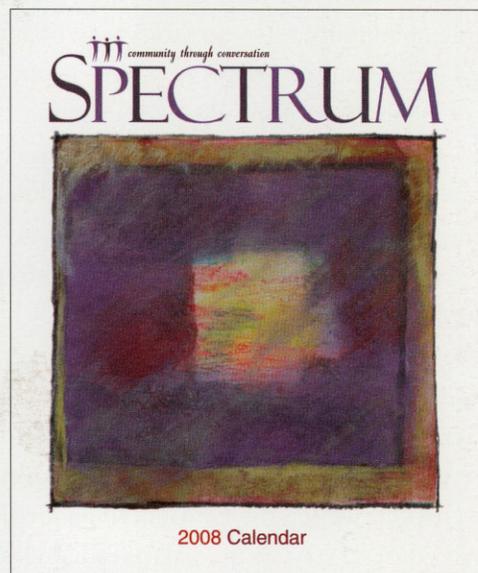
expression "time, (two) times, and half a time."<sup>20</sup>

*Reversals* are attested in the book on smaller and larger scales.<sup>21</sup> In Daniel 3:15, the proud king asks the faithful worshipers of God a challenging (rhetorical) question: "Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"<sup>22</sup> At the end of the story, in verse 29, he answers his own question: "no other god can save in this way."

The story from chapter 5 tells how Belshazzar and his thousand nobles drink wine and praise the idols of "gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone" (v. 4). Later in the story, Daniel rebukes the king because he desecrated God's holy vessels while giving praise to the idols "of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone" (v. 23). By intentionally reversing the order of the first two materials, Daniel wants to show that, as far as Heaven is concerned, Babylon is no longer the ruling empire of the world, but that Medo-Persia is. Gold had already given place to silver.

*Reversal* is also attested in the last chapters of the book. According to Daniel 11:33, wise people who instruct many during persecution by the contemptible ruler fall by the sword, or are burned, captured, or plundered. Yet because of the rise of Michael, the same wise

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people will be glorified, so they “will shine like the brightness of the heavens...for ever and ever” (12:3).

*Inclusio* is a literary device that takes place when the opening theme or phrase is repeated at the end.<sup>23</sup> Daniel begins (2:28) and ends (2:45) his lengthy speech before King Nebuchadnezzar with a reference to his God, who knows the future and holds it in his hand. Chapter 4 contains a royal letter addressed to the whole world and enveloped by two hymns of praise. The chapter begins (v. 3) and ends (v. 34) with a statement that affirms God’s enduring dominion and kingdom.

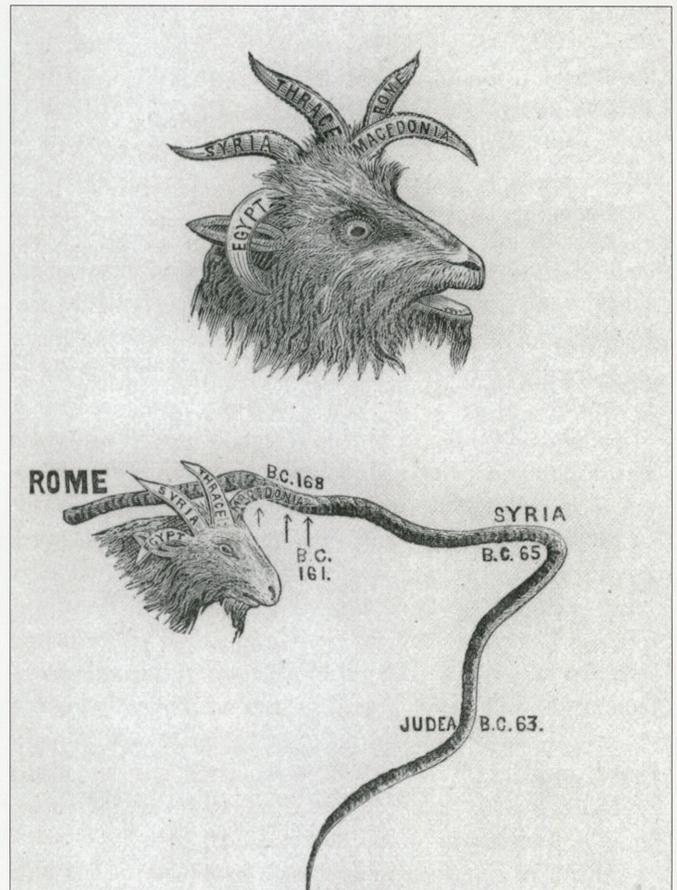
Similarly, Daniel 12 begins with a report of the rise of Michael, an event that guarantees Daniel will also rise to receive his allotted inheritance at the end of days. In both cases, the Hebrew verb root *’md* is used.

### Themes and Motifs

A careful reading of Daniel discloses a number of literary themes and motifs that attest to the book’s unity. The dominant theme is God’s power, displayed in the ways he deals with his covenant people and other nations. The book teaches that the events of world history are subject to God’s ultimate control.<sup>24</sup> The book portrays God as sovereign and eternal. Not only is he compassionate, but also “mighty to save”; he is also able to defeat the oppressor and deliver his suffering people.

The Bible commonly refers to God’s way of acting in the lives of individuals or groups of people as divine judgment. God’s judgment results in destruction of the oppressor, on the one hand, as well as deliverance and vindication of the righteous, on the other. Although the theme of judgment permeates the entire book of Daniel, it is especially present in chapter 7, which is often viewed as a pivotal chapter in Scripture.

From chapter 1, the reader discerns that, when the children of Israel went into exile to the land of Shinar, they, in fact, backtracked (or reversed) Abram’s journey of faith as reported in and around Genesis 12. Yet, in that same chapter, we see the faithful remnant rising from (desert) dust to stars at the palace in Babylon. One scholar describes this motif as “from pit to pinnacle.”<sup>25</sup> In contrast, the story from chapter 5 tells about the fall of Babylon, the event that can be described as a movement from stars to dust. Finally, in chapter 12, the wise and the “many” to whom they had witnessed rise from dust to stars once again, this time forever, never



again to go back to dust.

In addition to being the most powerful being, God is portrayed in Daniel as someone who shares power with humans. In this sense, world history as presented in biblical prophecy is a witness to numerous examples of uses and misuses of God-given authority to rule (*soltan*) by beastlike powers. In practice, this means that human laws sometimes stand in opposition to God’s principles, as they do in chapters 3 and 6, where the reader can see two unchangeable laws in conflict.

Daniel presents the rise of the beasts in chapter 7 as a replay of the creation story from Genesis 1 that climaxes in the coming of a humanlike being who receives universal authority to rule.<sup>26</sup> Daniel 8 describes the same theme of cosmic battle as a reversal of cultic services in the sanctuary. Both chapters climax in a statement that God’s cause will triumph in the end.

Chapter 9 presents the same truth through another theme that could be called the “Story of Two Exiles.”<sup>27</sup> From an earthly, temporary exile of seventy years, the prophet is introduced to a much longer (“seventy weeks” of years) universal captivity to sin, which will come to an end because of the Messiah’s death. That event will make God’s covenant prevail

in behalf of "many" people when their sins are forgiven.

## Conclusion

In this article, I have endeavored to show that the book of Daniel contains outstanding literary qualities. The book is attractive and useful material for reading, study, and application. Hopefully, the use of literary approach and its technical jargon will not hinder students of Daniel from glimpsing God's way of acting. For that reason, I close with a quote that offers a useful analogy.

*Like a telescope, it [Scripture] summons us to look through, not at, it and see the starry heavens. The most crucial question to ask is, Have you seen the stars? not, What do you think of the lens? . . . Like a lamp, the Scriptures make it possible for us to see; like bread, they satisfy our appetite and nourish us. It is very important not to forget. . . that the Bible is a means to an end, not an end in itself.*<sup>28</sup> ■

## Notes and References

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13. Soulen, *Handbook*, 32-33.

14. In most modern English translations, including the NIV, this wordplay is lost.

15. As far as our present evidence goes, alliteration and assonance are not attested in Daniel's book.

16. For a different definition of *paronomasia*, see W. Randolph Tate, *Interpreting the Bible* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2006), 258.

17. "Two words are used, but one is meant." This simple definition of *hendriads* is found in E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1968), 657.

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**Zdravko Stefanovic** teaches Old Testament studies at Walla Walla University. Pacific Press has just published his book *Daniel, Wisdom to the Wise: Commentary on the Book of Daniel*.

# MOVIES



## Cinematography—Why Bother? *A list or two to consider* |

BY ZDRAVKO PLANTAK

Shame, guilt, and an Adventist vision of potential eternal damnation were the feelings I experienced the first time I stepped into a movie theater in my hometown of Varazdin, Croatia. I was a teenager who had sneaked out from my Adventist boarding academy with a few friends to go see a movie. The feelings of sin were only softened by the movie we watched: *Ben Hur*. If we felt guilty and self-conscious before and during the film's performance, sheer fear and guilt for our criminal like behavior were elevated to the highest level as we left the theater.

There we saw our preceptor waiting on the other side of the street with his "evil eye" and a pad and pencil in his hands, writing down the names of those bad Adventist youth who dared to rebel and go to the *vjece bezboznicko* (the assembly of the godless) to mix with the sinners. We knew we would have to bear the consequences. Never mind that it was a film with Christian connotations showing in the midst of the atheist state of communist Yugoslavia. We all received the "last warning before the expulsion," a strange punishment for seeing Judah Ben Hur struggle for his kindness, get condemned to the galleys, and come back redeemed. The irony of life!

So, I naturally hated that part of Adventism, which I envisioned as being transliterated from its original American setting. Little did I know that, like many other things in our faith, we shared a suspicion of cinema with a part of the larger Christian culture. When I started studying film in the context of theology, it was liberating (and disturbing

at the same time) to see this and many other similarities in religious culture that we share with other Christian brothers and sisters. From the earliest days of cinematography, Christians and filmmakers have had periods of mutual involvement and cooperation. In the first decade of filmmaking, from 1895 to 1905, some Christians, far from being in conflict with the industry, creatively used and even shaped the creation of cinematography.

Many of the early movies had religious themes. For instance, dramatized passion plays "took on a cinematic lease of life following the advent of motion pictures" at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> One Christian publishing house in Paris financed one of the first films that dealt with the life of Jesus. In New York City, the first American attempt to record a life of Christ was filmed on the roof terrace of the Grand Central Palace Hotel. Another film, *The Mystery of the Passion Play of Oberammergau* (1898), lasted nineteen minutes. "One itinerant evangelist even purchased [it] and traveled the country using it at revival meetings."<sup>2</sup>

This became a pattern, and a number of other preachers used films in evangelistic tent meetings combining preaching with showing films. For example, Herbert Booth, son of Salvation Army founder, William Booth, used specially recorded scenes of Christ's life and death as a part of his multimedia production titled *Soldiers of the Cross*, which shared the gospel message at the beginning of the twentieth century in Australia.

Many movies, although not all, continued to exhibit religious life with dignity and reverence, and, as a result, churches were even

**Little did I know  
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used as movie theaters. But after these first two decades of the "seventh art," things changed. Excesses in sex and violence surfaced, as did the cult of the stars, exotic "dream palaces" to house screenings, and lack of regulations and censorship in production.

In 1933, the Vatican's Apostolic Delegate in the United States called for the "purification of the cinema, which has become the deadly menace to morals." The censorship process that started in those days has continued and somewhat developed into the present rating system. However, the relationship between Christians and cinematography has stayed ambiguous and mixed.

My study also led me to appreciate in particular several theologians who have contributed significantly to the theology-film conversation, namely Paul Tillich and H. Richard Niebuhr, and three contemporary theologians who have summed up that relationship best in the last few years: John May, Rob Johnston, and Jolyon Mitchell.

Paul Tillich was known as the "theologian of culture"—he even invented the term. As a chaplain in World War II, he not only prayed with the dying and for the dead, but he also dug the graves and buried the dead. He experienced the despair and alienation that any war brings to its participants.

During those years in the trenches, Tillich discovered that art could restore his faith. Thumbing through the reproductions of great paintings in art books that he managed to buy at field bookstores under "candle and lantern light to distract his mind during lulls in the bombardments on the front," he learned to appreciate what art can do to lift the spirit and bring him closer to the transcendent divine.<sup>3</sup>

After the war, he went to the Berlin Museum and was so impressed by Sandro Botticelli's *Madona with Singing Angels*, a painting that had already comforted him earlier on the front, that he wrote years later about this epiphany at the museum in an essay "One Moment of Beauty"

*Gazing up at it, I felt a state approaching ecstasy. In the beauty of the painting there was Beauty itself. It shone through the colors of the paint as the light of day shines through the stained glass windows of a medieval church.*

*As I stood there, bathed in the beauty its*

*painter had envisioned so long ago, something of the divine source of all things came through to me. I turned away shaken.*

*That moment has affected my whole life, given me the keys for the interpretation of human existence, brought vital joy and spiritual truth. I compare it with what is usually called revelation in the language of religion.<sup>4</sup>*

As Clive Marsh has rightly suggested, Tillich "sought to 'read' Western culture in order to identify its key concerns, in relation to which he could then present Christian responses appropriate for the present. His was a 'theology of correlation,'" writes Marsh, "which brought together contemporary cultural concerns and Christian theology so that Christian theology could be allowed to address actual questions."<sup>5</sup>

Such a method of correlations was naturally suited to a dialogical place of arts. Therefore, Tillich built into his theological process reflections upon the arts.<sup>6</sup> Tillich enabled other Christian thinkers to look carefully at the other expressions of art and culture, such as films, for theological dialogue and insight or transcendent experience and encounter with the Ultimate Being.

H. Richard Niebuhr also significantly influenced the twentieth-century theology of culture in his seminal book *Christ and Culture*.<sup>7</sup> Niebuhr offered five different ways that describe how Christ, and by proxy a Christian, can relate to culture.<sup>8</sup> Briefly, due to the familiarity of his concepts, we see Christ in opposition to culture (Christ against Culture), in fundamental agreement with the culture (Christ of Culture) and in one of three possible dialogical or dialectical relationships with the culture (Christ above Culture, Christ and Culture in Paradox, and Christ the Transformer of Culture).

These were useful categories in the mid-twentieth century and they still bear significance to the twenty-first century study on film and faith. The following three theologians have used Tillich's passion for theology of culture and Niebuhr's interest in the relationship between the two in adopting his categories and modifying them to fit the relationship between theology and film for the twenty-first century. Let me briefly outline these and then use one simple format to look

for clues where we might now want to position ourselves and why.

John May suggests that there is a visible shift or progression in the theological consideration of film. It begins with discrimination and a focus on morality and moral discernment. Then it moves to critiquing the visibility of how religious figures or themes are represented. Next it attempts dialogue—a theological conversation with particular films. In the fourth level of critique, it examines the humanism of the film and looks at how it can promote human progress and flourishing. At the highest level, there is consideration of aesthetics, which ultimately explores how the transcendent may be manifested at the cinema.<sup>9</sup>

1. Discrimination
2. Visibility
3. Dialogue
4. Humanism
5. Aesthetics

Robert Johnston has a somewhat similar list regarding the theological response to film:

1. Avoidance
2. Caution
3. Dialogue
4. Appropriation
5. Divine Encounter

Even though these approaches developed chronologically over the last three-quarters of the twentieth century, Johnston suggests that they are still applied horizontally by different churches and theologians today. The question is, To which do we as a community now belong? We, too, have moved over time from the avoidance stance of my academy days. Where should we be now?

