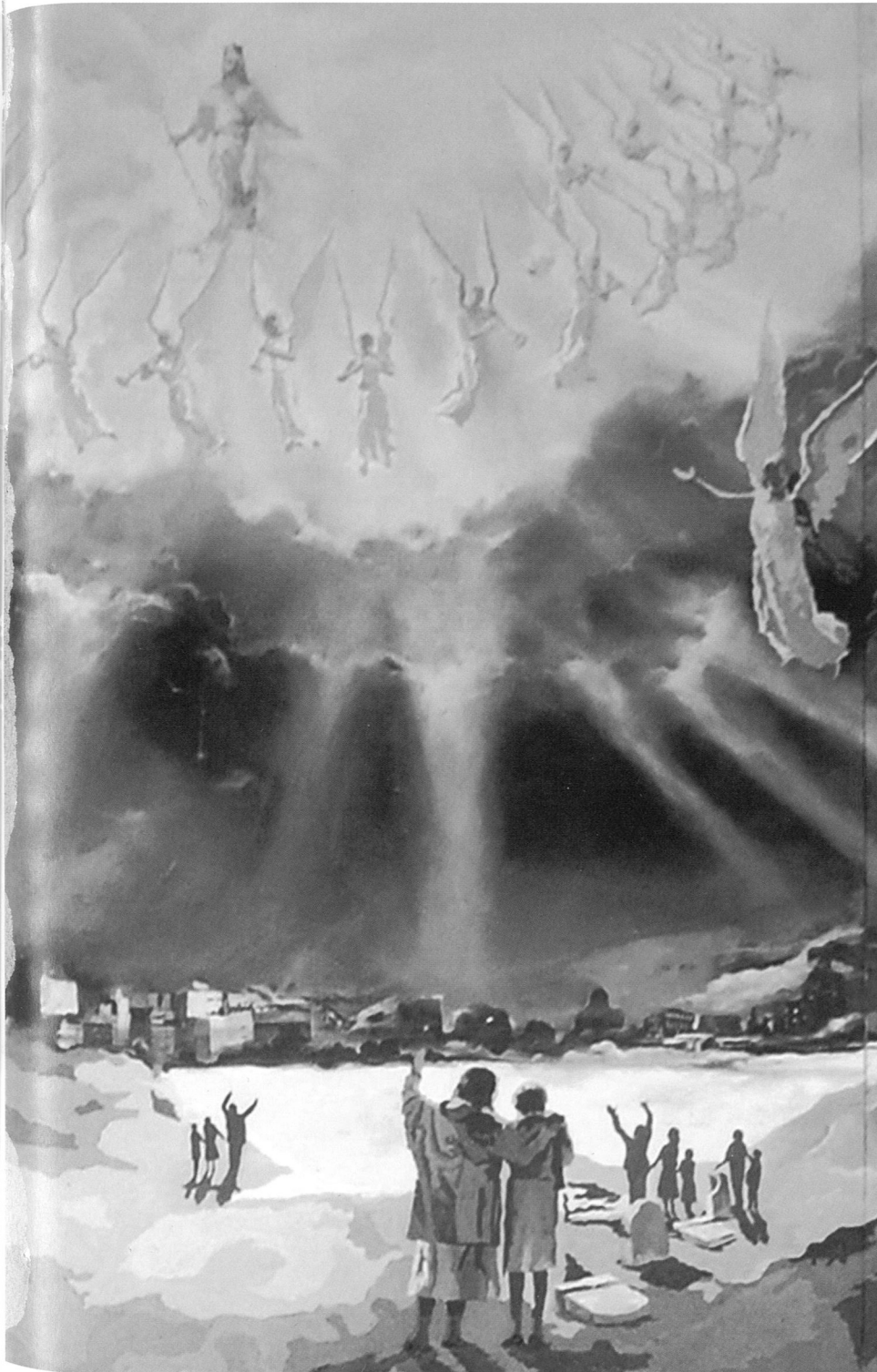


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SPECTRUM



Mr. Bussey Goes to Washington

The George
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Political Lessons of 2008

Adventist Collegians
and the U.S.
Presidential Election

Physics All the Way Down

In the Footsteps
of the Stahls

The End of Time?

Adventist Jitters

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Andrews University
Berrien Springs Michigan

community through conversation SPECTRUM

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Associate Editor Leigh Johnsen

Advertising Carlyn Ferrari

Membership Philipa Barnes

Design Laura Lamar

Media Projects Alexander Carpenter

Spectrum Web Team Alita Byrd, Alexander Carpenter, Lainey Cronk, Bonnie Dwyer, Rich Hannon, Leigh Johnsen, Jonathan Pichot, Johnny A. Ramirez, Jared Wright



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Editorial Correspondence

Direct all correspondence and letters to the editor to:

SPECTRUM

P. O. Box 619047

Roseville, CA 95661-9047

tel: (916) 774-1080

fax: (916) 791-4938

editor@spectrummagazine.org

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Subscriptions and Membership

Philipa Barnes

subscriptions@spectrummagazine.org

(916) 774-1080

Advertising

Carlyn Ferrari

advertising@spectrummagazine.org



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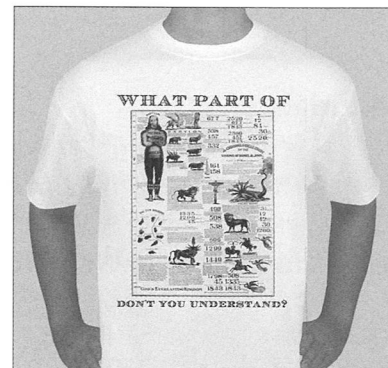
What Time Is It? | BY BONNIE DWYER

How did we get from the dinosaur times, to Bible times, to cowboy times to the *now* times?" The question came from the back seat of the car on a road trip. My (then) twelve-year-old son, Mark, had a ready answer for his friend Andrew's question. Mark summarized his recent lessons in world history, adding the Greeks and Romans to the periods, also stopping by the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment. To this day, we tease Andrew about the question. The story has attained myth status in the family canon. I think of it whenever I try to bring order to chunks of time, be they personal like the number of years since I graduated from high school, or prophetic, like the number of years since 1844.

Prophecy charts in hand, Adventists have been very specific about future events for 164 years. (It certainly seems that we should have come to the end of those charts.) And, yes, Andrew, good question, what about the *now* times? We're always so focused on future events. What about *now*? Do we understand time differently now, then Ellen White did in the 1800s? As we have become a globalized church, have we added the other parts of the world to our understanding of prophecy? Where do China, India, and Africa fit into the picture? Should we just talk about other things? It is a quandary for us on so many levels, not the least of which is when talking to our children.

A motivating quandary, you might say. In this issue of *Spectrum* several authors address End Times and Now Times in new ways: a grandmother, a retired evangelist, and a General Conference vice president sort through our understanding and explanations or lack of them. Lowell Cooper, a General Conference vice president, compiled his thoughts for the 2008 Adventist Society for Religious Studies meeting in Boston. Captivated by

the conference theme, "Re-Envisioning Adventism," he put ideas on paper and preached them in inspiring style.



Adventism is not the only aspect of Christianity being re-envisioned these days. In Phyllis Tickle's book, *The Great Emergence*, she explains how Christianity is changing and why. A review of her book by Brenton Reading appeared on our Web site in November. We reprise it in the Web section of this issue, along with chosen highlights from the ensuing comments, a Web thread discussion that gave me new perspective and hope for the now times.

Roger Dudley provides insights into the college generation of Adventists with his analysis of the recent election. Nick Miller and Michael Peabody provide lessons in religious freedom in a point/counterpoint discussion of the divisive proposition from the California ballot on gay marriage. Sigve Tonstad and Daniel Giang, two physicians from Loma Linda University, help us unpack the neurological realities of now.

“Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their country,” is a phrase I remember typing over and over in high school typing class (yes, before the days of keyboarding). As I search for the words to conclude, “Now is the time for all good Adventists to come to the aid of their church,” falls easily on the page—my fingers type it astonishingly fast. Amidst all the positive talk of new political directions for the United States, and “Yes, we can” becoming a new form of Amen, I’d like to add Now is the time—the time to be the Church, the change, the community service, the loving hands of Christ that we always talked and criticized and dreamed the Church could be. ■



Theological Transitions | BY DAVID LARSON

Since the death of my father, Ralph S. Larson, I have spent much time thinking about his life as a whole and how similar and different mine has been so far. Although he was an outspoken advocate of "historic Adventism" and I'm not, I have been surprised by how much we had in common theologically. But there were some big differences. One of these is that I am more comfortable with theological diversity and change than he was.

My father was not a sentimental man—far from it!—but he could be nostalgic about the Advent movement he joined when he was sixteen years old. On occasion, it was painful for me to read him mourn in print for those days that are forever gone. "That was when all around the world we all believed the same thing and acted the same way," he wrote.

I see this differently. I suspect that in 1936 Adventism was more diverse than my father realized. Also, I believe that our movement, like everything else, has always been changing, sometimes in good directions and sometimes in bad. Theological diversity and transitions are inevitable. To some extent we can guide them; however, we cannot avoid them and it can be destructive to try. But here are some things we should expect of our theologians:

- They should propose changes *openly* and *honestly*. One of the sources of the frustration and anger in some quarters about the book *Questions on Doctrine* is that, as virtually everyone now agrees, it published some changes without first making a strong case for them within our church and because it handled some of our denomination's theological history in ways that were, to use one of George Knight's understatement, "less than transparent." At the time, Raymond Cottrell and others predicted that this would produce fifty years of controversy. They were right.
- They should submit to *peer review*, as do all other professionals. Some in recent years who have felt called by God to introduce doctrinal changes have been reluctant to place their ideas before their theological colleagues.

