



EDITORIAL ■ *from the editor*

Reading the Bible Together | BY BONNIE DWYER

Whatever church members' individual level of education, literacy and biblical expertise, they are constantly involved in a process of learning. And this process appears to give them great joy.

—Eva Keller, *The Road to Clarity* (2005)

The church members described above are Seventh-day Adventists in Madagascar, and the subjects of a study by anthropologist Eva Keller. Their joy in learning was one of her major findings as she sought to understand what being a practicing Seventh-day Adventist comes to mean to people once they have joined the church.

It is this joy of learning that we hope to spark with the articles in this issue of *Spectrum* as we read together texts from Old Testament and New, perhaps in new ways.

Loren Seibold starts us off in the Old Testament with a very frank discussion of the Seventh Commandment. John Jones shifts to the New Testament for an examination of texts concerning sexuality according to Paul. Chuck Scriven takes us to Corinthians to consider the beloved community. Ernest Bursey shares his journey with the Sermon on the Mount. Then we return to the Old Testament for a pastor's review of the newest book by Richard Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*. It is an amazing scriptural journey with some of Adventism's finest biblical scholars. Although there are aspects of the text on which they may not agree, one primary point about sexuality that both Jones and Davidson, in particular, make is the equality of the sexes and the significance of that equality.

Along the way, we also take time to meet a very special, and yet very ordinary congregation in Hailey, Idaho, talk with a biologist about origins, and listen to the conversation that is always bubbling at <www.spectrum-magazine.org>. This time, we feature contributions from



the Collegiate Blog, a special section of the Web Site dedicated to and written by Adventist college students.

With the multiple voices con-

tributing to the conversation in this issue, I hope it will echo another facet of study as reported by Keller. [T]he goal of Bible study was not to learn doctrine by heart. Neither was it seen as a matter of one person teaching others, although it was inevitable that Claude and Papan' I Beby acted as teachers to a certain extent. The aim was clearly that everyone should reach an understanding of the issues under question by way of serious study, reflection and discussion with others" (90).

I guess part of the reason that I find Keller's study particularly fascinating is because she sees "conversion as merely the beginning of a long story, and not necessarily the most interesting part of that story." Her study, then, "was not a study of religious conversion, but of the nature of long-term religious commitment (7)."

Likewise in our history as a church: the beginnings are not necessarily the most interesting part of our story. Over time, our story is one of continual discussion of text and meaning. We embrace that conversation with joy. It is at the heart of our long-term religious commitment. ■