Jolyon Mitchell's is the most simplified proposal regarding the theological responses to cinematography. Mitchell classified this relationship between faith and film into only three groups: corruption, exploration, and illumination. Films are either shunned as corruption, embraced as exploration, or allowed to make a contribution to our overall thinking about God and God's world as illumination.<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps exploration describes where our community now finds itself. Although film can, on one hand, be perceived as negative, especially as interpreted in terms of "surface" layer ethics or "thin" ethics, it also has a potential to "explore profound theological questions and moral dilemmas," or what I would term "thick" in-depth moral ideas. The vast majority of contemporary films do not corrupt, but rather "provoke the world to ask new questions." Through storytelling, films often explore with great visual and emotional effect the dimensions, historical realities, or present imaginative possibilities that push viewers into greater self-examination and motivate them to greater virtues.

Film can be, as Bryan Stone, has rightly suggested, "an important dialogue partner for Christians who are interested in thinking seriously about their faith." He continues: "[T]he cinema is regularly and quite amazingly a source of revelation about ourselves and our world—about the 'signs of the times.' The cinema reveals what we value as human beings," he writes, "our hopes and our fears. It asks our deepest questions, expresses our mightiest rage, and reflects our most basic dreams."<sup>11</sup>

In this middle approach to film as "exploration," Mitchell is close to Johnston's idea of dialogue, in which theology needs to inform film viewing and, simultaneously, film viewing should inform theology. It is "insufficient and perhaps dishonest," suggests Johnson, "to make a point or illustrate a theological truth" by using film. This process needs to be a genuine dialogue so that "the viewers let the movie work its 'charm' on them, enlighten them, disturb them. Only then can it have a chance to deepen their understanding of reality (and perhaps even reality itself)."<sup>12</sup>

Robert Jewett, for example, calls his approach in *Saint Paul and the Movies* "dialogue in a prophetic mode" in order that the films he chooses for correlation with biblical passages "become a full partner in conversation with Paul the apostle" even though the Pauline word is allowed to stand as *primus inter pares*, the first among equals.<sup>13</sup>

Like Johnson, Jewett does not want films to be audiovisual aids for the already informed, which seems to be a regular feature of some of Adventist worship experiences (and many other Christian contemporary worships), but desires to take a film on its own terms,

allow it to speak in its artistic and ethical integrity, and then become a conversation partner in a dialogical mode.

This dialogue between faith and film, Johnson concludes, can take many different forms. "It can note the explicit theological themes of given films or dialogue with the motifs embedded both in movies and in the Bible," claims Johnson. "It can bring film and biblical text into conversation or it can compare and contrast the Christ of the Gospels with the metaphorical use of a Christ-figure to advance the meaning of a given movie." But, ultimately, the purpose is "to bring film and theology into two-way conversation, letting both sides be full partners in the dialogue."<sup>14</sup>

To Mitchell's final category of illumination, Johnston's two final categories give better nuance and point to two distinct aspects of illumination: namely "appropriation" and "divine encounter." He writes: "Movies can tease out of their viewers greater possibilities for being human and present alternative selves not otherwise available. ... [T]he goal in relating theology and film is not, first of all, to render moral judgment, ... but to achieve greater insight."<sup>15</sup>

William Jones has reiterated a similar idea in his book, *Sunday Night at the Movies*.

*Christians of our generation are becoming increasingly aware that the contemporary arts are pleading the same question the church is committed to holding before society: the question of essential meaning of human experience.*

*To a student of film and faith, it is becoming more and more obvious that a substantial number of theologians and theological film critics are joining this club that sees in the best of movies an opportunity for wonderment, a sacramental capacity and moments of transcendental encounter with the divine....<sup>16</sup>*

Movie watchers often exercise transcendental faculties of insight, criticism, and wonderment that come remarkably close to what religion has traditionally termed faith, prophecy, and reverence. Catholic theologian Neil Hurley concludes, "A wedding of the two is overdue, although, happily, the matchmakers are growing in number."<sup>17</sup>

This brings me to my main premise, which is perhaps best illustrated with a story from a recent trip that

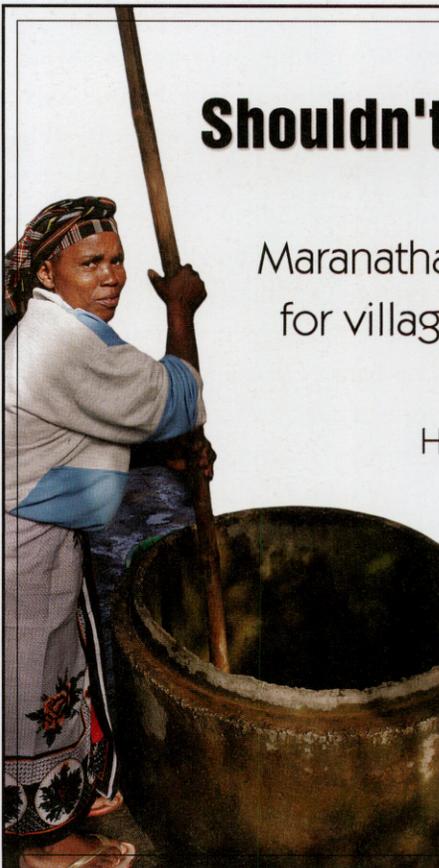
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my family took to Venice. I spotted a sign on a bridge over one of the famous canals that read "More Ethics and Less Aesthetics." Immersed as we were in the high culture and Renaissance art of Italy, I thought it was clever and ironic. But when I thought more about this sign, it began to bug me deeply.

As an ethicist, I think that this is utterly upside down! I believe that the more aesthetics we allow into our lives the more ethically we grow. We need more beauty in the world. There is plenty of ugliness. There is also a deficiency of beautiful life or what Greeks called good (virtuous) life.

Finally, then, here is my list of reasons why we would be foolish not to take seriously the most effective and influential cultural texts of today:

1. Film helps us see life more clearly. It teaches us about ourselves and about human potential as well as human limits. It creates vision—it enables prophetic imagination. Film images are an important source of knowledge; they visually present us with choices as we encounter others choosing rightly or wrongly. As Daniel Frampton describes matters: "Film reveals real-

ity, exactly by [often] showing a distorted mirror of it.... Cinema allows us to re-see reality, expanding our perceptions, and showing us a new reality."<sup>18</sup> In a poetic effect, it thoughtfully "opens (our) eyes to what we forget we can experience every day."<sup>19</sup>

2. Film brings to the front issues that we have often attempted to brush under the carpet and explores their implication to our daily living. Often these issues intersect with theological themes of justice, fairness, forgiveness, reconciliation, redemption, love, responsibility, relationships between individuals and in the communities, and many ethical issues of our time.

Films such as *Amistad*, *Schindler's List*, *Life is Beautiful*, *Cry Freedom*, *Amazing Grace*, or *Saving Private Ryan*, and many other mainstream Hollywood films as well as independent or foreign films enable us to aspire to get involved and continue working with God on bettering the world that he desires for his creation.

3. Film is a new way of thinking. In *Filmosophy*, Daniel Frampton argues powerfully and persuasively that we live in an age that must take cinematography

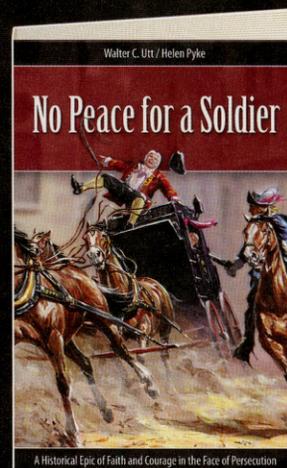
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seriously because film is the future form of thinking not totally dissimilar to a poetic thinking. Through such thinking, we are uniquely able to show how we think with our imagination. "Filmosophy," Frampton says, "is a study of film as thinking.... Film-thinking resembles no one single kind of human thought, but perhaps the functional spine of human thinking—film-thinking seems to be a combination of idea, feeling and emotion."<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, as a meditative art form, film-thinking "can show the complexity of things through simple images. Beyond logic, meditative human thought is sensitive not just to the world, but to memory, and the foreseeing the future possibilities."<sup>21</sup>

I am indebted to Johnston who helps round out this list of reasons why a Christian should enter into dialogue with film:

4. God's common grace is present throughout human culture.
5. Theology should be concerned with the Spirit's presence and work in the world.
6. God is active within the wider culture and speaks to us through all of life.
7. Imagination as well as word can help us to encounter God.
8. Theology's narrative shape makes it particularly open to interaction with other stories.
9. The nature of constructive theology is a dialogue

between God's story (Bible, Christian tradition, and a particular worshipping community) and our stories (the surrounding culture and life experiences).<sup>22</sup>

In his book *Faith and Film*, Bryan Stone states matters well:

*Linking Christian faith and theology with the arts is not something entirely new, of course. Christians have enjoyed a rich history of leaning heavily on the arts in order to carry out the tasks of bearing witness to the Christian faith. Just think of the impressive cathedrals of the Middle Ages that attempted to express Christian truth through their stained glass, handsome murals, ornate ceilings, and shadows, even the smell of incense—all of these have served as media for the communication of the gospel. But the role of the aesthetic has become diminished in the face of a rationalistic religion that reduced faith to dogma and truth to propositions. It would be no exaggeration to say that in recent centuries the printed word of theology has predominated over imagination, drama, myth, pictures, and storytelling. And yet few, if any, of our most fundamental Christian convictions can be reduced to words on a printed page. There remains in human beings a deep hunger for images, sound, pictures, music, and myth. Film offers us a creative language—an imaginative language of movement and sound—that can bridge the gap between the rational and the aesthetic, the sacred and the secular,*



Pastor Roy &  
Bennie Gee

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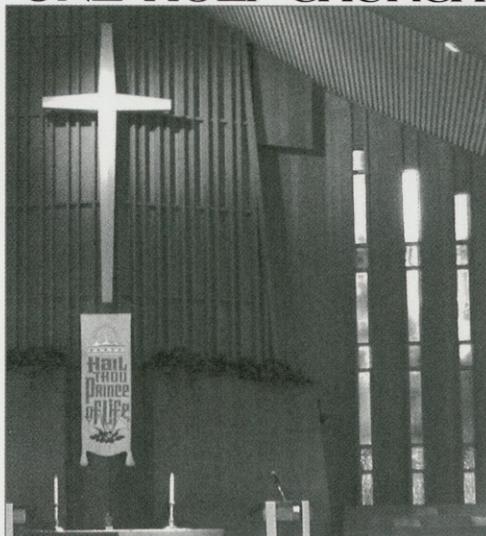
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As you might have guessed, I have found reading on this topic as provocative as watching films. Old books and new have brought profound insights.

Back in 1923, Ricciotto Canudo wrote that he saw a future where "films will reach us with the supreme clarity of ideas and visual emotions, [being] the synthesis of all the arts and the profound impulse underlying them... a lucid and vast expression of our internal life."<sup>24</sup>

I believe that Canudo was truly prophetic in his vision and, therefore, I suggest that we, as Seventh-day Adventist Christians, should take cinematography seriously.

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3. Kelton Cobb, *The Blackwell Guide to Theology and Popular Culture* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2005), 91.

4. Paul Tillich, "One Moment of Beauty," in *On Art and Architecture*, edited by John Dillenberger and Jane Dillenberger (New York: Crossroads, 1987), 235. The essay was written in 1955.

5. Clive Marsh, "Film and Theology of Culture," in *Explorations in Theology and Film*, edited by Clive Marsh and Gaye Ortiz (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1997), 30.

6. Marsh rightly criticizes Tillich about being too high-brow and only interested in high culture and high art. For an excellent related discussion beyond the scope of this paper, see Cobb, *Blackwell Guide*, 90–100, and Marsh, "Film and Theology," 26–34.

7. H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper, 1951).

8. For more elaborate discussion, see Jenkins, "Culture," in *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, edited by A. Richardson and J. Bowden (London: SCM, 1983), 137–141.

9. John R. May, "Religion and Film: Recent Contributions to the Continuing Dialogue," *Critical Review of Books in Religion* 9 (1996):105–21. See a brief summary of May's five categories in Mitchell, "Theology and Film," 738.

10. Mitchell, "Theology and Film," 739. As Mitchell put it: "Some critics have shunned the cinema as a medium that can corrupt morally, socially and doctrinally, while others have embraced it as a catalyst for theological exploration, or even as an art form with transcendent potential."

11. Bryan P. Stone, *Faith and Film: Theological Themes at the Cinema* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2000), 4.

12. See further and more elaborate discussion of his method of a dialogue in a prophetic mode in Robert Jewett, *Saint Paul and the Movies: The Apostle's Dialogue with American Culture* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 1–16.

13. Ibid.

14. Robert K. Johnston, *Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Academic, 2000), 53–54.

15. Ibid., 54.

16. G. William Jones, *Sunday Night at the Movies* (Richmond: John Knox, 1967), 40.

17. Neil Hurley, *Theology Through Film* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. x.

18. Ibid., 3.

19. Ibid., 124.

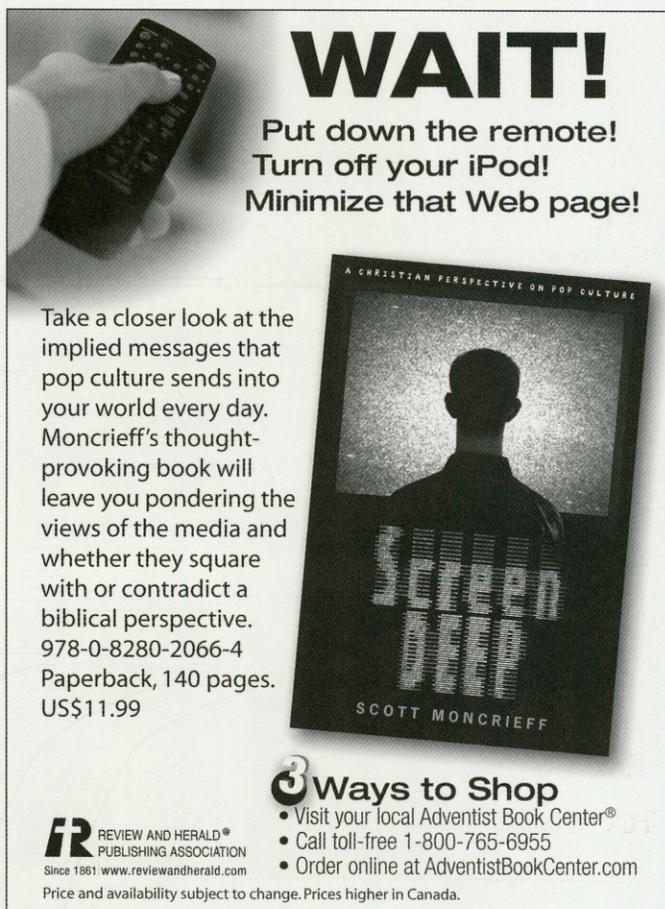
20. Ibid., 6–7.

21. Ibid., 192.

22. Johnston, *Reel Spirituality*, compares each of these in more details on pages 65–86.

23. Bryan P. Stone, *Faith and Film: Theological themes at the Cinema* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2000), 4–5.

24. Ricciotto Canudo, "Reflections on the Seventh Art," in *French Film Theory and Criticism: A History/Anthology, 1907–1939, Volume I: 1907–1929*, edited by Richard Abel, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).