Instead, they speak of these things almost exclusively to non-theologians who never seriously challenge them on an equal footing. This is the equivalent of a physician who talks and listens only to patients.

- They should not think of themselves as primarily *defending* or *discarding* earlier doctrines. Rather, their job is to *study* the theological heritage, selectively *retrieve* those themes that remain promising, *examine* them in the light of the whole of Scripture and the pertinent humanities and sciences, and *reformulate* them in ways that are fruitful for the church and society today.
- They should usually advance newer formulations *positively* instead of attacking earlier ones. This is how Arianism in our denomination was finally overcome. I heard one of its last proponents at a worship service some time between 1964 and 1968. This elderly Christian gentleman, who has long since gone to his rest, took his Arianism with him to his grave. This is the best way to prevail!
- They should *not try to demolish* the positions they oppose. In sports, one can win by only one point! In such cases, the winning team often congratulates and thanks the losing one for playing so well. Theologians should do the same thing. They lose nothing when they grant that the other side scores some strong points too.
- They should *not be ashamed* of their previous theological failures. Some in our midst seem embarrassed by the Great Disappointment and its theological aftermath. They need not be. Many postmillennialists, who believed that human life was gradually improving, were just as disappointed by World War I. Mistakes are common in all walks of life. The point is to learn from them.

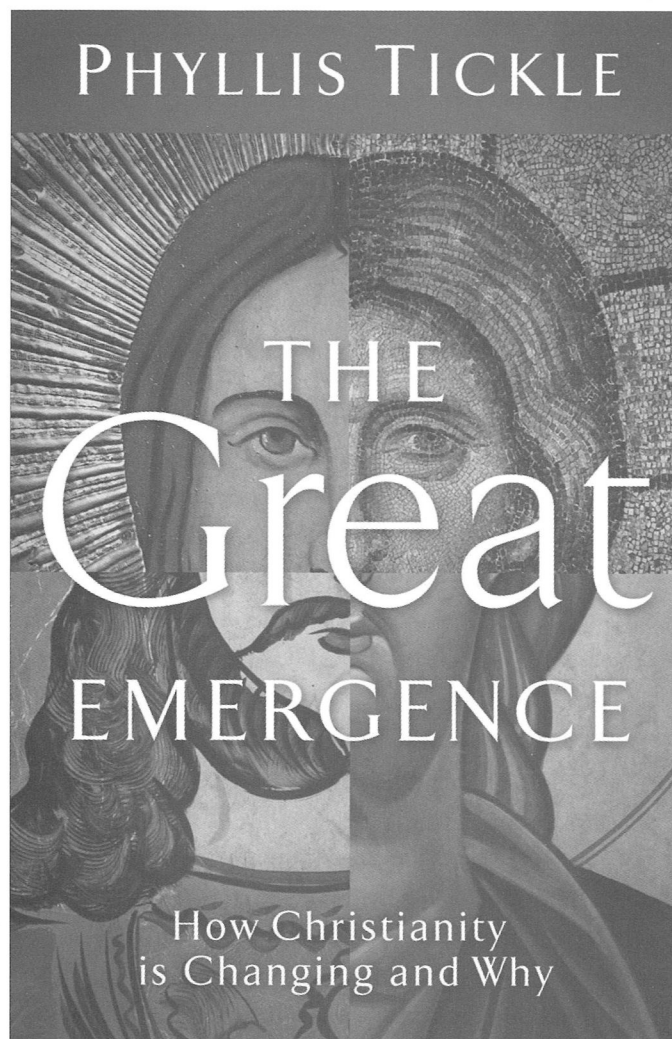
The main thing to remember in the midst of theological diversity and change is that "God's steadfast love endures forever." This is true always and everywhere! ■

David Larson teaches in the School of Religion at Loma Linda University.



The Great Emergence: A Semi-Millennial Rummage Sale

Right on Time | BY BRENTON READING



Imagine that a brilliant contemporary of Martin Luther, such as Melancthon or Erasmus, had written a book titled *The Great Reformation* that explored the revolution occurring in the Christian church of their time. If they had our modern self-analyzing sensibilities, they might have traced their own theological fault lines and placed them within the larger tectonic activity created by the universe-shattering discoveries of Copernicus, the

earthshaking explorations of Columbus, and the empowering invention of Gutenberg.

Had such a book been written with brevity, insight, and wit, it would have been a must-read for the relatively few literate individuals fortunate enough to be living through one of the deepest shifts in cultural and theological understanding ever.

In fact, we are living through just such a time and we have the gift of exactly that kind of book. But don't take my word for it. Read Phyllis Tickle's newest work, *The Great Emergence*.

The title alone has the potential to define our current Christian experience in the same way that Thomas Friedman defined our current global context with *The World is Flat*. Tickle sees the Great Emergence as the latest "rummage sale" in a series of semi-millennial cycles. Looking back, she focuses extensively on the Great Reformation, which is the previous event we are most familiar with since we live in its wake.

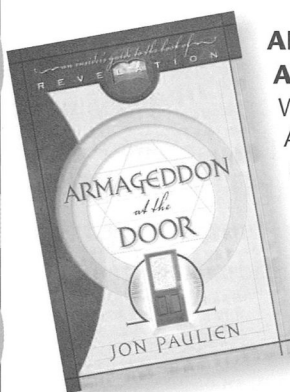
Five hundred years before the Great Reformation, the Great Schism divided the Western and Eastern Christian traditions. Five centuries before that, Gregory the Great's institution of monasticism reinvented Christianity and preserved culture after the fall of Rome. This occurred approximately five hundred years after the coming of Jesus, which was recognized as so completely transformational that the calendar itself was reset.

Tickle also recognizes that Jewish scholars would continue to trace these semi-millennial cycles back to the time of the Babylonian captivity when the prophets spoke, and beyond that to the transition from the Judges to the beginning of the Davidic Dynasty, and so forth. She also surmises that a similar cyclical pattern could be described in Islam.

However, the focus of *The Great Emergence* is on Christianity, specifically in the North American context. She dis-

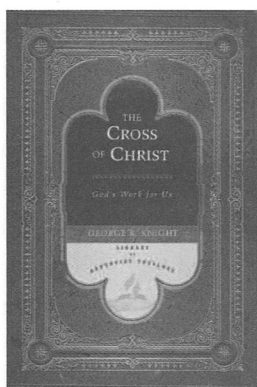
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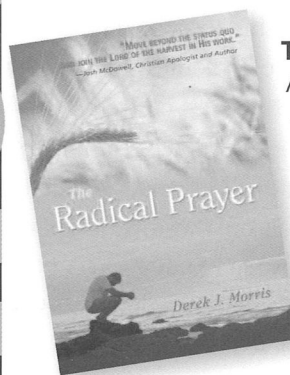
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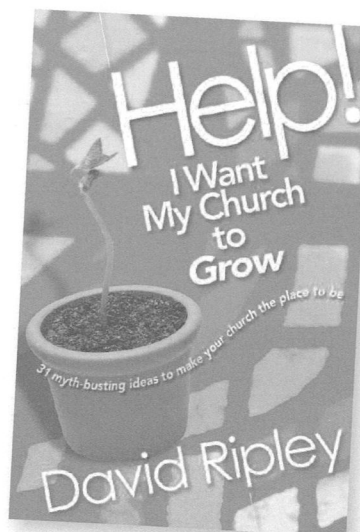
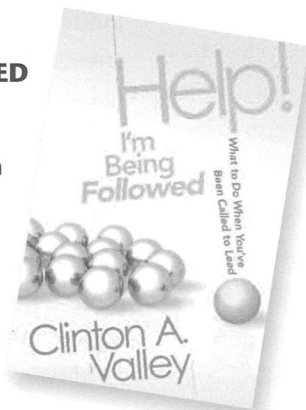


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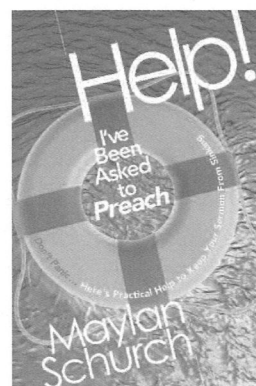
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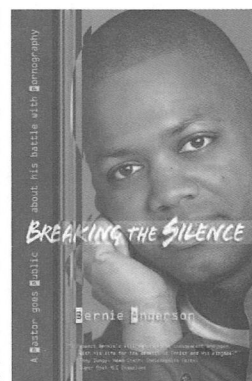
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Author Tickle



cusses the current scientific discoveries, philosophical concepts, and cultural practices that have disrupted the “cable of meaning that keeps the human social unit connected to some purpose and/or power greater than itself.”

These discoveries, concepts, and practices, she says, have punched holes in the common communal story and imagination, revealing the inner cables of spirituality, corporeality, and morality. Assuming society holds together long enough to complete the century-long mending process, the repairs should hold until the next major shift.

Some have suggested that the mending process may be more rapid this time, given our almost-instantaneous global interconnections. However, the level of complexity in the conversation and the number of voices able to become involved may more than offset the gains of more rapid access to one another's thoughts.

This global conversation offers a way to conceptualize movements such as Emergent and the Emerging Church, both of which are arising in the wake of the Great Emergence. These terms are notoriously difficult to define, much to the consternation of those who think they oppose whatever happens to be emerging. Trickle writes, “when pinned down and

forced to answer the question, ‘What is Emergent or Emerging Church?’ most who are will answer, ‘a conversation,’ which is not only true but will always be true.”

So Emergent and Emerging Church can be described as related conversations within the broader phenomenon of the Great Emergence. (Tickle also offers an intriguing theological distinction between these two phenomena that would be of interest only to those passionate about differentiating between them. So I will leave that until you read the book.)

You will find the book very readable. If there is a fault, it is that Tickle encompasses so much with brilliant clarity and amazing brevity that she leaves readers longing for more. Perhaps this succinctness explains the fact that Seventh-day Adventists are only referenced in relation to our church buildings being a place in which Emergents have been known to gather, along with other atypical locations such as public parks, football stadiums, and high school gyms.

Perhaps Seventh-day Adventists are mentioned only in passing because our denomination has tended toward isolationism and many of our conversations have been rather insular, setting up parallel and in many ways similar conversations to answer our own questions rather than becoming involved in the wider Christian conversation, much less within the public square, to address our common issues.

In order to help us enter this conversation, Tickle's book explores the big questions of the Great Emergence: “What is it?” “How did it come to be?” and, “Where is it going?” In the process, she takes us on a whirlwind journey through history, science, society, and faith.

She asks the central and overarching question in every time of upheaval: “Where now is our authority?” Since Luther, *sola scriptura* has been the resounding Protestant answer. Yet this once unifying cry has been dealt a series of blows beginning with race and slavery; continuing to gender inequality, divorce, and women's ordination; and going on to the final stand over “the gay issue.”

“Of all the fights, the gay one must be—has to be—the bitterest,” writes Tribble, “because once it is lost, there are no more fights to be had. It is finished. Where now is the authority?”

That is the question we are answering. In describing how we are answering and will continue to answer this

question, Tickle references network theory, describes crowd sourcing, and uses terms such as *global*, *radical*, *relational*, and *nonhierarchical*.

The answer, then, to the great question of our time may not be discovered in our conversation through community. Rather, our expanding conversation through community may actually be the answer.

Brenton Reading writes from Birmingham, Alabama, where he works as a radiologist.

The *Great Emergence* and the *Emergent Church* are hot topics in Christianity today—and the terms can be hard to define. I think the dialogue about these is both powerful and important to Christianity, and I hope that the Adventist faith community will participate more in that larger dialogue. Here at the *Spectrum* Web site, we have posted several different perspectives on Emergence. The discussion for all of these is being routed here, so we hope readers will soak in all the different voices and then join the discussion here.

Lainey S. Cronk, Nov. 13, 2008

Hey Brenton,

I'm curious to learn your take on the "emerging/emergent" movement and how it is different from "regular" church.

Is the difference theological? (No creeds, but emphasis on following the teachings of Jesus or "post"-denominationalism and emphasis on the things Christians belief/hold in common. It seems "emergent" language is used to advocate both positions.)

Is it one of praxis/methodology? (Meet outside the traditional church building, try unconventional methods of worship, use liturgy, return to ancient worship/spiritual practices, no "top-down" leadership.) Is it one of reaction to the way things have been done by "the institutional" church?

Perhaps a little bit of everything?

Zane Nov. 13, 2008

Zane,

I feel very inadequate to speak for emerging/emergent since others smarter than I have trouble even defining the terms.

I would readily identify myself as one of the hyphenateds <<http://chimpanaut.typepad.com/hyphenateds/>> that Tickle mentions in her book, an Adventemergent, if you will. (Perhaps I am the only self-proclaimed Adventemergent because a Google search goes without hits.) According to Tickle, hyphenateds have an emerging ethos yet choose to remain in their denominational setting. We struggle to "mind the gap" between these often-divergent identities.

I like the way Tickle frames emergent/emerging in light of the greater

movement of The Great Emergence, describing the phenomenon as localized communal responses to the larger phenomenon. I like the definition she offers. Emergent/emerging is a conversation.

But the thing I like most about emergent/emerging conversations (online, in books, or in person) is the room to breathe. In Adventism, I sense a stifling spirit of closeness. We have "the Truth" and instead of setting us free it has boxed us in. Emergent authors, Brian McLaren in particular, threw open the windows and even a door or two for me and helped me see new possibilities and dream new thoughts from within the existing structure of Adventism.

So, yes, for me, the main difference is theological, with a primary relational focus after that on belonging, behaving, and believing (apologies to Richard Rice). I like the term *generous orthodoxy*, which to me affirms the historic Christian faith and the biblical injunction to love God and one another while appreciating the wisdom and insight of other truth seekers, no matter where or when they are.

I think there are methodological differences, as well, which are manifest in a variety of ways. I think examples can be seen among various emerging Christians. Another practical difference I would add is that emergents do not isolate ourselves from this world, but rather seek to follow Christ into the world with a missional focus on doing justice and becoming a blessing to the world by sharing and living Jesus' expansive message that the Kingdom of God is here.

Perhaps emergent/emerging has been reactionary in the past. However, I see the conversation turning from complaining about the faults of the institutional church to seeking to work together from within our various traditions to create a more beautiful future.

Brenton Read, Nov. 13, 2008

Hey Brent,

Thanks for the thoughtful response (and the information on the hyphenateds, which is a new concept/term for me). I've been hearing more and more about Phyllis Tickle, and hope to read her book soon.

If you have time, check out the following link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58fgkfS6E-0>

It's a short take/synopsis of the Emerging Church Movement by Mark Driscoll, who identifies himself as a Reformed thinker/pastor. I don't agree with him totally (I'm a fan of MacLaren and Rob Bell), but have been paying attention to him because he is one of the more critical voices addressing the emerging church movement, but still a fairly "progressive" pastor in his communication style and ministry praxis.

He identifies four strands/lanes of the Emerging Church Movement. His divisions are a bit artificial/simplistic, and he's polemical, but I think his analysis is helpful in thinking about some of the issues at the heart of the debate. (Replace the term *Evangelical* or *Reformed* in his presentation with Adventist and I think his talk can be contextualized for our denomination.)

Personally, I'm all for a more open, creative, conversational, and Christian Adventism. If this is what "emerging" Adventism means, sign me up!

Zane, Nov. 14, 2008

Driscoll classifies himself as an "emerging reformer" but it seems to me he is just Old School Reformed with a hip wardrobe and urban vocabulary. I think he has stepped away from the emerging part of the conversation. I do like the idea of listening to and learning from those whose opinions differ from mine, but I have a hard time agreeing with anything he says. (His only beef with Dan Kimball and "emergent evangelicals" is that they allow women pastors—the horror!) It seems that having a conversation with him would feel very restrictive and not at all freeing.

I find myself on the opposite side of almost every issue he has with "emergent liberals." In fact, I was really inspired by the convergence of these "liberal" ideas with some of the best thinkers in Adventism (my opinion). For example, he accuses emergents like Brian McLaren, Doug Pagitt, and Rob Bell of questioning God's sovereignty over and knowledge of the future (Richard Rice, *The Openness of God*), denial of substitutionary atonement at the cross (Graham Maxwell and The Good News Tour), a low view of Scripture (Alden Thompson, *Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers*), and denial of hell (Alden Thompson, *Escape from the Flames*).

Driscoll accuses emergent types of asking questions that shouldn't be

asked, which reminds me of one of my favorite Ellen White quotes:

There is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation.

Brenton Reading, Nov. 14, 2008

Hey Brent,

Sweet White quote. Yeah, I don't agree with Driscoll on all his theological gripes with "liberals" and on certain issues, I side with Rob Bell, McLaren, and crowd.

I do, however, see his concern. Driscoll, I believe, was part of the Emergent Village when he began his ministry, but he has distanced himself from this group. Whereas they see themselves engaging in a conversation and remaining open, he sees them selling out from the teachings of classical Christianity—especially when it comes to matters of salvation.

In my opinion, there is valid concern over the tension between style and substance. It is one thing to engage in conversation, to be humble, open, and creative; it's something else to deny that certain things are true. For example, if emerging Adventism entails and embraces "liberal" ideas and rejects "conservative" ones, we've just embraced dogmatism and close mindedness of a different stripe.

There's an added dimension to the debate in the context of our denomination because there is an added theological layer. Whereas Driscoll draws his battle lines on issues like inspiration and atonement (and yes, apparently women's ordination), we must deal with such issues as the Sabbath, lifestyle, and eschatology.

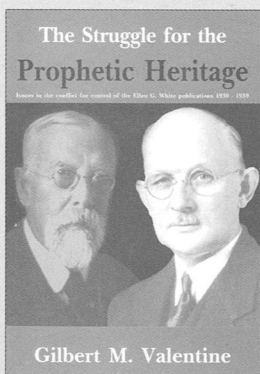
I think all Christians are grappling with the former, which deal with the fundamental identity of Christianity. In my opinion, the latter have secondary importance and their content and emphasis have to do with the fundamental identity of Adventism.

Perhaps stating things this way—of primary and secondary importance—shows my cards. I'm comfortable with an emerging Adventism willing to hold denominationally distinctive beliefs loosely, in the spirit of learning and sharing with others.

I'm not so sure about Christian beliefs in general. I think this throws the baby out with the bath water, so to speak. I would argue that there are certain Christian beliefs (not necessarily the ones Driscoll identifies) fundamental to Christian identity and praxis.