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# The Responsibility of Watching

BY SCOTT MONCRIEFF

The motion-picture medium has an extraordinary range of expression. It has in common, with the plastic arts, the fact that it is a visual composition projected on a two-dimensional surface; with dance, that it can deal in the arrangement of movement; with theatre, that it can create a dramatic intensity of events; with music, that it can compose in the rhythms and phrases of time and can be attended by song and instrument; with poetry, that it can juxtapose images; with literature generally, that it can encompass in its sound track the abstractions available only to language.

—Maya Deren, filmmaker and theorist

Film is unquestionably a marvelous artistic medium, combining several traditional arts in one. Perhaps equally unquestioned, many if not most films are not worth the time it takes to watch them.

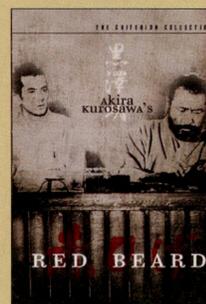
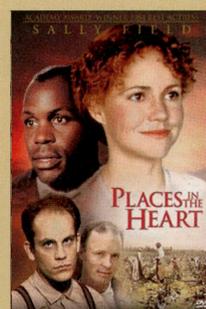
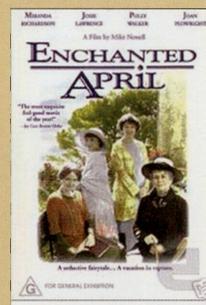
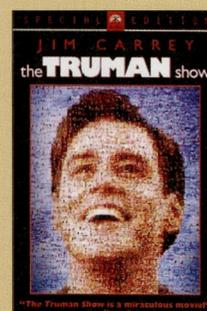
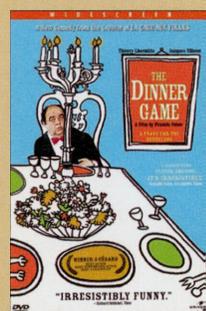
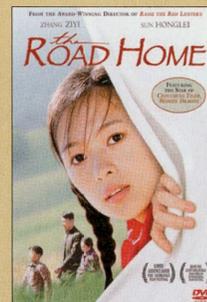
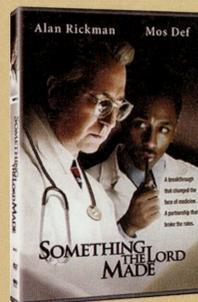
However, viewers bear a significant responsibility for being active and thoughtful when watching. With these points in mind, here are a few suggestions for improving viewer awareness, as well as a short list of films that I consider worth contemplating from a spiritual perspective.

**Develop Camera Awareness.** Get accustomed to noticing the role of the camera, almost as if it is a character. Is it close to or far away from what it's shooting, at eye level or above or below, moving or stationary? Characters, landscape, and motion can be photographed from dozens of positions, and a lot of the artistry of the film comes from the placement and use of the camera. For instance, while recently watching *The Queen*, I was struck by the placement of the camera during the scene where the reserved queen breaks down and sobs, briefly. The camera is placed a good way behind her, maybe thirty feet, and to the side, rather than in front of her, so we can't see the tears rolling. The camera, in other words, has the good manners and reserve that the queen wishes to uphold throughout the film.

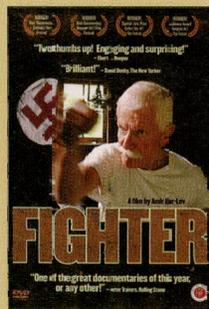
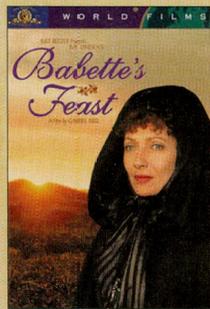
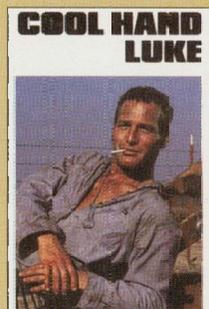
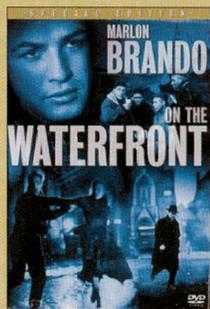
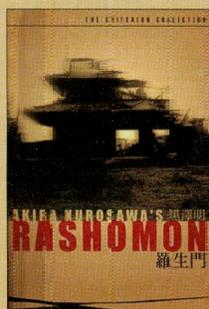
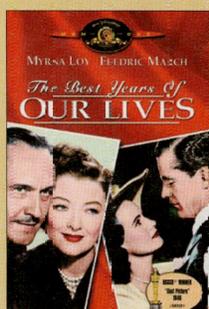
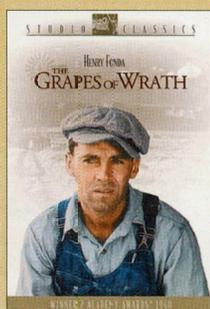
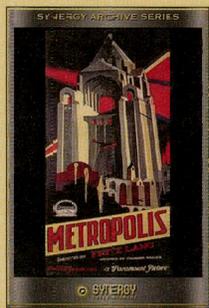
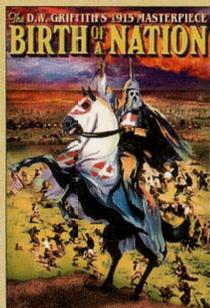
**Contemplate the Worldview.** What are the film's opening and closing shots, and how does that framework relate to the vision within? What characters are shown to be admirable and what characters not? What values does the film seem to uphold? What questions does it engage?

Continued on page 40...

## Scott Moncrieff Recommends



# Winona Winkler Wendth's Selections



## Top Ten Movies *Every Adventist Should See*

BY WINONA WINKLER WENDTH

Cinema is by nature democratic and privileges the Common Man—you will find few films, good or bad, that validate political power, and those that consider people in positions of power focus on their humanity, weaknesses, or fatal flaws. So you will find many statements of courage against authority in this list, although not every one is driven by this theme. In all cases, these films require us to think hard about what we accept as “normal” and just, to look beneath appearances and actions for character and motives.

This list covers the eighty-five years between World War I and the turn of the current century, although you'll find an emphasis on life and times around World War II, an extended crisis from which the United States did not start to recover until the social upheavals of the 1960s. Both of those times were profoundly affective to baby boomers and their parents, the people who shaped the sociology of our church for sixty of those eight-five years.

I chose these films because they present challenges to the way we think—to our received norms over time—and because they investigate and dignify the human struggle. Many of these films use overt or subtle Christian symbolism and imagery to demonstrate the nobility that comes from resisting Evil, the power of peacemaking, and the redemptive qualities of love.

You will not find many of these works on a critical or popular list of “One Hundred Best” films. But these are the ones I believe deserve our attention because we are interested in the nexus of spiritual and human truths—if, in fact, they can be separated.

Together, these films also provide a useful survey of filmmaking techniques employed by some of our best directors. As is the case with other art forms, film has a rich history and its own tradition. As a body of work, it is also highly self-referential—you will recognize words and images that are now not only deeply embedded in our shared culture but also alluded to repeatedly in our current cinema.

You should do your homework: read what others have had to say about the films you watch; be prepared going in. Good collections of

*Continued on page 41...*

## MONCREIFF ON FILM

Continued from page 38

For instance, Kurosawa's *Ran* ends with a blind character on a cliff, having dropped his religious scroll. In the context of the film, it's a very interesting final image. *The 400 Blows*, a classic French film about a troubled youth, ends with a freeze frame of the main character breaking the "fourth wall" to look at the viewer, drawing the viewer into the web of social responsibility.

**Look for Surprises.** Most films are in some ways predictable (operating according to unspoken rules of their genre, for example) and occasionally surprising. Think especially about what is surprising about a particular film, and why. That's likely to be its area of particular interest. For instance, why does a period film like *Chariots of Fire* have (then) contemporary synthesized music for its soundtrack?

**Talk About It.** The more you discuss the film with another person, the more likely you are to be able to sort out your own ideas about it, and to develop a more complex response.

**Try Independent and Foreign Films.** You're more likely to learn something new, see things in a different way, if you venture outside mainstream Hollywood.

**Play It Again, Sam.** Instead of watching new films all the time, watch old ones you've enjoyed and try thinking harder about them, seeing what you didn't notice before, studying rather than just consuming.

**Read a Book.** In this spot, actually, I meant read a book about film. As a general introduction, Louis Giannetti's *Understanding Movies* is excellent. There are also books that tie films to Christian understanding, such as *Reel Spirituality* (by Robert K. Johnston) and *Saint Paul at the Movies* (by Robert Jewett).

These are the films I recommend.

*Something the Lord Made* (2004, United States)

It's interesting that this film was even made—"the early days of open heart surgery" is not a particularly cinematic topic. Nevertheless, Alan Rickman and Mos Def deliver excellent performances in this subtle story of a white surgeon and his invaluable black laboratory assistant. Directed by Joseph Sargent.

*The Road Home* (1999, China)

A lot of excellent landscape photography and an interesting screenplay in this restrained—and therefore more powerful—love story. Directed by Zhang Yimou.

*The Dinner Game* (1998, France)

Tame by French farce standards, but perhaps a bit racy from a conservative Christian perspective, this film provides a penetrating critique of the folly of making fun of others as idiots. Directed by Francis Veber.

*The Truman Show* (1998, United States)

OK, you've already seen it, maybe a few times, but familiarity was not a criterion for this list. The name *Christoff* is worth the price of admission, and as a critique of consumer culture and a parody of creator/creature relations, the film is a keeper. Directed by Peter Weir.

*Enchanted April* (1992, United States)

Four English women in the doldrums go to Italy for spring break. Imagine a film where American teenagers go to Florida for spring break, and then think of an experience that is different in every respect. A great film for regeneration. Directed by Mike Newell.

*Babette's Feast* (1987, Denmark)

The routine of a small, conservative, nineteenth-century religious community on the coast of Jutland is altered by the arrival of a French cook. A super film for thinking about the intersection of religious and artistic values. Directed by Gabriel Axel.

*Places in the Heart* (1984, United States)

Race, community, and feminist issues, well integrated with interesting and well-acted characters, and a final scene that does transcendence with panache. Directed by Robert Benton.

*A Man for All Seasons* (1966, United States)

I fell asleep at this film as a kid (also slept through a Virgil Fox organ concert and Charlton Heston and Vanessa Redgrave onstage in *Macbeth*), but now find the acting and the working through of the theme of integrity to be absolutely gripping. Directed by Fred Zinnemann.

*Red Beard* (1965, Japan)

Almost three hours long, but great acting by Toshiro Mifune and a lot to consider about compassion and

empathy in this story of nineteenth-century doctors at a low-budget clinic. Directed by Akira Kurosawa.

*The Cameraman* (1928, United States)

There's a world of interesting silent films, and this Buster Keaton vehicle is one of my favorites, with excellent comedy, a nice romance, and an engaging partnership between a monkey and the hero. Directed by Edward Sedgwick. ■

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**Scott Moncrieff** is a professor of English (who also teaches film) at Andrews University. His book *Screen Deep: A Christian Perspective on Pop Culture*, is newly available from Review and Herald Publishers.

## WENDTH ON FILM

*Continued from page 39*

essays about film are Robert Ebert's *Alone in the Dark*, and his *Book of Film*; Jim Shepard's *Writers at the Movies*; Manny Farber's *Negative Space*; and Philip Lopate's *Totally Tenderly, Tragically*. My "go-to" books are James Monaco's *How to Read a Film* and Leo Baudry's *Film Theory and Criticism*.

You should watch a film on as large a screen as possible; you will miss the subtleties of cinematic details if you don't. Cinematographers worked hard to deliver them, so pay attention. Watch a film in the company of as many other people as possible; be prepared to talk to each other on the way out. Unlike books, films are made to be experienced communally, and we do their creative artists a disfavor by not respecting this.

Which brings us back to the democratic nature of this medium: movies make community, if only for a couple hours. But for those two hours, we know that the person next to us—neighbor or stranger—is witness to what we see, even though she or he may leave our temporary company with a slightly different "take" on what we shared. But that's true outside the screening room, as well.

*The Birth of a Nation* (1915, United States)

At a low point in the normative racism and genderism of the United States, this film was acclaimed by thousands of people, including President Woodrow Wilson, many of whom paid the equivalent of forty dollars or more per ticket to see it. *Birth of a Nation* celebrates the work of the Ku Klux Klan. That said, director D. W. Griffith was a great innovator and laid the groundwork for classic U.S. films by developing the sequential chase scene and the close-up. The fact that this film met with broad-based affirmation is a sobering insight into U.S.

sensibilities at a time when Ellen White was still alive. Directed by D. W. Griffith.

*Metropolis* (1927, Germany)

This silent film challenges the notion that labor is by nature dignified; it is an indictment of economic and political processes that appeal to a false understanding of religion in order to develop and maintain power. This is a love story, a fanciful creation of a future society from the perspective of the 1920s, and a clever inversion of the Golem legend. It also exemplifies the technical advantages European filmmaking had over picture making in the United States. One advantage of international silent films is that we can focus on the picture without unusual distraction from subtitles. Directed by Fritz Lang.

*Grapes of Wrath* (1941, United States)

This 1941 translation of Steinbeck's novel is a masterfully directed and stunningly beautiful cinematic work filmed by Gregg Toland. Henry Fonda's delivery of the words, "Wherever there's a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there," is still breathtaking. The film is replete with quotable, deeply religious language as it addresses the potential loss of the human spirit: "I wouldn't pray just for a old man that's dead, 'cause he's all right. If I was to pray, I'd pray for folks that's alive and don't know which way to turn." Directed by John Ford.

*The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946, United States)

This 1946 film about life in America in the psycho-sociological wake of World War II is one of director William Wyler's best pieces. This, too, owes much of its success to cinematographer Gregg Toland, whose use of deep focus to pull us into the circumstances of the characters—men who return home trying to make sense of their lives and their relationships. Their roles of authority in the army invert in society at home, veterans return without limbs or without adequate ways to earn a living, or without the hope of the "normal" domestic life they had counted on. The temporary disorder in American society affected all aspects of life during the following decade, and the roots of this are beautifully presented in this work. The felt need for Americans to hunker down and suppress this conflict and disappointment and to establish a compensatorily tight order is why, one generation later, we all went to see *Easy Rider* and *Cool Hand Luke*. This is a long film, but you'll never notice; the performances are exemplary.

*The Bicycle Thief* (1949, Italy)

This 1949 neo-realist film explores the malleability of the

social contract in situations in extremis, specifically, Italy in the aftermath of World War II. Long takes—long scenes filmed by a stable camera that show action from the actors, rather than from the film editors and cutters—create and support the tension we feel as the main character's economic life becomes more and more desperate. Having lost his own bicycle, a father tries to support his family and finally steals another in order to earn a living. This portrayal of all large social systems from the Italian bureaucracy to the Catholic Church is brave. *The Bicycle Thief* regularly appears on critics' "Ten Best" lists and should be screened in ethics classes on both the secondary and college level. Directed by Vittorio DeSica.

*Rashômon* (1950, Japan)

This history-making masterpiece awakened Americans to the quiet and elegant beauty of Japanese films; this is also the film that awakened the Japanese to their role in international filmmaking. *Rashômon* is based on a story by Ryunosuke Akutagawa, one of Japan's best-known writers. Life is a multivocal narrative, and no unchallengeable history is possible, Akutagawa says through six different tellings of a single event. Today, psychologists refer to "The *Rashômon* Effect," the circumstance in which witnesses to a single happening have irresolvably different stories. This film does hold out the belief that goodness, although possibly not always recognizable, is still possible and still prevails. Directed by Akira Kurosawa.