Zane, Nov. 14, 2008

Have You Read?



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Valentine is also author of
*W. W. Prescott: Forgotten
Giant of Adventism's
Second Generation*
published by Review and Herald.

To whom did the gift of prophecy really belong? This new book explores the complex and conflicted relationship between the White Estate and church leadership. It explains how it came to be agreed that the "gift" belonged to the whole church. But it took time to resolve the power struggle within the top ranks of Adventist church leadership over the issue. Eventually the White Estate was relocated from California to the General Conference but it was a long and bumpy road from West to East.

Reviewers say:

- "Valentine is an excellent author and this is a good book" —*George Knight*
- "I found Valentine's presentation stimulating and probing as he explored the complex relationship between the White Estate and denominational leaders." —*Michael Campbell*
- "Valentine is not only a superb historian, he is also a loved pastor and a wise teacher. This is a narrative of commendable empathy told with a clear understanding of the problem, the related issues and the outcomes." —*Arthur Patrick*



Mr. Bussey Goes to Washington | BY ALITA BYRD



Barry Bussey, a Canadian attorney, is going to work on Capitol Hill about the same time as Barack Obama moves into the White House. He has been appointed to serve as the Seventh-day Adventist Church's liaison to the U.S. government and as the new associate director for the

world church's PARL Department. Bussey replaces James Standish, who earlier this year was appointed executive director of the U.S. Commission on Religious Freedom.

BYRD: *When do you take up your new role and what will your primary duties be?*

BUSSEY: I am unsure as to when I will actually take the reins at the office but I anticipate being in Washington in the early part of the new year.

My work will be as the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) associate director of the General Conference under the leadership of Dr. John Graz. The primary duty is to act as a liaison between the world church and the U.S. government—not only Congress but other entities, such as the State Department.

The issues of religious freedom around the world, as it affects our members but others as well, require advocacy in—what is undoubtedly—the world's most influential capital. It strikes me that I will have a huge learning curve as to the issues the world church faces in this area.

Other areas of work will include the TV show *Global Faith and Freedom*; IRLA director for development (participating in congresses and meeting of experts around the world); and editor of the journal *Fides et Libertas* (one issue per year).

Q: *Presumably you watched the recent U.S. election with great interest, particularly given your new job. How do you think the make-up of the Congress will impact your job? In general, is it easier to lobby Democrats or Republicans on behalf of the Adventist church? How do you think the Obama administration will change things?*

A: Indeed, this was one election I watched closely. To be honest, not having any experience with the previous make-up of Congress, I go in with an unbiased opinion of what a particular configuration of Congress may or may not mean.

This is new to me—I have no expectations one way or the other as to who is or is not receptive to the Adventist interests to promote religious freedom. It would seem to me that religious freedom is a universal value that people from all political parties would espouse and cherish.

As to the Obama administration—I think it says volumes to democratic ideals for the American democracy to put an African American in office. It was a historic evening to watch. The American people have every reason to be proud of such accomplishment. I pray for his success.

Q: *What specific issues will you be dealing with and lobbying for or against?*

A: I have not got the “briefing notes” yet—but I understand one big issue is the workplace religious freedom legislation—that will be a high priority.

Q: *You are a Canadian. Do you think this makes it easier or more difficult to work with American politicians?*

A: When I was first broached about this position my first reaction was, “I am Canadian—still under the British Crown—what in the world are you thinking in asking me?”

I have no grand illusions. I recognize that I am the outsider here—but that is nothing new as my wife and children are U.S. citizens and I am the odd man out every time we travel stateside.

I am sure there are pros and cons to my status. Though I have studied U.S. history in school and out of personal interest, there is much for me to learn about the U.S. system. I have a lot to learn, no question, but by God's grace I will be keen to figure it out.

On the other hand, I expect my being an outsider is a good thing in that I have no preconceived ideas—I will plow ahead asking for the Lord's guidance (and that of others) as to what I should do.

I maintain that I will be speaking a universal language—justice, freedom, conscience, and human rights within the context of a liberal democratic society.

Q: *In 2004, you argued the position of the Adventist Church in a same-sex marriage case before the Supreme Court of Canada. What were your arguments and what was the outcome of that case?*

A: The case was unique in that it was a request of the Canadian government to the Supreme Court, in a series of questions, as to whether the government had the constitutional jurisdiction to decide the definition of "marriage" and whether it could redefine the concept to mean "any two persons."

Throughout the history of English common law countries, marriage has been defined by that law as "the voluntary union for life of one man and one woman, to the exclusion of all others." However, a number of superior courts in Canada redefined marriage: "for civil purposes, is the lawful union of two persons to the exclusion of all others."

Under pressure from various groups the Canadian government decided to bring in legislation incorporating the courts' redefinition. Before actually bringing the legislation to the House of Commons the government sent a draft copy to the Supreme Court and asked the following four questions (my paraphrasing):

1. Does the Parliament of Canada have the exclusive authority to pass legislation defining marriage for "civil purposes?" (The Supreme Court of Canada said yes it does. The Adventist Church took no position on this question.)
2. If the answer to question one is Yes, is Section 1 of the proposed legislation, which extends the capacity to marry to persons of the same sex, consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms? (The Supreme Court said Yes it is consistent and that such an extension "flows" from the Charter. The Church took no position on this question.)
3. Does the freedom of religion guaranteed by the Canadian Charter protect religious officials from being compelled to perform a marriage between two persons of the same sex that is contrary to their reli-

gious beliefs? (The Supreme Court held that the guarantee of religious freedom in the Charter is broad enough to protect religious officials from being compelled by the state to perform civil or religious same-sex marriages that are contrary to their religious beliefs. The Church did take a position—see below.)

4. Is the opposite-sex requirement for marriage for civil purposes, as established by recent court decisions consistent with the Canadian Charter? If not, in what particular or particulars and to what extent? (The Supreme Court refused to answer this question. The Church did take a position—see below.)

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada was concerned about what effect the redefinition would have on religious freedom in Canada. It was a complex case. Our factum covered some 25 pages. Below is a summary of our argument.

To the Third Question:

The proposed "protection" is vastly under-inclusive and leaves unanswered many questions about the extent of religious freedom in a society that accepts same-sex marriages. The Charter protects against even indirect coercion by the state. Unless the proposed legislation is carefully crafted to impact only the secular aspects of marriage, the legislation will have a negative effect on the practice and beliefs protected under section 2(a) of the Charter.

Inevitably the state's new institution of "marriage" will conflict with the Church. For example, the Church may have to face state pressure over such issues as church membership, church employment, church school teachers, those who can and cannot hold church office, rental of church buildings and facilities, and freedom of expression of church members and clergy.

Church Schools The state's support of a different definition of "marriage" may well result in provincial curriculum requirements that church schools teach courses recognizing same-sex marriage. Church schools that would refuse may face de-certification from the provincial departments of education. Students would then face a problem with being accepted into postsecondary education without a recognized grade twelve diploma.

Church Buildings and Facilities The proposed legislation makes no provision for religious groups who are careful to ensure that the use of their buildings and facilities are in keeping with their faith. One can reasonably expect that

without protection, religious communities will be under increasing pressure to permit same-sex couples to use their church buildings for same-sex marriage ceremonies. Will protection be limited to human rights legislation? Will such legislation now be interpreted to require an accommodation of same-sex couples using church buildings for same-sex marriage ceremonies and receptions over the Church's protest?

Freedom of Religious Expression There is no provision protecting ministers of religion, or other religious persons in expressing their views on the morality of same-sex marriages.

To the Fourth Question:

The Church does not seek to restrict individual liberty by resisting the redefinition of marriage. Rather, it insists that individuals, whatever their sexual orientation, are free to engage in monogamous relationships of their choosing without re-defining marriage. To the extent that the law should protect and encourage such stable relationships, all are free to obtain such legal protections. The Church does not oppose the state recognizing such relationships, even though the Church's moral view may be distinct from the view of many in society.

The Church is not asking the state to promote the historical and existing definition of marriage as a religious institution. The Church, and its adherents, seek state protection of marriage as a religious institution. Such protection is not as against individuals, but as against the state redefining marriage that will negatively impact on the liberty of the Church and its members to freely express and practice their faith.

The Supreme Court of Canada gave us much-needed encouragement and protection in its decision, stating that it "seems clear that state compulsion on religious officials to perform same-sex marriages contrary to their religious beliefs would violate the guarantee of freedom of religion under . . . the Charter."

The Supreme Court also made clear that the state could not compel the use of "sacred places for the celebration of such marriages and about being compelled to otherwise assist in the celebration of same-sex marriages."

Unfortunately, the Supreme Court did not answer our concerns over church schools and religious expression. In essence, it was put off for another day, when there will be a "balancing and delineation" of the conflicting rights within the Charter on a case-by-case basis.

Q: *You are a former Canadian politician. Can you tell us about your political platform and about your political career?*

A: I cannot claim any fame as a "Canadian politician," but I did run for public office in 2000.

It was a very brief "career"—I forget how many days the election was on for, but less than two months, as I recall. (In Canada, our elections tend to be short.)

At the time, I was the secretary of the Ontario Conference, and a number of people in the city of Oshawa, encouraged me to seek the candidacy in the Canadian Alliance Party (which later morphed into the Conservative Party and is currently in power). I did. I won the nomination but lost the election.

I cannot recall my entire platform, but I do remember using the phrase, "Campaign of Respect."

I am not a person who seeks to rant and rave about the poor qualities of the opposing candidate, and so forth. It is just not my style. I earnestly sought to be respectful of the other candidates.

I remember the media making a heyday out of the fact that I was not only a lawyer but also a minister in the Adventist Church with "strange views."

Although the results were respectable—I came in second (28.8 percent of the vote)—we lost. Few people understand the exhaustion and sense of re-evaluation that goes on after spending such high energy days on the campaign trail, with TV and radio interviews, official openings, dinners, and debates. I was tired at the end of it.

It was then I began a self-evaluation of "where now?" Everything was up for review, including my prospects of working for the Church again.

A couple of my friends offered me positions in their law firms. It was tempting, however, I could not shake the sense of God's call on my life and was hired again by the Ontario Conference as Legal Counsel, PARL, and trust services director.

As I look back, I am thankful for the experience. It has made me realize how important it is to know personally my stand on issues. For instance, I was challenged on my views on abortion and the death penalty. I had people on both sides seek my support for each issue. In the end, I had to go with my conscience—I supported a pro-life stance on both. When faced with a reporter's microphone and camera, you better have your mind made up—or the lights will show an uncomfortable blush.

Equally important was the realization that the campaign

trail is not for intellectual debate, considering the many shades of gray that issues present themselves in. It is a rhetorical game. A game of strategy and one-up-manship. As a result, one has to be careful about what is said during a campaign.

Working for the Church, I realize that I need to be apolitical. By virtue of my position, each time I say something about a political issue, people assume, rightly or wrongly, that I speak the Church's position. That puts significant pressure to keep my mouth shut unless I make it absolutely clear as to whom I am speaking for—myself or the Church. Even then, I am reticent to speak my view for fear of it being misconstrued.

Q: *Do you find that the Adventist Church covers a multitude of viewpoints across the political spectrum, thus making it difficult to lobby on behalf of any particular political belief? Or do you find the Church to be relatively homogeneous, with specific beliefs and political hot topics largely agreed upon?*

A: Elements of our Church's message to the world can fit nicely with most political parties to one degree or another. For this reason it is not difficult to see how a political apparatus may stress one or more tenets of our faith while out on the campaign trail to get the "Adventist vote" as it were.

However, we are such a small proportion of the electorate that we do not have as much influence as other, larger, church communities. In any event, we have to ask, "To what end do we seek influence?" Is it not to allow us to live in accordance with our conscience—to serve our fellow man in whatever forum we have around the world—all in preparation for his return?

Q: *Has the Adventist Church's political viewpoints changed over time? Are we more liberal or conservative than we used to be?*

A: This depends on a number of factors. First, how do we determine the Adventist Church's political viewpoint? Is it the organized church as we know it or is it the opinions of a group of members in a given locale?

I am not sure there is an "Adventist Church political viewpoint," but I have noticed that wherever I have gone throughout the world, our members tend to reflect, by and large, the prevailing opinion in the given area. For example, I would suggest that the Adventists in Europe have a different political view than in America (on any number of given issues)—so which is the "Adventist political view"?

From my perspective, it is not whether we are more lib-

eral or conservative. Rather it is having an understanding of who we are despite the labeling. What is it that we believe, and espouse as values, or principles we live by?

Personally, I am of the view that the Adventist Church is comprised of a group of like-minded individuals who follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, waiting for his return. In the meantime, they seek to follow his will for their lives as best they know how. That is not meant to be trite, but a serious response to a very serious question.

Q: *How involved should the Adventist Church be with politics? Where should the line be drawn to separate church from state?*

A: Following on from my previous answer, which I think responds to this question as well: as a church it is not our place to be involved in "politics" (politics being the party machinery of seeking to get particular individuals elected or not). That is not our purpose. What we are about is plain for the world to see: our teachings of faith.

I have opinions, you have opinions, we all do—we come to these views based on any number of indicia of evidence—some rational but others irrational.

The same is true of the Adventist Church—our official views or statements of belief come from a long historical pedigree of biblical research, experience, and blessings of God. They represent the teachings of Scripture and Christ, whom we seek to emulate, as best we understand at any given point in time.

Given a particular context, those statements of belief may or may not be "political." Consider our emphasis on health. We maintain we should avoid tobacco and alcohol. Preaching a sermon in Canada in the tobacco region of Ontario against the ills of tobacco may be considered "political" by some. Opinions would vary over the efficacy and legitimacy of preaching in a tobacco region—but if the sermon was preached elsewhere it may not be seen as politically offensive. So where is the line? Can we speak to our faith only in areas where it is not controversial?

At the end of the day, what are we to do? My thinking is to be ourselves. We cannot base our faith on an opinion poll—we carry on as the great Christians did before us—emulate the Messiah. Controversy will be inevitable, as it was for him. The line of demarcation will be different for every situation, but what is not acceptable for us, in my view, as Adventist Christians is to deny our Lord and Savior. ■

Alita Byrd edits the Interview section of the *Spectrum* Web site.



The George Brown Story and Adventist Race Relations | BY BENJAMIN BAKER

Race relations in Adventism are a turbulent and often-ignored subject. More than sixty years have elapsed since the creation of regional conferences for the African American members, and the conferences endure although the surrounding culture has changed. What many Adventists may not know or remember, however, is that a black man was nominated to the presidency of the General Conference. The year was 1990, the place Indianapolis, Indiana. The Church was engrossed in debates over woman's ordination, tithe appropriations, leadership, and conference structure.

The Nominating Dilemma

Neal Wilson, the incumbent General Conference president, had held the post for twelve years and chose to submit his name for nomination once again. Wilson was highly respected by the constituents, and the Church had made significant progress under his leadership. After the nominating committee took several ballots, two candidates emerged as frontrunners: Neal C. Wilson and George W. Brown.

George Brown was born on January 11, 1924, in the Dominican Republic to an Antiguan father and Dominican mother. His native language was Spanish and he was a third-generation Adventist. Brown earned his bachelor's degree in theology from Caribbean Union College in 1948 and served successfully as a pastor and evangelist for a decade. He married Carla Brown in 1952, and the couple had four daughters. He received his master's degree in systematic theology and doctor of divinity degree from Andrews University. Brown held

numerous positions in the Inter-American Division, including the presidency of Caribbean Union College.

In 1980, Brown assumed the presidency of the Inter-American Division. For a decade, he provided extraordinary leadership, at once conservative and progressive. The division experienced unprecedented growth. He was known for his adroitness at reconciliation and unification.

The Nominating Committee had a decision to make, and the delegation voted decisively for Brown, 130 to 81.

Time for a Decision

A messenger was dispatched to find Brown. The 211 voting delegates were asked to stay in the room so that the choice would not be broadcast before Brown was notified. It took some time to find the nominee. The chair, Robert Folkenberg, then president of the Carolina Conference, and secretary, Benjamin Reaves, then president of Oakwood College, broke the news to Brown and urged him to accept. The sixty-six-year-old Brown was surprised. He asked for a day to think it over and promised to have an answer on Friday by 5:00 p.m.

Brown and his family went to a private place to talk the matter over. Brown describes this as "the most excruciating experience I have ever had." He was honored that the Church thought him the man to lead it, but he had serious issues to consider. He was nearing seventy years in age. His beloved wife of almost forty years was

ill. If he accepted the presidency, he would have to travel a great deal of the time, which meant that he would be away from his wife. Brown was in prayer and deep thought for much of the night and morning. Pressure came from all sides for him to accept.

The Breakthrough

During that gauntlet of a day of prayer and thought, Brown reached the conclusion that God was not leading him to accept the presidency. When he realized this, he recalls that a peace came over him and he could not be moved by any arguments or suggestions to the contrary. Brown announced his declension to the committee before 5:00 p.m. on Friday, as he had promised. Robert Folkenberg told the nominating committee: "A nightmare of nightmares has occurred. Elder Brown has decided not to accept."

The committee then selected Folkenberg for the presidency, but that is another story.

Although this critical episode has been largely forgotten, it is important to keep in mind that the Seventh-day Adventist Church nominated a black man to be the president of the world church eighteen years before the United States seriously approached the possibility. That 1990 General Conference Session was a breakthrough in race relations in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. ■

Benjamin J. Baker is pursuing a Ph.D. from Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Who Is Our Neighbor Really? | BY VAUGHN NELSON