*On the Waterfront* (1953, United States)

This film about life among dockworkers puts family loyalty and right-doing in contest. Marlon Brando finally does what's right and discovers that his personal sacrifice empowers his fellow workers, who finally stand up to the power and authority of corrupt union leaders. Brando "could have been a contender," but had given up his hopes to please his corrupt gambler brother. Christian imagery underlies this film and shows redemption through personal risk and courageous selflessness, with a little help from the church. Based on a series of articles in the *New York Sun*, *On the Waterfront* compounds history, religion, love, spirituality, family ethics, politics, and economics. Leonard Bernstein's soundtrack is terrific. Directed by Elia Kazan.

*Cool Hand Luke* (1967, United States)

"Callin' it your job don't make it right, Boss." Stuart Rosenberg's 1967 film presents that decade's call to question absolute authority with an imaginative use of the Christian narrative and a

remarkable performance by Paul Newman as a man who submits to punishment with quiet dignity, yet prevails morally. A tough film, hard to watch, this puts our habitual ideas of goodness and justice under pressure. Director Stuart Rosenberg gives us one of the most powerful mother-son relationships on screen, contained in two scenes, which together take only a few moments. The film does not fail to communicate.

*Babette's Feast* (1988, Denmark)

"When we ask for bread, God will not give us stone." Set in a nineteenth-century religious community, this film suggests that shared participation in what is richly beautiful can build community, hope, faith, and trust. Based on a short story by Karen Blixen, the film transforms the original text beautifully and smartly—"It's better than the book." Babette comes unannounced to right a chilly and bitter community that has long since forgotten what genuine joy can be, and the film considers the relationship between the numinous and the human, the nature of community, the divided self, the discovery of meaning, the joys or sorrows that come from self-sacrifice, and the downward psychological spiral of delayed gratification. An all-time wonderful "food movie," this film, too, is supported by Christian symbolism of redemption. "Mercy imposes no conditions." Directed by Gabriel Axel.

*Fighter* (2000, United States)

Jan Weiner and writer-director Arnost Lustig are Czech holocaust prison camp escapees who return to their native county to revisit and recollect and make sense of their experiences. This is a study in the function and value of memory—if no one remembers who you are or what you did, how are your experiences able to help you locate truth or find meaning? The film asks us to consider at what point one puts ethics aside in order to survive, and what constitutes heroism. This is a "buddy" movie of the most intricate and complex sort—these men disagree about almost everything—and it even posits that the ways in which we respond to crisis after the fact may be a matter of physiology. Directed by Bar-Lev.

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**Winona Winkler Wendth** is a freelance writer who is studying creative nonfiction in Bennington College's MFA program. She has studied, taught, and lectured on film on various campuses.

## Making a List for 2007 | BY DANEEN AKERS

I'll admit right up front that I'm a movie junkie. And not just one of those intellectual, art house movie junkies but a true movie fan who loves both indie and big budget Hollywood films. I went to Sundance Film Festival this year and regularly patronize the small one-screen theaters still left in my city, but I also went to see the latest *Harry Potter* on the first day it came out—in full IMAX splendor.

(Did you know that the IMAX in San Francisco is the third-largest movie screen in the world? It's a glorious experience.) While I'm confessing, I also saw the latest *Pirates of the Caribbean* on its first day out and thoroughly enjoyed myself—there's a place for popcorn movies. I'm hoping my confession will tempt those of you who might dismiss some of these films as either too popular or too “different” to take a risk and adjust the Netflix queue.

While researching this list, I was reminded why I love movies so much. Quite simply, this is our campfire, the place where we go to learn our stories. For two hours, we sit in a dark room with cell phones turned off, next to our neighbors, suspended in disbelief as we enter into the reality of another and sometimes (perhaps most cathartically) *The Other*. We encounter our fears, hopes, and yearnings through who we meet and what we see on that screen. These two hours are the closest thing to a sermon many people ever hear—and they pay for it. These two hours are power. Like Uncle Ben says in *Spiderman*, with great power comes great responsibility.

The following ten films represent two hours well spent in the hands of filmmakers who take that responsibility and don't disappoint. (Yes, a couple are just two hours spent in harmless entertainment that can take us out of the stress of our lives for a mini-vacation.)

### Top Films of 2007

1. *Once* — Walking out of the theater after seeing *Once*, my husband and I found ourselves unusually speechless. We just kept muttering profound insights like, “Wow,” and “Oh, wow.” The reviewers seemed to have had the same experience as they universally fell in love with this little Irish gem. It's technically a musical, but director John Carney reinvents the genre so completely that you wouldn't necessarily realize that fact until you read a review.



- This is a film that sticks with you far longer than others. This staying power comes from the raw honesty and emotion between the two main characters (whose names we never know) who connect over their love of music and a similar brokenness in their lives; they are willing to befriend each other in a manner rarely seen in cinema. Oh, and did I mention that the music is dynamite?
2. *Into the Wild* — As a huge fan of the Jon Krakauer book this film is based on, I didn't have high expectations for the film (when is the film ever as good as the book?). But this film actually might just surpass the book, and that credit goes to Sean Penn's directing. He clearly identifies with the fiercely independent idealist Chris McCandless, who takes to the road after college, shunning the materialism, shallowness, and deceit he sees in his parents, and eventually dies on his final great adventure alone in an abandoned bus in the wilds of Alaska.

Everything about this film, from the superbly cast supporting characters to Penn's directing style, fits the character and his very American streak of ideal-

ism (think Thoreau and Muir) to live pure, unfettered, and in harmony with Nature.

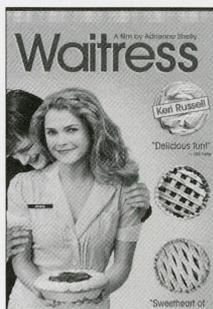
3. *For the Bible Tells Me So* — Readers of the *Spectrum Blog* or the Progressive Adventism Web site will know that I have a history with this film. My husband and I, along with a group of Pacific Union College students, waited for three hours to get into the midnight screening of this film at Sundance. Even though we ended up with the worst seats in the house on the very front row, we were all deeply moved by the power of this film, possibly the first mainstream film to try to reconcile homosexuality and the Bible.

It does so through the stories of five conservative Christian families who discover that their son or daughter is gay (including the Rev. Gene Robinson's family) and the scholarship of prominent theologians and ministers who offer biblical exegesis and scriptural analysis that aren't always taught during Sunday (or Sabbath) School. The film is meant to be a conversation starter for families and churches—and the evidence from the *Spectrum Blog* is that it wildly succeeds in this endeavor.

4. *Grace is Gone*—The many possible meanings of its title haunts this film—and in the best way possible. This was the Audience Award winner for a narrative film at Sundance this year, and it's already being talked about as John Cusack's best performance to date (he's actually almost unrecognizable, which worked quite well for Charlize Theron when Oscar season came around).

The film follows a father who can't figure out how to tell his two daughters that their mother has been killed in Iraq. As the Sundance program guide read, the fact that this film can actually be seen as promilitary is part of its power. The filmmakers don't draw conclusions for us; rather, they leave us with a story we can't shake.

5. *Waitress* — Keri Russell stars in this quirky and utterly charming little film about a waitress, Jenna, who discovers that she's pregnant with her vile husband's baby, a discovery that jeopardizes her plans to leave and start her life over. She vents her frustrations by creating pies (sometimes literally and sometimes just as a survival



technique) with names like, "I-Don't-Want-Earl's-Baby-Pie" and "Baby-Screaming-in-the-Middle-of-the-Night-and-Ruining-My-Life-Pie."

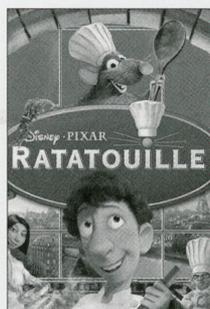
As a woman more than a little scared of how having a baby might change/dare-I-admit ruin my life, I found the ambiguousness of Jenna's feelings toward her unborn child a rarity in film, and it made the climax all the more meaningful.

6. *SiCKO* — No matter what your opinion of Michael



Moore, *SiCKO*—his best film by far—is worth your time. Moore unmasks the deep and troubling issues with American health care through his unique style of op-ed filmmaking that drives some people mad, but is ultimately meant to start a conversation. He cleverly doesn't even address the 50 million uninsured Americans, choosing to focus on those of us with "good" health insurance.

The ensuing litany of migraine-inducing stories of Americans who had the misfortune actually to need to use their health insurance should get all of us to pay more attention to this issue (and not just in election years). Although this picture is often grim, it is actually a comedy, and his optimism that we can change and that the United States is ultimately a land of good people left me feeling hopeful, not discouraged.



7. *Ratatouille* — Billboards proclaiming this film to be the "best reviewed film of the year" aren't exaggerating (but that's partially due to the fact that it came out in the summer when movie fare is more Michael Bay and less Michael Clayton). Still, the accolades are well deserved. This is a sweet, family friendly film about a Parisian rat who longs to be a chef; it's what you've come to expect from Pixar but with a lot of good French cooking thrown in.

8. *In the Valley of Elah* — The latest film from Paul Haggis (*Crash*) is an unflinching look at what war does to our children. Based on a true story, the film follows a father and former army man (Tommy Lee Jones) looking for his son, who has gone missing after returning from Iraq.

The story that unfolds is never manipulated and is about as raw as they come. The film gets its title from the valley where David fought Goliath, and as Jones's character tells a little boy named David the genesis of his name, we imagine other little boys hearing the same story but from the Koran, not the Bible, similarly situating themselves as Davids, facing their Goliaths with courage. I left wondering what my responsibility is as a citizen of a country that is sending our young



men and women to witness and participate in atrocity.

9. *Evan Almighty* — Okay, I know that half of you just wrote me off after seeing this title on my list. I'm apparently one of four in the country who loved this movie—the other three being the rest of my party who spent almost two solid hours laughing (those deep belly laughs) at this modern-day Noah and the flood story.

Steve Carell can always make me laugh, but that's not all



that was going on in this film. If God is anything like Morgan Freeman plays him, then we're going to be just fine.

10. *Paris, je t'aime* — Most filmgoers never get to see short films, and even the ones who do almost never get to see accomplished directors and actors make short films. This collection of eighteen shorts, set in the eighteen arrondissements of Paris, varies tremendously in style, but they all have heart, charm, and a healthy dose of that intangible Parisian joie de vie.

## Top Films That I'm Embarrassed Not to Have Seen Yet:

I'm afraid I've missed a few greats (by all accounts), including:

- *3:10 to Yuma*—A western to remind us why we like westerns.
- *Away From Her*—A poignant look at Alzheimer's.
- *Eastern Promises*—David Cronenberg's brutal examination of violence.
- *Hot Fuzz*—If you like a good British farce.
- *No End in Sight*—The documentary hailed as a balanced, inside perspective on how things went so wrong in Iraq; it's at the top of my Netflix queue.
- *Michael Clayton*—A lawyer/thriller film with a con-

scious that Roger Ebert says "is just about perfect as an exercise in the genre."

## Upcoming Films That Look Like Winners:

Of course, as this issue goes to press, we're entering the best movie season of the year (everyone is trying to qualify before the Oscars). Here are a few that seem well worth the theater experience:

- *Lars and the Real Girl* (10/26)—Although it sounds more than bizarre—a lonely, isolated man (Ryan Gosling) orders a life-size doll from the Internet and seems to think she is his real girlfriend—all signs point that it's actually an affirmation of love, community, and unconditional acceptance.
- *Bee Movie* (11/2)—The new animated flick from Jerry Seinfeld (note that it's rated PG, parents).
- *Lions for Lambs* (11/9)—A Robert Redford film about Iraq war policy. I have to admit that the biggest reason I can't wait to see this film is because one of my husband's PUC students worked as an intern on it.
- *I'm Not There* (11/21)—The unconventional biopic with six actors portraying Bob Dylan's life, including the indomitable Cate Blanchett in a role that is getting beyond rave reviews.
- *Atonement* (12/7)—Based on the Ian McEwan World War II novel that was short listed for the Booker Award—need I say more?
- *The Kite Runner* (12/7)—This was one of my book club's favorites, with its themes of friendship and redemption.
- *Juno* (12/14)—This is possibly the film I'm looking forward to seeing the most. It's being hailed as this year's *Little Miss Sunshine*, a quirky little film about a pregnant teen girl from a small town.
- *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (12/21)—Johnny Depp can get me to see any movie (I mentioned my *Pirates* obsession above), but Johnny Depp singing in a Tim Burton film? This I gotta see.
- *Charlie Wilson's War* (12/25)—Give me Tom Hanks, Julia Roberts, and Phillip Seymour Hoffman in a movie about a self-absorbed congressman who ends up concocting a scheme for a covert war in Afghanistan with Mike Nichols at the helm, and I'll predict a hit.
- *There Will Be Blood* (12/26)—It's been years since either P. T. Anderson or Daniel-Day Lewis made a film, and now they've both found something worthy of their talents. ■

**Daneen Akers** writes from San Francisco, where she is pursuing a graduate degree in English with emphasis on composition. As the reviews editor for *Spectrum's* new web site, she welcomes ideas for book and film reviews. She can be contacted at daneen@dneenaker.com



# NOVEL THOUGHTS

## When Adventists Riot! | BY RAY GARTON

Although it may be hard to believe for Seventh-day Adventists, who have long been discouraged from reading fiction, the fact is that sometimes fiction is the best way to tell the truth. "When Adventists Riot!" is a work of fiction—but it really happened in 1981. It's fiction because all the names have been changed—I've used the same fictional names I'm using in my novel, *Dismissed from the Front and Center*, a work-in-progress about my two years at Rio Lindo Academy—so these aren't really the people who were involved. And yet the story tells certain truths about some of the real people involved—but without involving the real people.

**W**hen I tell people my high school graduation ended in a riot, they don't believe me. Even after I tell them the story, they're doubtful. Of course, there are more than a few things about my two years at Rio Lindo Academy that people not familiar with the Seventh-day Adventist Church find odd.

Like the day I was walking through the administration building and the academy's principal, Elder John Gash, stepped in front of me and said, "Go back to the dorm and change your shirt."

I looked down at my shirt—a perfectly normal pullover with a V-neck. I checked for rips and stains, sniffed for B.O., found nothing wrong. Confused, I asked, "Why?"

"Because I can see your chest hair."

I smiled, thinking he was joking. But no, he was quite serious. When I asked him why a little chest hair was offensive—and really, there was only a little of it visible, I wasn't an ape, or anything—he never gave me a straight answer, just kept telling me to go back to my room and change the shirt. So, I did.

I puzzle over that to this day. I'll never know what it was about a few chest hairs that set Elder Gash off. Maybe I'd rather not.

Strange incidents like that were so commonplace that

none of us students really thought of them as strange back then. Sometimes, we simply acquiesced to the arbitrary dictates, but more often, we just laughed them off because that was what they deserved. So many of the policies were nonsensical and actually quite funny once we figured out they were based in something other than reason.

Rio Lindo is a boarding academy—boys' dorm at one end, girls' at the other, with the administration and science buildings and cafeteria in between, and the gymnasium and athletic field in back. I was there for my last two years of high school. At that time, church services were held in the large auditorium attached to the back of the administration building. For Friday night vespers, the boys had to sit in the left column of pews, the girls in the right. We were allowed to sit together for church on Saturday and other functions, but on Friday nights, as if there were something in the air—perhaps the faculty suspected an overabundance of human pheromones?—we were kept apart.