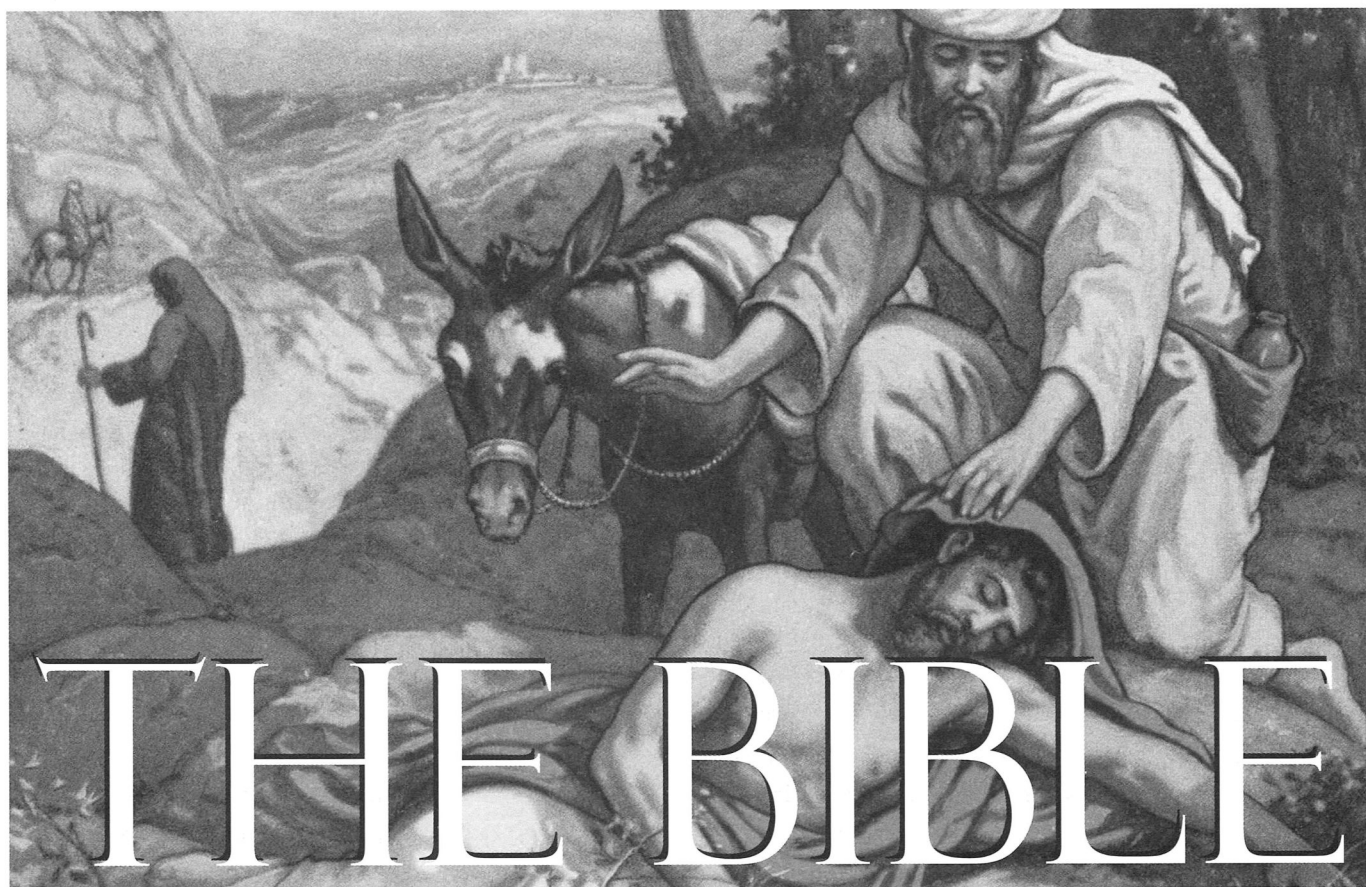
I recently preached a series in my church on some of the minor prophets. I chose to begin with Obadiah. When a colleague noticed the commentaries on my desk opened to Obadiah, he exclaimed, "You're not afraid of anything!" I rather enjoyed what may or may not have been intended as a compliment. But now in retrospect, it occurs to me that perhaps I should have felt a bit more trepidation toward Obadiah than I did.

I have a confession to make—especially to biblical scholars. Sometimes a preacher might experience the temptation to tweak a reading of a text for the sake of a good sermon. I think my sermon from Obadiah was

one of those (rare) cases.

Here's a refresher for those who don't read Obadiah for their morning devotions. In twenty-one verses, Obadiah the prophet brings the word of the Lord to the people—except in this case it's an oracle against a nation, Edom, to be exact. God's complaint against the Edomites begins at verse 10:

10 For the slaughter and violence done to your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever. 11 On the day that you stood aside, on the day that strangers carried off his wealth, and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you too were like one of them. (NRSV)



Taken alone, these words of judgment against acts of violence and lack of concern for a neighbor in distress are irresistible fodder for a sermon on the Christian responsibility to stand in solidarity with our neighbors in times of need, even our global neighbors.

Upon further reflection, I am not sure this reading catches the thrust of Obadiah. It doesn't take a very nuanced reading of the rest of the book to get a different picture. In the end, the Day of the Lord will be a dark day for these Edomite neighbors and a day of vindication for God's own people. So much for solidarity. Honestly, I like this reading less.

In Obadiah's defense, his historical context is worth noting. The work most likely emerges from the exilic period. This was a time of absolute existential, theological, political crisis for the exiled Jews. In a sense, it is another exercise in prophetic theodicy. So perhaps hearing Obadiah trying desperately to answer the question "Where is God now?" gives us some patience with him. It's hard to ask too much in the way of altruism of a people in such turmoil.

Even given Obadiah's context, we may be uneasy with this reading of the prophet's response to the neighbors. Must we respond to crisis with a destruction of the neighbor? Perhaps we need to search for another biblical model of neighborly conduct.

Luke 10 may be the first place we turn when thinking about the meaning of being a neighbor. The Good Samaritan. Go and do likewise. The common reading of this parable renders it as an example parable. The (surprisingly!) good Samaritan becomes the model for the hearer/reader to go and likewise do acts of compassion for people—even people you don't like or who don't like you. This seems preferable to Obadiah's approach. Here we challenge ourselves to higher moral ground; we respond to crisis by becoming doers of good.

This is a popular parable, but its traditional reading is not necessarily the best one. As long ago as the 1970s, Robert Funk noted that a reading in which the reader models herself after the Samaritan who shows mercy requires a rather strange shift in the reader's sympathy—from robbed traveler to heroic Samaritan—that is not obviously intended. In fact, Jesus'

question to the lawyer—"Who was a neighbor to the man, the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan?"—suggests that the three passersby are parallel and the reader's sympathy is to remain with the beaten man in the ditch.

Hence the answer to the lawyer's query about whom he must love as a neighbor is not a recommendation that the lawyer become a champion of good works, just as the Samaritan; rather, the answer is for the lawyer to recognize his own vulnerability and need of the neighborliness of the despised other, the outsider. We can imagine that these were much harder words for this lawyer, who surely craved the satisfaction of doing good works to a neighbor.

The lure to interpret the good Samaritan parable as a call to acts of compassion and altruism is strong. Although I would not go so far as one author as to call it narcissism, there does seem to be some self-interest in this reading. Identifying with (or even challenging oneself to become) the good Samaritan provides welcome relief from, say, the approach to neighborliness seen in Obadiah.

Whereas Obadiah's abandoned, beaten captives long for the final destruction of their passive, unhelpful neighbors, the reader of Jesus' parable escapes the role of victim by becoming the subject who does heroic good works for an undeserving "neighbor": heaping coals of compassion, as it were. To be an actor of compassion is to remain in a position of power and control without the dubious desire for retribution.

Icertainly do not intend to cast doubt over the altruistic life. And were this Lukan parable the lone foundation for Christian good works to the other (especially the surprising other), I would not tamper with it. But I assume we all can agree that compassion, service, and good works are fairly basic to the biblical witness. That established, I think Luke's parable pushes us toward another kind of response to the other.

This third approach to others does not manipulate the other to be either an object of my condemnation or an object of my heroics; instead, Jesus' parable invites the reader to remain in that altogether vulnerable position of receiving compassion and grace from the despised other.

I loosen my grasp on the very power to define who is my neighbor, who belongs. Being on the receiving end of neighborly compassion leaves a lot of initiative in the hands of the other. And that is risky.

I do not by any means intend to dismiss the prior two responses to neighbors. The confounding beauty of the canon is that all those responses are there, and we should not just throw them out.

- The eschatological vindication of the abused, beaten captives (to abstract a bit from Obadiah) is powerful in a context of oppression, disillusionment, and crisis.
- The initiative to become actors who specialize in compassion, even toward the most unlovable recipients, is desperately needed in the world (to borrow from Burt Bacharach).
- But we should not stop short of the message of Jesus' parable of the vulnerable victim who receives help from the outsider and must rethink his definition of a neighbor.
- Such vulnerability is, after all, at the heart of the gospel. God opens Godself in to the world. God includes the other. God invites us to participate in the divine life. And so God invites us as persons to such openness. And God calls us as a community, and yes, an institution, to wrestle with loosening our grip on power and control.

There is, of course, a sense in which every community has the right to determine what constitutes membership and belonging, to draw lines that divide those who are "in" from those who are "out." In a way, I suppose that is unavoidable. Postmoderns have shown the inevitability that saying something means saying not something else.

So, I suppose my appeal in the context of Adventism and community is not to abandon our communal identity or even to dispense with drawing boundaries. It seems that they are practically inevitable.

Rather, I wonder what it would look like for the Adventist community to become a reader of Jesus' parable that identifies with the beaten man in the ditch throughout the story. What would it mean to remain vulnerable to the good works of the Samaritan neighbor? What would it mean to relinquish some of the control over who becomes a neighbor (and hence an "insider")?

I have been bothered by a question asked of me this summer by two people very dear to me: "Does your school graduate real Adventist pastors?" My initial reaction to such a question is, "What in the world (literally) do you mean by a 'real' Adventist pastor?"

On the one hand, I recognize an institution's interest in having some semblance of consistency in its representation. But on the other hand, I wonder where the trajectory of these biblical models nudges us. As we ponder Jesus' wounded traveler in the ditch, who might turn out to be the shocking Samaritan who offers compassion to us, who offers wholeness and healing to us, who by that act of caring becomes a neighbor who belongs with us?

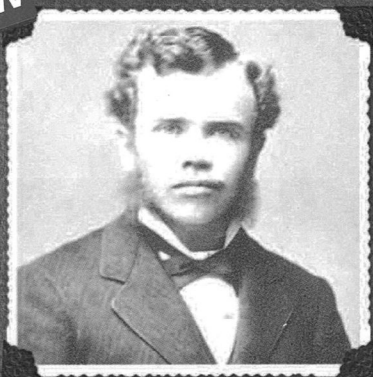
What would it mean to loosen our grip—if only a little—on deciding who becomes the neighborly insider? What if the other had some say in it? After all, is there anything more thrilling than someone saying, "I want in! I want to be a Seventh-day Adventist Christian"? And then who are we to dictate point-by-point, detail-by-detail exactly what inclusion means?

My reading of Obadiah was a bit forced because, as anyone who has spent much time with Scripture knows, it's hard not to do sometimes. It's difficult to resist the temptation to manipulate and control the text. It's hard and unsettling to let the text read you (me). Yet good scholars and pastors know that Scripture comes alive most when we have an openness to being touched and changed and ministered to by the text—even the strange, despised texts. Perhaps we are called to that same commitment to openness and vulnerability in our formation of community.

For me it is a great joy and privilege to be an Adventist. I have been richly blessed by belonging to the Adventist community. My hope and prayer is that as we continue to be readers of Scripture, we will continue to be challenged and to grow in our relationship with the other. May God give us the insight and the courage not only to be a people of compassion but also to be people who are open to the compassion and to the belonging of the surprising, unexpected other. ■

Vaughn Nelson is lead pastor at Grace, a church plant in Eastlake (San Diego), and is a graduate theology student at La Sierra University.

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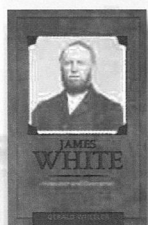
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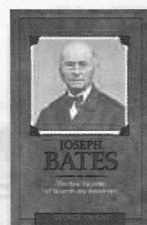


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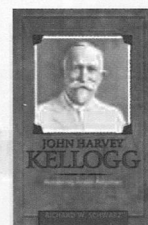


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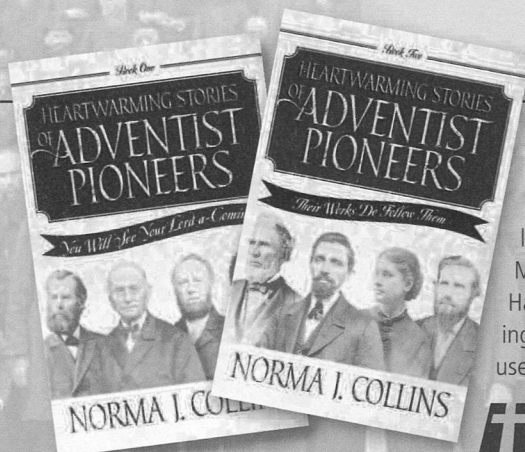
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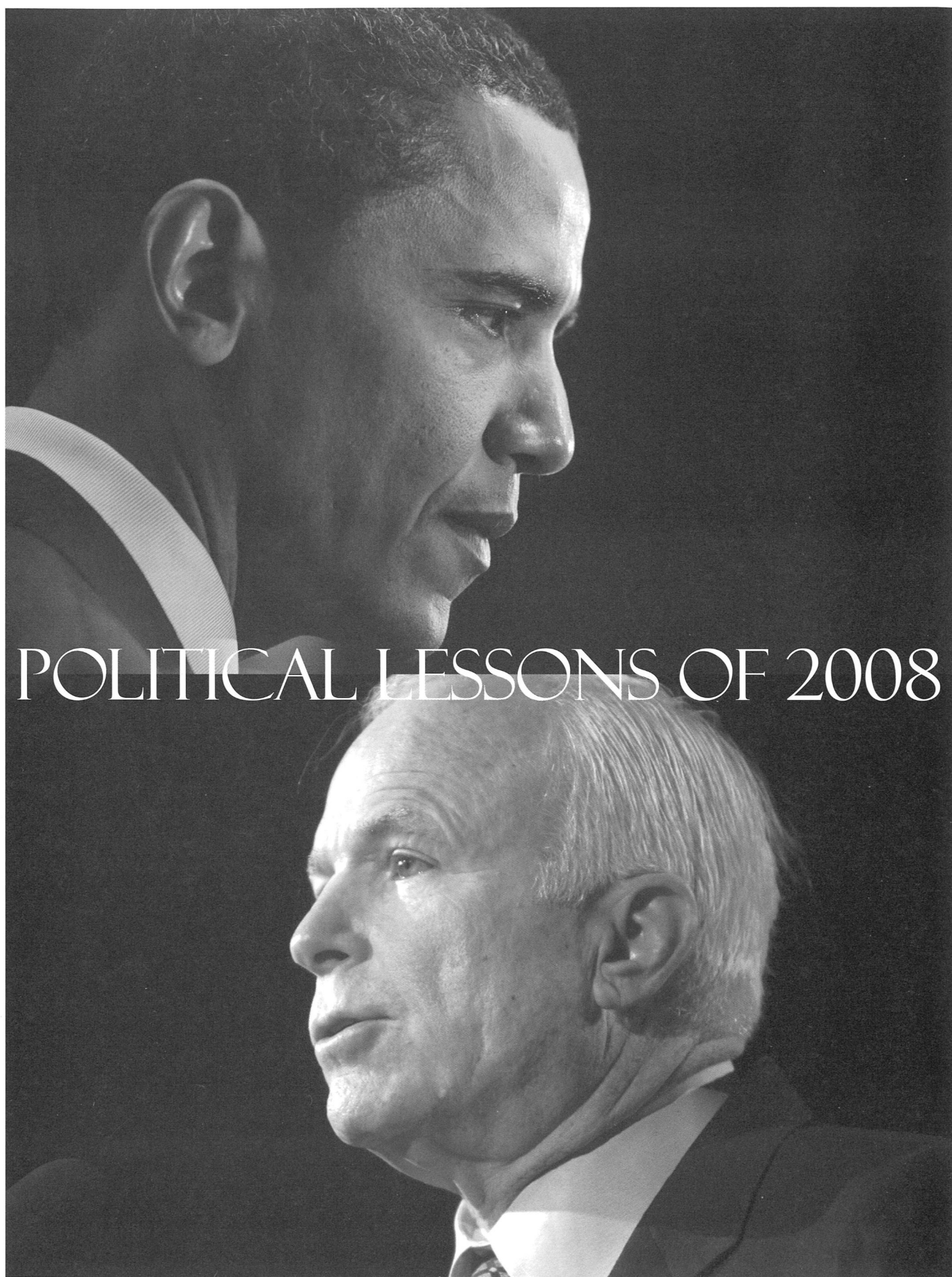


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California's Great Debate

PROPOSITION 8

This initiative measure is submitted to the people in accordance with the provisions of Article II, Section 8, of the California Constitution.

This initiative measure expressly amends the California Constitution by adding a section thereto; therefore, new provisions proposed to be added are printed in italic type to indicate that they are new.

SECTION 1. Title

This measure shall be known and may be cited as the "California Marriage Protection Act."

SECTION 2. Section 7.5 is added to Article I of the California Constitution, to read: *SEC. 7.5. Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California.*

Editor's Note

The final vote in favor of Proposition 8 on the California ballot did not end the debate on gay marriage in the state. The California State Supreme Court will review the constitutionality of the measure with a ruling expected in 2009. Meanwhile, the state's Fair Political Practices Commission, which oversees campaign finance laws, has also agreed to review a complaint that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints neglected to report a battery of nonmonetary contributions—including phone banks, a Web site, and commercials—on behalf of the measure. Heavy involvement of churches in support of the proposition turned the issue into one of religious liberty as well as gay rights. Before the election, we asked two Adventist attorneys who were vocal about the measure to provide us with a point/counterpoint discussion of the issue and its religious liberty implications. They wrote immediately after the election.



Constitutional Issues and Proposition 8

BY MICHAEL D. PEABODY

On November 4, 2008, in the midst of severe financial insecurity, 52.3 percent of California voters amended the state constitution to eliminate same-sex marriage and provide that only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized within the state.

Proposition 8 created a destabilizing carve-out in the Unruh Civil Rights Act, which provides protection from discrimination within all business establishments in California, including the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodations.¹ It

NO



Un-Golden Moments in the Golden State

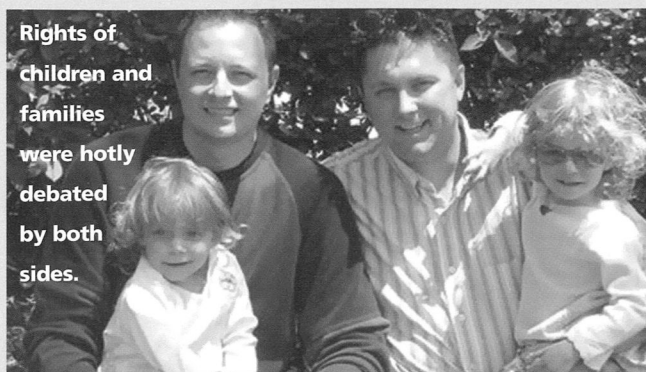
BY NICHOLAS P. MILLER

Proposition 8 has revealed a disturbing fault line, not only in California, but more profoundly, in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A few Adventist pastors and Bible teachers publicly urged that to protect gay marriage is to promote a "righteous society" and that all "good and thoughtful" people would do so.