But I digress. Back to that graduation riot—the graduating class of 1981.

I was class president my senior year. This was due largely to my ventriloquist dummy, Chester, who was universally loved at Rio Lindo and had become a kind of unofficial school mascot. Chester and I performed with the Lindaires (Rio's student singing group), in speech class performances, in Sabbath School, in church, and various student shows, and even gave impromptu performances in the dormitory throughout my two years at Rio. Yep, everybody loved Chester. Girls used to line up to kiss that vinyl doll—meanwhile, I couldn't get a date. I think it was really Chester who was elected class president that year. But of course, I had to do all the work—Chester simply took all the glory.

The weekend of our graduation, Elder Gash and I were somewhat at odds. By the end of my second year, I'd

begun to get frustrated by all the strange little things that, until then, I'd simply laughed off, like the mystifying chest-hair incident—and the equally mystifying Week of Prayer accusations, the Senior Talent Show scandal, the utterly ridiculous Christmas Banquet movie debacle, and so many others (you'll have to read the book for those).

The source of most of these strange things was Elder Gash himself, undeniably a strange man. He was very tall and burly, with a broad face pockmarked by the ghosts of long-dead acne. His black hair was always well combed, maybe a little greasy with product. He seldom smiled, and when he did, the smile did not quite look at home on his

was bringing that tradition to an abrupt end. This did not sit well with the class—nor with me.

"Elder Gash, this is the last time many of us are ever going to see our friends in the junior class," I explained in an attempt to change his mind. "We've become very close to some of the juniors. Seeing them line the aisle for us as we march out is a memory we'd like to take away with us, like so many graduating classes before us."

"But it offends some of the older constituents," Elder Gash said.

I frowned as I thought that over. "Wait...the junior class lining the center aisle offends some of the older con-



**explosive disaster**

face. His full lips were a deep red and usually puckered, as if he were about to kiss someone. His tongue frequently moistened them in a gesture that was more than a little reptilian. His dark eyes were stern and piercing, and even when they weren't meant to, they looked accusing. More often than not, they looked downright angry.

The first major problem to arise in the preparation for our graduation was the detail that eventually led to the explosive disaster at the end of that ceremony.

It had been a beloved tradition for many years at Rio Lindo for the junior class to line the center aisle on each side as the graduates marched out after the commencement ceremony, just to see the graduates out on their final departure. It was a tradition that each class looked forward to at the end of the school year.

Until 1981. That year, Elder Gash announced that he

stituents?" I asked, trying to bend my brain around that one. Over those two years, I'd gotten a number of brain-benders from Elder Gash, but this one was a winner.

"When the seniors march out," he explained, folding his arms across his broad chest like Darth Vader, "they too often stop to hug, and sometimes even kiss, some of the juniors who line that center aisle. This presents too great a temptation for the students, and the public display of affection offends some of the older constituents."

Ah, the old familiar sin, the toxic offense immediately recognized by anyone who ever attended a Seventh-day Adventist school: the dread and insidious PDA—Public Display of Affection!

I did not know how to respond to that. Sure, hugs and kisses were exchanged, but they were the kind one would expect to see at a final gathering of students who've spent

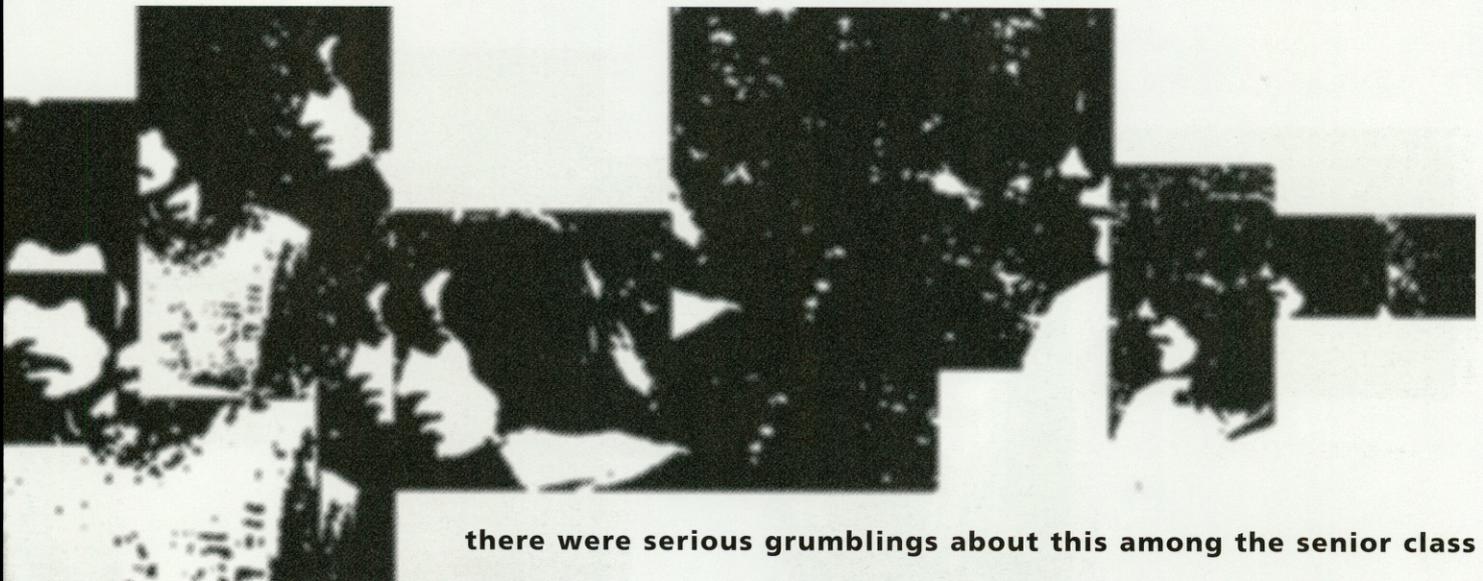
years sequestered together in this strange environment that was at once both nurturing and stifling. It wasn't as if the exiting graduates stopped to engage in hot and heavy make-out sessions with the waiting juniors—the high windows of the gymnasium did not steam up, there was no inappropriate touching, no clothes were removed, new families were not inadvertently started there in the center aisle. These were simply excited expressions of affection and farewell among emotional teenagers saying goodbye and about to go away, sometimes far away, to get on with their lives.

But still, it was dat ol' demon—PDA!

I never met any of the “older constituents” who were so

Stanton no doubt assumed, was closer to God. So, behind the untrustworthy back of Stanton Pardy and away from Elder Gash's piercing, watchful eyes and puckered, kissing lips, we began to plot and plan, hatching a little conspiracy that would have unexpected and violent results.

**I**f Elder Gash's arbitrary decision about the juniors lining the center aisle for the graduates wasn't enough to start a riot, there was the matter of the stage backdrop for the graduation ceremony being painted by the art teacher and a brilliantly talented student. It was an enor-



**there were serious grumblings about this among the senior class**

offended by this behavior. None of them was named for me. When I asked Elder Gash for specific reports from these people, he provided none and was offended that I would be so insolent as to make the request. He simply told me, with a leaden sound of finality, that as of our graduation, there would be no more lining of the center aisle by the junior class for the departing graduates.

But there were serious grumblings about this among the senior class, and neither I nor the other class officers were satisfied with this state of affairs. Neither were the junior class officers. The exception to our minor mutiny, of course, was senior class vice president Stanton Pardy, the tallest, single most self-righteous, pious, faculty smooching John Denver look-alike I've ever met. This guy always sided with Elder Gash. I suspect this was because Elder Gash was one of the few people there taller than Stanton and therefore,

amous mural that stretched the entire length of the stage and reached nearly to the gymnasium ceiling. It began with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden on the left, featured the Crucifixion of Christ in the middle, and concluded on the right with the Second Coming. It was gorgeous.

But Adam's butt cheeks were showing.

Eve's derriere was covered up by her long hair, but Adam's was visible. They stood with their backs to the viewer, overlooking the Garden. Adam's butt cheeks were tastefully done, not at all offensive—certainly not to anyone in our class, anyway—and everyone who saw the mural loved it. But...it was still Adam's butt cheeks. And there were all those thin-skinned, easily offended “older constituents” to think about. I imagined dozens of elderly Adventists gazing innocently up at the mural,

clutching their chests, and dropping heavily to the floor. Dead.

Even before I received word, I knew what was coming.

Elder Gash declared that Adam's butt cheeks were out (hey, at least Adam's chest hair wasn't showing). Our art teacher was forced to hastily paint an oddly positioned bush to cover up the offending posterior. It was never quite clear from where this bush was growing. At first glance, I actually thought it was coming out of the bottom in question! It looked, quite simply, ridiculous, and seriously marred and distracted



from an otherwise beautiful mural. Our art teacher was mortified to have his work criticized and censored by a Neanderthal like Elder Gash.

I'd had it. I went to Elder Gash and told him exactly what I thought of his decision to obscure Adam's rear end. I told him I thought it was utterly pre-adolescent and far more dirty minded than the original artwork. What was he going to do—kick me out of school? I was furious and did my best to control myself, but I was shaking at the time, struggling to maintain my composure. Once I'd said my piece, I turned and walked away before he could even swipe that reptilian tongue over those puckered lips, let alone respond. I'd been listening to him for two years—he had nothing more to say that I cared to hear.

The Friday of graduation weekend, I began receiving messages from all directions: Elder Gash wanted to speak with me as soon as possible.

Each message became more and more urgent—Elder Gash was very eager to see me immediately. But if I could help it, he wouldn't. I avoided him as if he were virulently contagious. When I saw him coming, I either hurried in the other direction or hid (the way Seventh-day Adventists have done with me ever since I became a published horror novelist). Whatever he had to say, I didn't want to hear it.

Besides, I had other things to do—secret things—and they were occupying most of my time.

By graduation weekend, the conspiracy was in place. I had met secretly with the junior class president and we had put together a plan—the junior class would line that center aisle for the departing graduates whether Elder Gash and his weak-kneed “older constituents” liked it or not. Word spread clandestinely throughout the junior class in the way only students at a Seventh-day Adventist boarding academy, accustomed to secrecy and subterfuge, could spread it. (Secrecy and subterfuge are practically part of the curriculum.) Like a message transmitted throughout the underground resistance in World War II,

word got out among the juniors that they would line that aisle as soon as I stopped the procession of graduates coming off the stage.

But there was something else in the air, something other than the low hum of students making plans below the faculty's radar. There was a tension all around, the feeling of something building. There was more going on than our secret plans—I just didn't know what it was yet. I would find out on Sunday. We all would.

Saturday night was Class Night, and Chester and I were scheduled to perform. Up to that point, I had successfully avoided Elder Gash. I was in the middle of my routine with Chester when I noticed that someone was standing beside me. Frowning, I stopped talking, turned, and saw Elder Gash towering next to me.

It was not planned. I had no idea he was going to approach me on stage in the middle of my performance, so I'd had no chance to plan what to say. My mind was completely blank. But as if he thought it up himself in his mostly empty vinyl head, Chester immediately turned to Elder Gash and said, "What're you doing up here? You don't have to sweep the stage until after the show."

The audience went wild. The laughter and applause went on and on and on.

Elder Gash's tongue flicked out, his lips puckered, and his face lit up like a big red light on the bottom of a flying saucer. His pockmarks positively glowed. It took awhile for the audience's reaction to quiet down, then awhile for Elder Gash to compose himself enough to speak. Then, as if nothing had happened, speaking to Chester and most decidedly not to me, Elder Gash presented my ventriloquist dummy with an honorary diploma as a graduating mascot of Rio Lindo Academy.

That was why Elder Gash had wanted to see me—to prepare me for this interruption in my performance, an honor never before bestowed on anyone at Rio Lindo.

Okay, I'll admit it—I felt a little guilty. I did not feel guilty enough to speak to Elder Gash after the program—we never spoke again—but I still felt guilty. I still have that little diploma, and every time I look at it, I think of the audience's raucous reaction to Chester's remark that night, of Elder Gash's blood-red face, and I have to smile. But I also have to feel, even still, a little regretful of my behavior.

## New York's Best-Kept Secret

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We meet from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. each Saturday at St. Mary's Church.

11/10	11:00 2:15	Mei Ann Teo — <i>Red Books: Our Search for Ellen White</i> DVD viewing of the play <i>Red Books</i>
11/17	11:00	Samir Selmanovic — <i>Jesus: Our Teacher</i> (Quaker Center)
11/24	11:00	Festival Thanksgiving Service
12/1	11:00	Dr. Lester Wright — <i>The Refiner's Fire</i>
12/8	11:00 2:15	Monte Sahlin — <i>Christian Mission in a Secular Context</i> <i>Mission in Metropolis: The Adventist Movement in an Urban World</i>
12/15	11:00	Samir Selmanovic — <i>Jesus: Our Servant</i> (Quaker Center)
12/22	11:00	Festival Christmas Service
12/29	11:00	No Service

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# SPECTRUM

**T**he big day arrived. The commencement ceremony went smoothly. Each of us in turn stepped up to Elder Gash, shook his big hand, and took that wonderful diploma, that symbol of finality, that emblem of victory.

Then it was over—we'd all graduated, and it was time to march off the stage. As class president, I led the way to the front edge of the stage, to the steps leading down to the gymnasium floor. Halfway down the steps, I stopped with my lovely marching partner, Susan DeBolt.

"What are you doing?" she whispered.

"Let's just stand here a minute," I replied.

"I don't know if this is a good idea."

"Don't worry, it'll be fine."

Boy, was I wrong.

A heavy silence fell over the gymnasium. I gazed out over the several hundred in attendance and wondered which among them were the "older constituents." The audience looked around at each other, at me, at the other graduates, then at each other again. Someone muttered something about marching. Someone else dropped a program on the floor.

The junior class sat in the front row. Suddenly, they stood and began to make their way to the center aisle as planned.

Then all hell broke loose. Chaos. Pandemonium.

Somehow, the faculty had gotten word of the conspiracy, and they were ready and waiting. The second the juniors began to move toward that aisle, the faculty raced forward and pounced on them, physically attacked them to prevent them from lining that aisle. Teachers literally picked students up and bodily withheld them from their mission. Then, a few really big juniors picked up some teachers and moved them out of the way.

The audience—made up primarily of families and friends of the graduates—had no idea what was happening, all they knew was that teachers were suddenly attacking students, and a lot of them did not sit still for it. Parents joined the fray and tried to pry the faculty members off the juniors. From where I stood—the best seat in the house for the entire eruption—I saw my own father leave his seat. He'd suffered a stroke some years before and walked with a cane, which he used to bop one of the teachers over the head. Fists were thrown—and so were chairs. There were potential lawsuits flying all over the place.

But miraculously, the loyal juniors would not be held

back. They somehow marched through the battlefield and lined that center aisle as planned.

Behind me, Stanton Parady began to stab me in the back repeatedly with a stiff finger, saying through clenched teeth, "You're behind this, aren't you? You've never been any good! You've fooled everyone else, but not me! You've always been rotten to the core!"

A part of me wanted to turn around and punch him, but I was too busy getting chills down my spine and tears in my eyes as I watched the juniors move down that aisle and stand to each side to wait for us. It was time.

The violence staggered to a stop. As red-faced teachers stood panting with their hair messed up, as parents with clenched fists and bared teeth looked around in confusion, as thrown chairs lay scattered on the floor, Susan and I moved ahead, and the graduating class of 1981 proceeded down that aisle between two lines of smiling, slightly mussed juniors—no! They were seniors now!—who gave us our final farewell by seeing us out into the world.

And yes, we stopped now and then for a little defiant PDA—"older constituents" be damned.

**I**n 2006, I attended my twenty-fifth high school reunion. By then, of course, we were adults and we could publicly display all the affection we wanted to—and we did. Elder Gash was not there—by then, he had died of cancer. Regretfully, I never got the chance to thank him for that wonderful little diploma that I still treasure and keep in a brown suitcase with the original Chester.

But my old friends were there, and it was grand to see them again. Even Stanton attended, and tried to behave as if he and I had always been friends.

We had been through something big together. Just spending two years—as many as four for some—in a Seventh-day Adventist boarding academy as a class was a powerful bonding experience. But we had been through something else, too. For one moment twenty-five years earlier, we had stood up to pettiness and unreason—a kind of tyranny—and had chosen instead to embrace a beloved and long-standing tradition, and something that might not seem like much now in our jaded adulthood, but that back then had meant the world: A final public display of affection among departing friends. ■

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**Ray Garton** is the author of more than fifty books, including the horror novel *The Loveliest Dead*. In 2006, he received the World Horror Convention Grand Master Award.

## My Brothers and My Sisters | BY STEVEN SPRUILL

**T**his article is about us, not me. So I'll start off with only two facts about the me part of us, and if, at the end, you're still reading, still interested, I'll provide a bit more about who I am and where I'm coming from.

I write novels for a living.

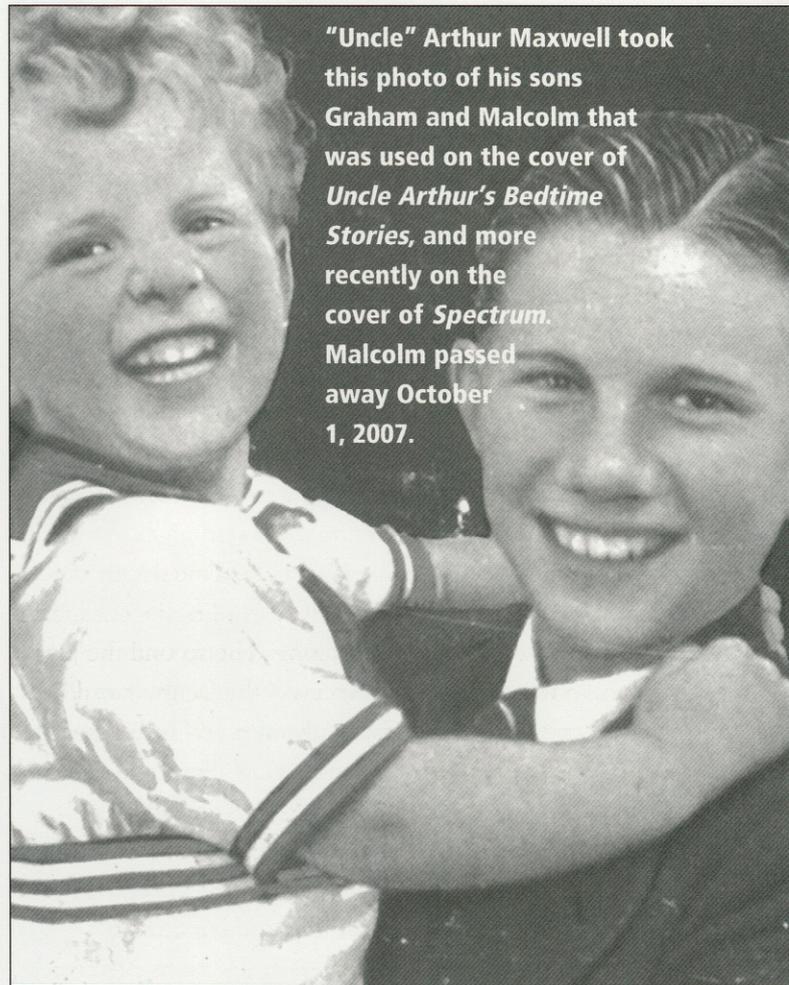
I'm also a Seventh-day Adventist.

Or, to be more precise, there will never be a time when I was not raised Seventh-day Adventist.

Psychologists will tell you the first two decades of life are the most formative. They'll also tell you that people can change despite the enormous and enduring influence of our start in life. I changed. In my early twenties, I had a long dialogue with myself and others. We Adventists call it "soul-searching." (Hereafter, I will use "We" to refer to Adventists in the same way a Jew might use it to locate himself with other Jews irrespective of religious practice.)

By my mid-twenties, I could no longer profess to believe the doctrines that make Seventh-day Adventism unique. That part of me is probably now different from the you part of us. But I believe we are, all of us, all the things we have ever been. People raised in the Seventh-day Adventist Church tend to be different from people raised in other ways—and similar to each other in a number of important respects. Part of me will always be Adventist. What is that part, and how significant is it? Much of what makes you and me "We"—and different from most other people—is our shared experience.

That's what this article is about—the culture of Adventism. It is a tie that binds, whether or not you or I acknowledge it. You, and I, and those raised Adventist who still believe but don't live up to it, all share a rich heritage. In my view, the bond of that mutual background too often goes unsought and unacknowledged.



"Uncle" Arthur Maxwell took this photo of his sons Graham and Malcolm that was used on the cover of *Uncle Arthur's Bedtime Stories*, and more recently on the cover of *Spectrum*. Malcolm passed away October 1, 2007.

So what is Adventist culture?

Most of us would probably think of music first. Adventist music is Adventist not because it is different from the music of other denominations, though in a few cases it is, but because it happens in church and school and becomes inseparable from the Adventist experience. A hymn takes on a personalized meaning when it was the one playing when you were lowered into a Seventh-day Adventist baptistry. Endless loops of "Just as I Am" might roll from the organ during altar

calls in other denominations but what you meant when you walked down the aisle to commit and recommit to Christ was different from what a Baptist or Jehovah's Witness meant, and the music that accompanies that act takes on a very particular emotional meaning that you and I share. Whenever the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" is sung, members of the Battle Creek Tabernacle going back several generations will think of Battle Creek Academy reunions, when the whole congregation joins in on that great anthem.

Also, Adventists value and emphasize music in ways I haven't encountered anywhere else. The church and school immerse us in particular sorts of music throughout our upbringing as Adventists. During times when budget cuts have prompted many high schools to curtail or abandon their music programs, I know of no instance where even the most impoverished Adventist Academy has done so. It would be unthinkable.

Music is part of the ministry, and it is taught by our choir and band directors with a professionalism that is surely unsurpassed elsewhere. In my sixteen years of Adventist education, I encountered no music teachers who ever gave me the impression that what they were doing with their lives was dispensable, a hobby, a luxury. They were career musicians no less important in academy life than the math and physics teachers. Observing these sterling examples of passion and dedication to their art helped me decide it was all right to give my life to mine.

We Adventists also share a continuing exposure to visual art of a very particular sort, especially paintings. It would be almost impossible to be raised Adventist and be unfamiliar with the *Bible Story* books. The power of the stories is magnified by the lavish illustrations. There is a painting of Christ and the Rich Young Ruler well known to Adventists. That painting—the sorrow on Christ's face, the regret on the rich man's—has a powerful effect on our attitudes toward money and the stuff it buys and is more effective than any words when the offering plate comes around. Harry Anderson's painting of Christ, seen in so many of our churches and schools, takes on the particular flavor of what we were taught about Jesus that is unique to Adventism. Like the music, it evokes that shared experience.

As a kid, I loved to draw and in my early teens, began painting. I decided to do a portrait of Judas. The complex, tormented "bad boy" of the apostles fascinated me. I took up my brushes and, within a few weeks, the face of Christ gazed back at me. Such is the iconic power of Harry Anderson's Christ.

Music, paintings, what about fiction? Some Adventists still consider it the same as lies. It won't surprise you that I find that sad. This article is about what We Adventists share, not what we don't. Most readers of *Spectrum* can probably agree with me that each of the arts, including fiction, can tell the truth or be used to degrade and deceive. My good friend Ray Garton, another Adventist novelist featured in *Spectrum* this issue, recently sent me part of his novel-in-progress based on his experiences at Rio Lindo Academy. I have not read funnier, richer, more touching passages. Every word rings true in the most powerful sense. I hope you'll all have a chance to read Ray's novel someday soon.

But at this point, aside from the parables of Christ, the literary heritage We Adventists share is all "fact." To me, if fiction is a lie because it is "made up," then so is a painting. At their best, both are tools for illuminating truths we couldn't see as clearly in any other light. It was from trying to paint that I learned oak leaves aren't simply green. The undersides are a darker green, even burnt umber, whereas the tops are chartreuse where they catch the light. It was from writing novels that I came to appreciate that people are, to others, not what they think or feel themselves to "be," but what they do.

Another part of the great heritage We Adventists share is food. Potluck! The very word makes me hungry (and as I write this, I just had lunch.) Last I checked, about half of Adventists eat no meat. The other half are also well acquainted with vegetarian cooking, because official church and school potlucks are vegetarian. I defy anyone to tell me Adventist potlucks aren't unique feasts. There must be a hundred Adventist recipes for "nut loaf." We all know what Savita gravy is. Skallops. Choplets. Others are now enjoying these foods, but We Adventists pioneered them. We might have sold them, but we still own them.

Beyond vegetarianism, those Adventists who eat meat do so in a very particular way. Steaks are rarely rare. Hamburgers are cooked or grilled until they are white inside. (I wonder how many Adventist catsup addicts were created by those desiccating burgers.) Our queasy attitude toward pork and shellfish go well beyond whether they are appetizing or good for us, all the way to will they imperil our souls? Most religions have food taboos; those of Jews come closest to ours, but Adventist attitudes toward diet are a unique part of our shared heritage.

So is imagination. We Adventists are taught young to see beyond the surface of everyday life. To imagine. Some of what we are taught and urged to see with our mind's eye is sublime. Heaven. Guardian angels. We imagine ours there beside us, invisible but real, and chills of rapture go up our spines. Our imaginations are also tested with the dark and the horrific. We visualize Satan or his angels in the room with us. The Beast with ten horns haunts our dreams. I've spoken with younger Adventists who have somehow missed the weeks when the traveling evangelist would come to their local church and stage a revival.

In my own youth, such events invariably contained vivid poster-board illustrations or slide projections of the prophecies from Daniel and Revelation. What powerful images! The towering, glowering idol with the feet of clay, the four horsemen of the apocalypse, that frightening beast of the papacy. Very scary stuff that engages whatever imagination each of us was born with, be it small or great. Ray Garton and I have discussed this and agree it's a wonder more kids raised Adventist don't grow up to be horror writers! However that may be, We Adventists who were raised in the Church share an early and continuing exposure to images and ideas from beyond this world that stretch for a lifetime our capacity to imagine.

The last bit of cultural heritage I'd like to mention is our lexicon, a collection of words that have taken on uniquely Adventist inflections. I'm sure after this article goes to press, I will slap my forehead in dismay at all the ones I omitted, but each of you will be able to add your own. Here are a few that came easily to my mind:

*Colporteur*, as in our child's prayer of "God bless the missionaries and the colporteurs." Most Adventists know what a colporteur is. Few others do.

*Truth-filled literature*. (See colporteur.)

*PDA* (public display of affection). No one who went to an Adventist academy could fail to recognize this concept, if not the acronym, itself.

*Adventist*. As most of us have noticed, Adventists pronounce this word AD-vent-ist. Nearly all non-Adventists pronounce it ad-VENT-ist.

*Backslider*. Other churches may use this highly charged term. In Adventism, it inspires a particular uneasiness, a feeling of needing to circle the wagons and defend the faith. We worry whether we are backsliders because we watched a movie in a theater rather than on TV, or drank caffeinated coffee.



## Men's Club?

Some doors are still closed to women...

because Adventist women still can't serve as ordained ministers. And that's too bad. For them and for us. When we deny people's spiritual gifts, a terrible thing happens. We cripple the body of Christ. Doesn't the church need the gifts of ordained men and women? Isn't it time to open this door?

### Contact TEAM.

TIME FOR EQUALITY IN ADVENTIST MINISTRY

P. O. Box 7816

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Still with me? For those who are interested, here's a bit more about me. If you feel no need for that, please skip down to the last four paragraphs.

Remember that old TV game show, "To Tell the Truth"? Celebrity panelists questioned contestants from a particular walk of life, then tried to pick the real glass blower or worm farmer from the imposters. Picture four guys on camera standing behind their chairs, each in turn saying, "My name is Steve." Then the narrator off-stage reads the following biographical hook written from "Steve's" point of view:

"Once upon a time, at the Catholic University of America, when I was supposed to be studying, I wrote my first novel and sold it to Doubleday. After finishing the doctorate and internship in clinical psychology, I abandoned all thought of a practice and wrote novels. Fourteen of them and eight or nine stories have been published by Doubleday, Berkley, Dell, St. Martin's Press, and TOR. The novels include science fiction, military and medical thrillers, and a trilogy about a D.C. Cop, two physicians, and a human predator who just might be the reality behind the vampire myth. I've been featured in The Literary Guild and Doubleday Book Club, condensed in *Good Housekeeping Magazine* and reprinted in *Reader's Digest* abridged books. My work has been translated into twenty foreign languages. I recently wrote and illustrated a psychological self-help book on the wisdom of SpongeBob Squarepants, but mostly I write fiction. Not too long ago, I wrote the nation's number one best-selling novel."<sup>1</sup>

After this introduction, the four "Steves" sit down, the celebrities ask their questions, make their picks, and at the end, the host says, "Will the real Steve please stand up."

All four stand up. One says, "I'm Steve Lyon." The next says, "I'm Steve Morgan," the next says, "I'm Steven Harri-man," and the last says, "I'm Steven Spruill." That last one is the real me, the other guys are my pseudonyms. Here's what I'd say about myself: I'm not famous. There's no reason you should have heard of me. Only a few million Americans read novels, and many of those will buy only best-sellers (which might explain why there aren't more best-selling novelists). I think fame would be fun in a certain way and not so fun in a lot of others. My friend, Ray Garton, is too modest to tell you this, so I will: Readers recently voted him the prestigious Grand Master Award, which he shares with such elite best-selling novelists as Peter Straub and Stephen King.

As the only two Adventist novelists we know of, Ray and I have the feeling we grew up together and went to

different schools together. As noted earlier, he attended Rio Lindo Academy. I went to Battle Creek Academy, grades one through twelve. While at BCA, I worshipped at the Battle Creek Tabernacle. At age eighteen, I took I-94 west to Andrews University, capping off my Adventist education with a bachelors in biology and a proposal of marriage to Nancy Lyon, a graduate of Takoma Academy, then in the final year of her teens. Nancy and I have been partners and best friends ever since.

I'm aware that, in the eyes of some Adventists, if not many, I might look like a backslider. Indeed, based on the writings of Ellen G. White, one could argue that "Adventist novelist" is an oxymoron. Whether someone can, in good conscience, leave the doctrinal part of the Church is an argument I prefer to avoid. Sonny Jurgenson, the great quarterback of the Washington Redskins, is now a "color" commentator for Redskin games. A master of the forward pass, Sonny once quipped: "Three things can happen when you pass. Two of them are bad."

I think the same could be said of arguing religion. If one or both minds in the argument are closed it's a waste of breath. If one were to succeed in undermining the other's faith that can sustain in the darkest hour, that would be even worse. I suppose there exists a third outcome that might be good, but I'm not sure what it is. Rather than argue, I prefer to believe that what unites you and me is greater than what divides. By being raised Adventist, we are not strangers, even if we've never met.

A few years ago, I traveled on a small plane flying between Caribbean Islands. The pilot, copilot, and flight attendant were a clean-cut young man with red hair. He stood beside the fold-down stairway to usher us off the plane. As I drew even with him, he looked me in the eye and murmured, "LDS?" For a dyslexic second, I thought he was offering me LSD. Then I realized he was asking me if I was a Mormon.

"Seventh-day Adventist," I replied, and he nodded knowingly.

If that young man could see what he saw in me, surely We can see it in each other. ■

## Notes and References

1. In the nation of Hungary.

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Novelist and psychologist Steve Spruill lives in Virginia.

## Books on the Bedside Table

*Faith of Another Kind* | BY BONNIE DWYER

If it is true that God exceeds all our efforts to contain God, then is it too big a stretch to declare that **dumbfoundedness** is what all Christians have most in common? Or that coming together to confess all that we do not know is at least as sacred an activity as declaring what we think we do know?

—Barbara Taylor Brown

**M**y copy of Taylor Brown's book, *Leaving Church: A Memoir of Faith*, is dog-eared and marked up with circles, underlinings, and exclamation points. How can one resist an eloquent preacher who describes leaving congregational ministry for an academic post, and then one of the first things that she finds in her new life is Sabbath?

Next she gave me an appreciation for spiritual poverty. "Since this virtue has all but vanished from the American church scene, it is often hard to recognize," she says.

*With so much effort being poured into church growth, so much press being given to the benefits of faith, and so much flexing of religious muscle in the public square, the poor in spirit have no one but Jesus to call them blessed anymore. Yet his way endures as a way of emptying the self of all its goods instead of shoring up the self with spiritual riches. Only those who lose their lives can have them.*

The title of this book might lead you to think that it will be a recitation of all the problems that plague the Christian community, but it is not. Although Taylor Brown does describe the tears that she shed over the

issues in her congregation, her love for the people of the church shines through. The point that she makes is that "church is not a stopping place but a starting place for discerning God's presence in this world." Church is where people

*gain a feel for how God shows up—not only in Holy Bibles and Holy Communion but also in near neighbors, mysterious strangers, sliced bread, and grocery store wine. That way, when they leave church, they no more leave God than God leaves them. They simply carry what they have learned into the wide, wide world, where there is a crying need for people who will recognize the holiness in things and hold them up to God.*

Perhaps it was because her words were ringing in my ears that several of the books and articles about books that I picked up in the following weeks seemed to echo that sentiment. For instance, there was the article in the September 9 issue of the *New York Times Magazine* about Sigmund Freud, and how in old age this committed atheist began to see what's so great about God. For the article, Mark Edmundson drew on his new book, *The Death of Sigmund Freud*, about the legacy of Freud's last days.

There Edmundson tells the compelling story of the last book written by Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, where Freud suggests that the Jewish belief in an unseen God

*gave them an advantage in all activities that involved making an abstract model of experience, in words or*

**Freud read Scripture as though it were poetry and learned from it accordingly.**

numbers or lines, and working with the abstraction to achieve control over nature or to bring humane order to life. Freud calls this internalizing process an "advance in intellectuality" and he credits it directly to religion.

Belief in an unseen God thus may prepare the ground not only for science and literature and law, but also for intense introspection. Someone who can contemplate an invisible God, he implies, is in a better position to know himself.

Imagination, curiosity, and humility shine through in *Einstein: His Life and Universe* by Walter Isaacson. I was charmed by the genius physicist and grateful to the author not only for introducing me to a fascinating man but also explaining his theories in a very accessible manner. By the end, I was also appreciative of Einstein's relationship with God, atheist that he declared himself to be.

"There was a simple set of formulas that defined Einstein's outlook," Isaacson wrote. "Creativity required being willing not to conform. That required nurturing free minds and free spirits, which in turn required a spirit of tolerance. And the underpinning of tolerance was humility—the belief that no one had the right to impose ideas and beliefs on others."

*The world has seen a lot of impudent geniuses. What made Einstein special was that his mind and soul were tempered by this humility. He could be serenely self-confident in his lonely course yet also humbly awed by the beauty of nature's handiwork. "A spirit is manifest in the laws of the universe—a spirit vastly superior to that of man, and one in the face of which we with our modest powers must feel humble," he wrote. "In this way the pursuit of science leads to a religious feeling of a special sort."*

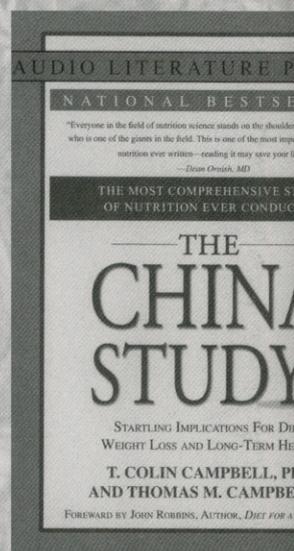
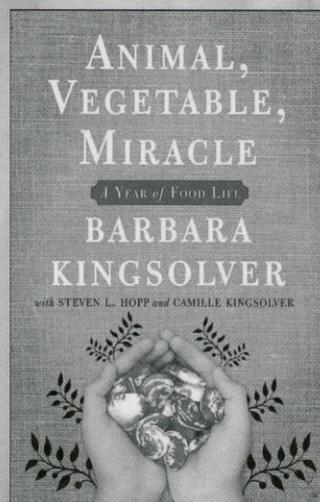
*For some people, miracles serve as evidence of God's existence. For Einstein it was the absence of miracles that reflected divine providence. The fact that the cosmos is comprehensible, that it follows laws, is worthy of awe. This is the defining quality of a "God who reveals him self in the harmony of all that exists."*

Edmundson suggests that Freud read Scripture as though it were poetry and learned from it accordingly. These books may not be poetry, but I have learned something new about the value of a spiritual life filled with creativity, humility, and awe. ■

#### Books Mentioned in this article:

Mark Edmundson. *The Death of Sigmund Freud: The Legacy of His Last Days*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2007.  
Walter Isaacson. *Einstein: His Life and Universe*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007.  
Barbara Brown Taylor. *Leaving Church: A Memoir of Faith*. San Francisco, HarperSanFrancisco, 2006.

Two recent books on diets and food that can inspire rethinking of what we eat.



# COUNCILS ON DIET AND HEALTH

## The Adventist Advantage

*A Closer Look* | BY BENJAMIN LAU

The November 2005 issue of *National Geographic* reports that Seventh-day Adventists are among the longest-lived people in the world. Citing studies by Gary Fraser and his associates at Loma Linda University, the article shows that Adventists in California live four to ten years longer than the average Californian. Adventists' habits of consuming whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and nuts while avoiding red meats, tobacco, and alcohol lower their risk of developing cancer and heart disease. Studies also note that Adventists increase their chances for living long by associating closely with those who practice a similar lifestyle.

Three important papers from the Adventist Health Study led to the favorable report in *National Geographic*. First is a paper titled "Ten Years of Life: Is It a Matter of Choice?" by Gary E. Fraser and David J. Shavlik, from Loma Linda University's School of Public Health.<sup>1</sup> In this paper, the expected lifespan of California Adventists (78.5 years for men, 80.2 years for vegetarian men; 82.3 years for women, 84.8 years for vegetarian women) is compared with the populations in ten countries, including Australia (73.9 years for men, 80.0 years for women), Canada (73.0 years for men, 79.7 years for women), Japan (75.9 years for men, 81.8 years for women), and the United States in general (73 years for men, 79.7 years for women). Japanese have often been described as the longest-lived population, but, as shown in Table 1, California Adventists outlive the Japanese on average. Another highlight of this paper shows that, among California Adventists, vegetarian men and women (mostly lactoovovegetarians, only 3 percent of California SDAs are vegan or pure vegetarians) outlived their nonvegetarian counterparts.

**Table 1**

*Expected Length of Life in Years: California Adventists Compared with International Populations*

Country	Men	Women
Australia	73.9	80.0
Canada	73.0	79.7
Denmark	72.0	77.7
Finland	70.9	78.9
Iceland	75.7	80.3
Japan	75.9	81.8
New Zealand	71.6	77.6
Norway	73.4	79.8
United Kingdom	71.9	77.6
United States	73.0	79.7
California Adventists	78.5	82.3
Calif. Adventists-Vegetarians	80.2	84.8

**Source:** Gary E. Fraser and David J. Shavlik, "Ten Years of Life: Is It a Matter of Choice?" *Archives of Internal Medicine* 161 (July 2001):1645-52.

The second study is titled "Cancer Incidence among California Seventh-day Adventists, 1976-1982," by Fraser's group.<sup>2</sup> This study compares cancer incidence among California SDAs with incidence rates in the state of Connecticut. The comparison was made by calculating the so-called standardized morbidity ratios (SMRs). Table 2 has some interesting findings taken from this study. There were a total of 598 cases of cancer observed in California Adventist males during this period (1976-82), whereas the expected incidence rate for the reference population was 814 cases, resulting in an SMR of 0.73 for cancers of all sites for SDA men (596 divided by 814 = 0.73). This is a statistically significant difference.

**Table 2**

*Observed and Expected Cancer Incidence in Adventist Males, 1976–1982*

Site or type cancer	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	SMR of (O/E)
All cancers	598	814	0.73*
Esophagus	0	14	0.00*
Stomach	15	30	0.50*
Colon	62	98	0.64*
Rectum	25	49	0.51*
Bronchus and lung	41	162	0.25*
Melanoma of skin	23	13	1.77
Prostate	186	149	1.25*
Bladder	37	62	0.59*
Kidney	8	21	0.37*
Brain	15	10	1.49

**Source:** P. K. Mills, W. L. Beeson, R. L. Phillips, and G. E. Fraser, "Cancer Incidence among California Seventh-day Adventists, 1976–1982," *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 59 (May 1994):1136S–1142S.

\* Asterisk denotes statistically significant difference.

A third study published by Gary Fraser, "Association between Diet and Cancer, Ischemic Heart Disease, and All-Cause Mortality in Non-Hispanic White California Seventh-day Adventists," compares three groups of California SDAs: vegetarians who ate no meat, fish, or poultry; semivegetarians who ate meat, fish, or poultry less than one time per week; and nonvegetarians, who ate these foods more than once a week.<sup>3</sup> The average body weights for vegetarian, semi-vegetarian, and nonvegetarian men were 77 kilograms (kg) (169.4 lbs), 80 kg (176 lbs), and 83 kg (182.6 lbs), respectively. For women, the numbers were 63 kg (138.6 lbs), 66 kg (145.2 lbs), and 69 kg (151.8 lbs), respectively. Among both men and women, vegetarians were thinner than nonvegetarians.

So the news is very good for Adventists, and national and international news media have touted the *National Geographic* report. However, a closer look at some of the statistics contains alarming news, and many Adventists who have witnessed friends and family die young from heart attacks, strokes, and cancer take little solace in the reports. Is it possible that, although Adventists are healthier than most, we can actually do better? My answer is a resounding YES!

CL was a dynamic pastor. He was a vegetarian and exercised regularly. A three-hundred-member SDA congregation flourished under his leadership, with 50 percent of the membership made up of young families. One day, the head elder called to inform me that CL had died of a massive heart attack while jogging. He was forty-two and left a wife and two small children. Church members asked: "How did such a healthy person die at such a young age?"

A forty-six-year-old physician suffered a heart attack five months ago. He had been a lactoovovegetarian all his life. He was in a coronary intensive care unit for two weeks while friends and loved ones in four churches prayed earnestly day and night for his recovery. In spite of modern medical technology, he died in the hospital. Friends and loved ones asked in agony: "Why didn't his healthy lifestyle spare his life?"

JL, a minister's wife and a lactoovovegetarian all her life, recently died of ovarian cancer after undergoing surgery and chemotherapy. During a health seminar I conducted at an SDA church, members queried me as to why her lifestyle did not spare her from ovarian cancer while her non-SDA relatives and friends had not been inflicted.

One possible answer to the questions that church members ask regarding heart attacks and cancers among SDA men and women is this: the lactoovovegetarian diet may be the culprit. Numerous studies have now shown that cow's milk and dairy products contribute to cancers, heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, and many other diseases of the affluent societies. For a quick reference, please read Colin Campbell and Thomas M. Campbell's *The China Study*, with more than 750 documented scientific references.<sup>4</sup> Incidentally, Colin Campbell, of Cornell University, and his family adopted the vegan lifestyle after he completed *The China Study*. Researchers involved with the study over a period of two decades included scientists at Oxford University, the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, and the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine, as well as thousands of other researchers.

Let us look at some specific cancers. As Table 2 shows, the SMRs for cancers of the esophagus, stomach, colon, rectum, lung, bladder, and kidney in SDA men are 0.00, 0.50, 0.64, 0.51, 0.25, 0.59, and 0.37, respectively. All these numbers are significant statistically and very

good news. However, the SMRs for melanoma (skin cancer), prostate cancer, and brain cancer in SDA men are 1.77, 1.25, and 1.49, respectively, which means that SDA men actually have higher incidence of skin, prostate, and brain cancer than non-SDAs. The higher incidence of prostate cancer is indeed disconcerting.

The culprit here could very well be the lactoovovegetarian diet. Numerous studies have shown that consumption of dairy products is the primary factor that contributes to prostate cancer. One article that came out of Harvard and was published by June M. Chan and Edward Giovannucci, "Diet: Dairy Products, Calcium, and Vitamin D and Risk of Prostate Cancer," could not be more convincing.<sup>5</sup> Twelve out of fourteen case control studies and seven of nine cohort studies have observed a positive association between dairy products and prostate cancer; this is one of the most consistent dietary predictors for prostate cancer in the published literature.

**Table 3**

*Observed and Expected Cancer Incidents in Adventist Females, 1976–1982*

Site or type cancer	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	SMR of (O/E)
All cancers	862	937	0.92
Stomach	4	24	0.16*
Colon	95	126	0.76*
Rectum	37	52	0.71
Bronchus and lung	27	76	0.36*
Melanoma of skin	24	14	1.71*
Breast	231	254	0.91
Cervix of uterus	32	20	1.60*
Uterus	129	68	1.91*
Ovary	47	36	1.29
Genital	208	135	1.54*

**Source:** P. K. Mills, W. L. Beeson, R. L. Phillips, and G. E. Fraser, "Cancer Incidence among California Seventh-day Adventists, 1976–1982," *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 59 (1994):11365–425.

\*Asterisk denotes statistically significant difference.

For SDA women, there were a total of 862 cases of various types of cancer (Table 3), whereas the expected number of cases was 937, which resulted in an SMR of 0.92 (see Table 3). In other words, the incidence of all cancers for SDA women is 92 percent of that of the reference popula-

tion, or 8 percent less, which is not statistically significant. The SMRs of stomach cancer, colon cancer, and lung cancer are 0.16, 0.76 and 0.36; all of these are statistically significant. For breast cancer, the SMR is 0.91. This means that when one hundred women in the general population have breast cancer, ninety-one SDA women also suffer breast cancer. The difference is not significant from the standpoint of statistics.

The SMRs of SDA women for skin cancer, cancer of the cervix of uterus, uterine cancer, ovarian cancer, and genital cancer are 1.71, 1.60, 1.91, 1.29, and 1.54, respectively. In other words, SDA women have higher incidence of these cancers than non-SDA women. Particularly disturbing in this case are cancers of the female reproductive system. One recent review of a meta-analysis of epidemiological studies, "Milk, Milk Products and Lactose Intake and Ovarian Cancer Risk: A Meta-Analysis of Epidemiological Studies," by S. C. Larsson, N. Orsini, and A. Wolk, concludes that high intakes of dairy foods and lactose (milk sugar) may increase the risk of ovarian cancer.<sup>6</sup>

One of my Ph.D. students conducts research that deals with ovarian cancer. She has provided me with scientific literature showing that milk sugar (lactose) contributes to the development of ovarian cancer. Most studies indicate that milk protein (casein) rather than milk sugar contributes to cancer development. Many people choose to use low-fat milk. Thinking that low-fat milk is preferable to whole milk, they do not realize that the removal of fat actually increases the concentration of milk protein and lactose. In other words, low-fat milk contains more protein and sugar than whole milk.

Back to the third study by Fraser's group. Looking at the relationship between beef consumption and fatal heart attack, the study compared three groups of SDA men: those who never consume beef, those who consume beef three times a week, and those who consume beef more than three times a week. The results showed that those who consumed beef three times a week had 1.93 times more fatal heart attacks than those who never consumed it, and those who consumed beef more than three times a week had 2.31 times greater incidence of fatal heart attack than those who never consumed it. In contrast, women who consumed beef had a slightly lower incidence of fatal heart attack compared to those who did not consume beef. Hormones in beef may account for this difference, since we have known for years that premenopausal women have lower incidence of heart attack because of protection from female hormones.

Another fascinating finding from this study reveals higher

incidence and relative risk of several common cancers in SDA nonvegetarians compared to SDA vegetarians. For example, the relative risk for colon cancer in nonvegetarians is 1.88 (almost two times) greater than the vegetarians. This difference is highly significant. The incidence of diabetes and high blood pressure in nonvegetarians is twice as high as in the vegetarians.

To summarize these published reports from the Adventist Health Study:

1. SDAs have longer average life spans than the general population. This is an Adventist advantage.
2. SDAs have lower incidence of several cancers compared to non-SDAs.
3. SDA men have greater incidence of prostate cancer than the general population.
4. SDA women have greater incidence of reproductive system cancers compared to the general population.
5. SDA females have just about as much breast cancer as the general population.
6. Beef consumption increases the chances of a fatal heart attack in SDA men.
7. SDA vegetarians are almost two times more likely to avoid colon cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure than SDA nonvegetarians.

So shall we rejoice over the reports from the *National Geographic*? Yes, for those SDAs who have indeed benefited from the SDA lifestyle. No, for large numbers of SDA men and women who have died of heart attack and cancer. Is there something that can be done to reduce the number of premature deaths among the brothers and sisters in the Church? The answer is again a resounding YES.

The lactoovovegetarian diet served its intended purpose well for many decades when cow's milk and dairy products were produced by animals raised in farms free from contaminations of hormones, pesticides, carcinogens, and drugs. Today, milk and dairy products are "manufactured" in cattle factories rather than farms. Numerous studies have linked fats in cow's milk and dairy products to heart attacks and strokes.

A few years ago, I reviewed world literature on cow's milk implicated in human diseases.<sup>7</sup> First, I noted that there was a link between juvenile diabetes and consumption of cow's milk based on studies of children in forty countries. These studies have led the American Academy of Pediatrics to make a position statement that discourages use of cow's milk and dairy in newborn babies. We know today that milk protein has antigens very much like protein antigens in the pancreatic cells. Some

children turn antibodies into milk protein, which in turn destroys the cells that make insulin.

More than two thousand published papers study the relationship between cow's milk and cancers, and a large number show a link to breast cancer, colon cancer, ovarian cancer, prostate cancer, leukemia, and lymphoma. Cow's milk is also linked to multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's disease, and osteoporosis. As an immunologist, I am most concerned with one-thousand plus scientific papers that deal with the topic of milk allergy, which has been found to contribute to numerous health problems from head to toe: headache, sinusitis, otitis, asthma, bronchitis, colic, indigestion, and arthritis, to name only a few.

One young mother informed me that her breast-fed baby girl broke out with eczema (rash) on her mouth and face almost every week. Her husband took the baby to see the pediatrician, who prescribed cortisone. The young mother called me because she was hesitant to use cortisone. I told her to be a detective and find out what the baby was sensitive to, paying attention particularly to what she herself ate. She discovered that every time she ate cheese the baby would break out with rash the following day. However, avoidance of dairy products eliminated the rash.

Her neighbor had a baby boy about the same age who also had rash on his face despite cortisone cream treatment. In addition, he had been treated for ear infection and asthma. When the mother finally eliminated dairy from her diet, she discovered that not only did her son's face clear up, the ear infection and asthma also disappeared.

Now I would like to get back to the young pastor who died of a heart attack. CL was raised a vegetarian who loved cheese and ice cream. Because he was an avid athlete, he maintained his ideal body weight. However, his total serum cholesterol of more than 200 mg/dl was always a concern to me. I convinced his wife to clean dairy products out of her refrigerator, but the pastor delighted in devouring an abundance of dairy products at the church potluck every week.

JL, the pastor's wife who died of ovarian cancer, was a lactoovovegetarian all her life. She, too, loved cheese and desserts. She consumed large quantities of milk, cheese, and refined sugar as a student in her academy and college cafeterias. She worked in a large SDA hospital, where, again, she had her share of generous servings of dairy products.

I mentioned earlier *The China Study*, by Colin Campbell and Thomas M. Campbell. In their study of liver cancer in

animals, they exposed animals to aflatoxin, a liver carcinogen. Then they divided the animals into three groups. One group was fed a diet containing 5 percent milk protein (casein), and a second group 20 percent milk protein. The third group was fed 20 percent plant (soy) protein. None of the animals fed the 5 percent milk protein diet developed liver cancer, whereas 100 percent of the animals fed with 20 percent milk protein developed liver cancer. It was interesting that animals fed 20 percent soy protein also did not develop liver cancer.

In another experiment, the Campbells reported that they were able to turn cancer on and off. Let me explain: when they switched animals on 20 percent milk protein that had cancer to 5 percent milk protein, the cancer gradually disappeared. When they put cancer-free animals originally on 5 percent milk protein to 20 percent milk protein, sooner or later they developed cancer. The Campbells and their associates then went to the Philippines to study liver cancer in children. Many children had been infected with hepatitis B virus, and many possibly exposed to the liver carcinogen aflatoxin, as well. Yet only those whose diet was rich in animal protein suffered liver cancer.

The study that the Campbells conducted showing that cancer can be turned on and off is especially intriguing to me. I, personally, have known individuals with cancers of breast, colon, and prostate who became cancer free when they changed to a plant-based diet. I also know three friends whose colon cancer went into remission after switching to a plant-based diet, only to have the cancer return within six months to one year after they resumed an animal-based diet.

Several knowledgeable organizations in the United States and abroad are currently promoting a plant-based diet for prevention of heart attack, stroke, cancer, and a host of chronic degenerative diseases. For example, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine <[www.pcrm.org](http://www.pcrm.org)>, with headquarters in Washington D.C., has recommended a switch to a plant-based diet for more than two decades.

**I**n conclusion, if you desire to live a long healthy life free from cancer and heart attack, I strongly suggest that you consider a plant-based diet given by our creator in Genesis 1:29. I often eat my meals in SDA university, academy, and hospital cafeterias, and I attend many SDA church potlucks. Although the constant in all these

locations is vegetarian food, I am concerned about huge amounts of dairy-based and refined sugared foods. It is indeed possible to eat very unhealthy food in Adventist cafeterias. Lactoovovegetarians may actually consume more animal products (cheese and milk) than meat eaters.

In 1902, Ellen G. White wrote the following passage on page 356 of *Counsels on Diet and Foods*: "Teach people to prepare food without the use of milk or butter. Tell them that the time will soon come when there will be no safety in using eggs, milk, cream, or butter, because disease in animals is increasing." She wrote more than one hundred years ago that the time will SOON come when eggs and milk will no longer be safe for human consumption. I think the time has NOW come. ■

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## Garden Envy

**BOOK REVIEW:** *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* by Barbara Kingsolver with Steven L. Hopp and Camille Kingsolver

By Heather Isaacs Royce

Every once in awhile I encounter a book that makes me slightly covetous.

Gratefully, the envy I feel now after reading this book may be more easily satiated than the yen I have been left with after concluding some wild travelogue or great spiritual memoir. The solution (or should I say absolution) to my dipping into the second deadly sin may be as simple as planting my own garden.

Kingsolver's book begins with her family's departure from their home in Arizona to a farm in Virginia. There they begin the work of getting off the global industrial food grid—described as wasteful fossil fuel consumption, cruel factory farm practices, unsustainable environmental policies, and unfair labor practices—and becoming locavores, growing the bulk of their own food and buying the rest through local food producers.

But contrary to what I might have imagined a year of growing one's own food to be like—long, hard days of back-breaking work for a meager crop of turnips and potatoes—Kingsolver's monthly reports from the farm tell a story of beauty and abundance that, though not without labor, recovers the lost value of knowing the land on which our lives depend. Kingsolver is not a legalist; she makes allowances for purchases of items that cannot be obtained locally, such as coffee, chocolate, and spices, if they meet fair trade standards.

Reading *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* I was shocked by my ignorance about the food I eat. Though raised in the heavily irrigated San Joaquin Valley with orchards and vineyards on all sides of my small town, I internalized little of the agricultural realities and challenges of my environ-

ment. The simple idea of eating seasonally, for example, never crossed my mind when the grocery stores presented mangoes in February as though a gift to us fog-trodden Central Californians. And no one told me the true story of how turkeys are raised for our Thanksgiving table.

As one who has only dabbled in vegetarianism, I was encouraged by Kingsolver's reflections on meat consumption. She writes persuasively on this issue in her chapter "You Can't Run Away on Harvest Day." The word harvest, in this context, refers to the day when Kingsolver, her family, and a few friends butcher the chickens and turkeys they have so carefully raised. Though sympathetic to many of the concerns raised by vegetarians and vegans, she believes it is possible, and sometimes preferable, to be an ethical meat eater, defined here as a rejection of meats from CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) and a promotion of organic, free-range meat production mindful of the need for restrained, humane, and conscientious eating habits.

Citing the wasteful use of fuel to haul produce halfway around the globe to stock American grocery stores with tropical fruit in mid-winter, Kingsolver writes:

*Should I overlook the suffering of victims of hurricanes, famines, and wars brought on this world by profligate fuel consumption?*

*Bananas that cost a rain forest, refrigerator-trucked soymilk, and prewashed spinach shipped two thousand miles in plastic containers do not seem cruelty-free, in this context.*

*Giving up meat is one path; giving up bananas is another. The more we know about our food system, the more we are called into complex choices. It seems facile to declare one single forbidden fruit, when humans live under so many different kinds of trees.*

We are being called into complex choices about our food. My husband once half-joked that many of the prob-

lems in American society might be traced back to Burger King's motto: Have it your way. Living with an awareness of the complex factors affecting our food system means that we cannot ethically support the immediate gratification of having it our way—including eating at Burger King.

Given the strong claims Kingsolver makes, I found myself wishing citations had been included in the text itself to better ground her arguments. Her husband, a professor of environmental studies, includes pithy "Did You Know?" type sidebars throughout the book that provide economic and scientific rationale for locavorism. And her college aged daughter provides her own perspective along with simple and popular family recipes. But I still wanted to know more and find out—as I now do with my food—where my information was coming from. Blessedly, a reference and resource guide included at the end of the book gives me a trail of articles and books on this subject. A pile of library books on the issue of food ethics sits by my bed now. And yes, the more I read the more complex my choices become.

But this is a good thing—to have to exercise my ethical and spiritual commitments in such a meaningful way every day—every meal—of my life. What would it mean if the most basic act of human existence—eating—became as fundamental to our ethical life as prayer is to our spiritual life and as voting is to our civic life?

For myself, I want to live in a world where our ethics and spirituality and civic responsibilities are not so far apart as they appear now. Before I even finished *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, I found myself pulling weeds from our little plot of rented land, inspired to plant my very first garden.

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Hospice chaplain Heather Isaacs Royce writes from Napa, California.

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# This Is One of Those Poems

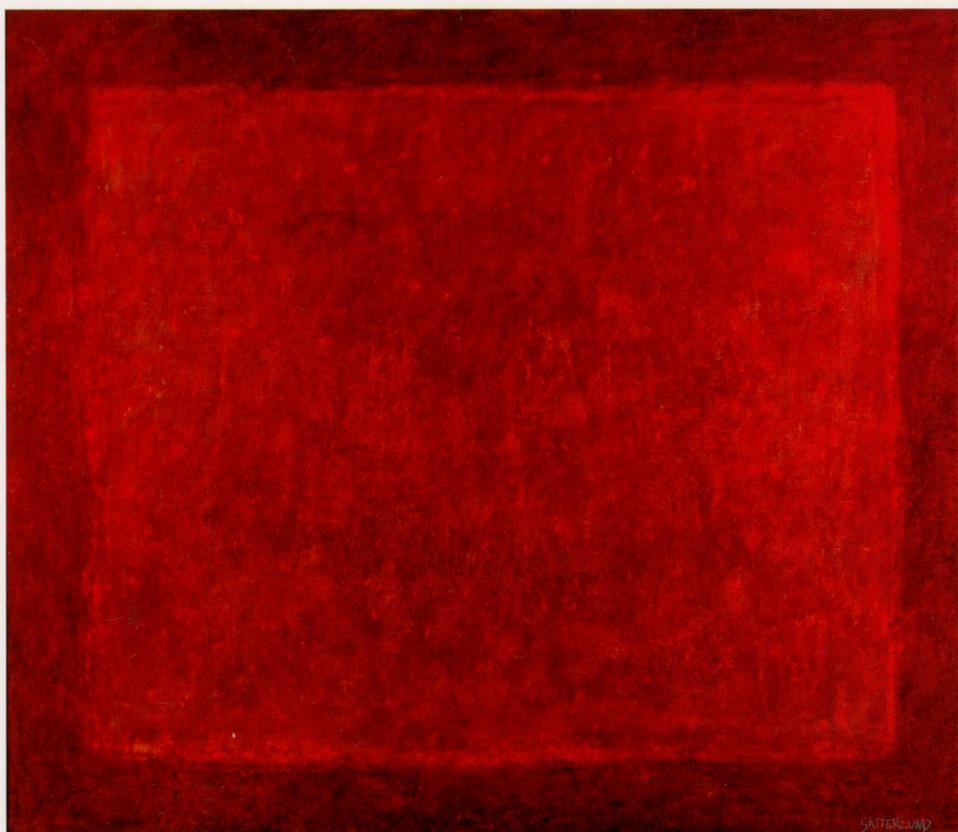
By Nancy Lecourt

Not the ones about love—  
The other ones,  
The ones where  
You are lying on a stone  
Beside a tidal river,  
Listening to the sound of a foghorn far away  
And the occasional whoosh of a car crossing a bridge.

The sun is low and warm on your face.

You cannot see the ocean—  
Only the gulls, hanging in the bright air.  
You are waiting to be called  
For supper  
And you believe  
You almost can  
Smell  
Fresh  
Bread.

Albion, August 2007



This is one of two paintings by artist Jeremy Satterlund that Columbia Union College Religion Department commissioned for Richards Hall. Titled *Ramas Ruuach* (Moving Spirit), the paintings are a mediation on Genesis 1:2.