However, many Adventist religious liberty leaders who endorsed Proposition 8 viewed these statements as a profound misreading of the Scriptures and as revealing deep misunderstandings of the history of law relating to family and marriage. Indeed, we

YES

Rights of
children and
families
were hotly
debated
by both
sides.



NO

describes the protections as follows, "All persons within the jurisdiction of the state are free and equal, and no matter what their sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, marital status, or sexual orientation are entitled to the full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in all business establishments of every kind whatsoever."

In the United States' constitutional democracy, there is no more fundamental principle than equal protection under the law, which is upheld by neutral courts that protect minorities from adverse treatment

by the majority. The California Supreme Court has recognized the fundamental constitutional right to marry since 1948, when it ruled against state laws that had existed since the state's founding that prohibited interracial marriage, and it applied this same analysis to outlaw the prohibition against gay marriage in 2008.² Since sexual orientation was on an equal legal footing with other protected classes, when viewed as a matter of law and not in light of a preferred outcome, the court's ruling is logical and inevitable.

The court clarified that existing protections of the rights of religious groups would "not impinge upon the religious freedom of any religious organization, official, or any other person; no religion will be required to changes its religious policies or practices with regard to same-sex couples, and no religious officiant will be required to solemnize a marriage in contravention of his or her religious beliefs."

Disregarding the constitutional implications and relying on inflammatory "facts," proponents of Proposition 8, which had actually been introduced in October 2007, worked to scare voters into reversing the "activist

YES

believe that this defense of society-endorsed sodomy implicates the scriptural admonishment: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isa. 5:20).

Many of us who have been defending the separation of church and state in print and in the courts over the last decades believe that the constitutional argument in this instance is largely a smokescreen for a deeper theological agenda. Many Adventists who are defending the so-called separation of church and state Proposition 8 debate were either missing in action, or openly hostile, when it came to issues of keeping church institutions free from state entanglement or the state promotion of religious practices. I know, because I have debated them in the past on this topic, some in the pages of *Spectrum* itself.

The reason that legally protecting traditional marriage does not implicate the separation of church and state is simply this: marriage is a universal human institution that transcends any religious or cultural group.

Laws protecting do not need to be any more Judeo-Christian than laws against murder, theft, rape, and incest. Yes, over time there have been some minor modifications on the precise contours of marriage, polygamy being an obvious case. But even in instances of polygamy, children have a mother and a father.

Biology itself witnesses that children are the product only of the union of a man and a woman. Never in the history of civilization—until the influence of an essentially relativistic and even nihilistic epistemology and values system of recent decades—have same-sex couples been considered appropriate civil institutions for perma-



Yes on 8 supporters

judges" who had voted against the "will of the people." They warned, among other things, that churches could be shut down and pastors fined for refusing to perform gay marriages, despite clear language to the contrary.

Adventists joined the fray, and pastors in California and Arizona, where a similar initiative appeared on the ballot, were asked to distribute fliers promoting Proposition 8 warning that Adventists would "rebel against the authority of God and the wisdom of His law by voting in favor of same-sex marriage."³

In a minor paean to separation of church and state, Adventists added the argument that traditional marriage, unlike the Sabbath, could be legislated because it was in the "second table" of the Decalogue that deals with civil issues. This distinction was not understood by radical evangelicals, who would enact all ten, much less gay rights activists.

Proponents argued that Proposition 8 supported equal treatment because homosexuals, just like heterosexuals, were free to marry members of the opposite sex.⁴ This reversed the Adventist argument that a 1990 U.S. Supreme Court decision had damaged the Free

Exercise Clause when it upheld the denial of unemployment benefits to Native Americans who used sacramental peyote. Though no fans of hallucinogenic drugs, Adventists disagreed with the Court's ruling that neutrally worded laws that treated everybody the same were permissible even if they discriminated against a group.⁵

Proposition 8 proponents instead exposed a clear intent to discriminate against homosexuals by disregarding the emergence of clear double standards. They argued that children are ideally raised by a father and mother but ignored heterosexual cohabitation, divorce, single parenting, and other arrangements. They failed to clearly articulate how gay marriage by third parties could affect heterosexuals, allowing the underlying forces of prejudice to make their arguments for them.

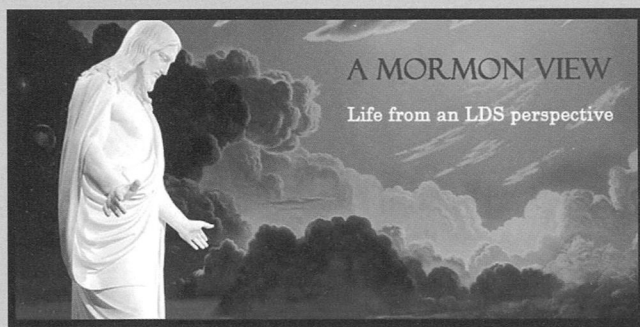
Adventists joined others in exiling a legally protected segment of the population from the shelter of the law and destabilizing the same protections we ourselves enjoy. Perhaps more than any other group aligned with us, we ourselves have experienced discrimination, being punished for working Sundays a century ago and losing jobs today rather than working on Sabbath.

NO

nent unions or the raising of children.

If we are removed from relying on obvious moral principles from nature in organizing our laws, then nothing on the sexual front is able to be regulated or forbidden: not prostitution; not bestiality; not public nudity or sex acts; not necrophilia; not polygamy—indeed, even the man/boy love society should be given free reign. Some immediately cry "age of consent" as a barrier to some of these extremes. But under the logic of pro-Proposition 8 advocates, consent is not a meaningful limit, except perhaps to aggravated rape.

This is because observations about the importance or relevance or obviousness of the age of consent are equally based on the same kinds of observations of human experience and nature that we use in arriving at our arguments about sexual morality. If our reasoning is rejected wholesale, then it cannot be used to fashion limits that happen to be more politically correct. Indeed, mainstream left-wing groups like the ACLU essentially recognize this when they defend the possession and distribution of child pornography.



YES

We do not argue that homosexual acts should be criminalized. Within a zone of privacy, consenting adults can and should anticipate a certain amount of non-interference from the state. Yet there is a huge, illogical leap from this to argue that the state must then promote and endorse this private, immoral behavior by giving it the imprimatur of marriage and bestowing on those who practice it the right to raise children—children that such unions, left to themselves, cannot produce.

This is to place innocent, non-consenting third parties in a zone deeply violative of historic and traditional

NO

Historically, Adventists have championed liberty of conscience for all, even if we have disagreed with those we have defended, and we have never advocated constitutional changes to reverse the rights of others, particularly in matters of religion. We as a group have recognized how hard we had fought for our rights, and although we held to our own religious standards we did not seek to enforce them using the power of the state.

Here, Adventists sold the message of freedom of conscience for the definition of "marriage," claiming a property that we did not rightfully own. We joined angry mobs in kicking out the inhabitants, ripping out its legal foundations, and transplanting its entirety to a precipice. The only mitigating factor is that we were not uniformly joined to this purpose.

Looking forward, we are virtually guaranteed that a future constitutional amendment will either reverse Proposition 8 or legally redefine marriages as "domestic partnerships." Procedural legal arguments used to uphold Proposition 8 will support future reversals, and churches will find that they have bound themselves to the negative consequences of

religious establishment.

Instead, we must markedly and consistently regain our moral authority as champions of the principle that "in matters of conscience, the majority has no power."⁶ ■

Notes and References

1. California Civil Code sections 51 through 51.3; see also Government Code Sec. 11135
2. *Perez v. Sharp* (1948) 32 Cal.2d 711; and *In re Marriage Cases* (2008) 43 Cal. 4th 757.
3. From a bulletin insert provided to Adventist Pastors in California and Arizona by the Seventh-day Adventist Church State Council. Available as of this writing at http://churchstate.org/site/1/docs/Final_Final_Bulletin_Insert_Prop_8.pdf
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990) 494 U.S. 872.
6. Merele D'Abigne, *History of the Reformation*, 1248.

Michael D. Peabody is an attorney in Los Angeles and the editor of ReligiousLiberty.TV, a Web site dedicated to preserving liberty of conscience.

YES

principles of civil morality—and one that has been shown by many current scientific and empirical studies to be much less adequate for the raising of children. The truly loving, kind, righteous, good, Christ-like thing, we believe, is to protect the welfare of these children rather than the "rights" of those who wish to have their personal wrongs endorsed by the state.

But we are also concerned with the treatment of the Bible by those who oppose Proposition 8. Consider that both the Old and New Testaments teach that homosexual behavior is a violation of the natural law, for which God holds both believers and nonbelievers accountable. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah, and Paul's statements in Romans, make this abundantly clear.

Some argue that understanding the intersection of biblical and civil morality is not always simple. But we believe that what is very clear is this: it is not wise or right to get out front as Adventist thought leaders and promote the societal endorsement of immorality, when obvious moral imperatives—both biblical and civil—point strongly in the opposite direction. Even if one

believed that protecting traditional marriage were somehow a technical violation of the U.S. Constitution—which we strongly maintain it is not—would not the best approach be to maintain a discreet silence?

This is the counsel that Ellen White gave on the question of Bible readings in the public schools. Such readings may have been a technical violation of the U.S. Constitution. But as the practice would promote good morality, she said, in situations like this "silence is golden."

Frankly, once they found themselves unable to stand in defense of basic morality along with the Church's religious liberty leadership, we could have used more golden moments from our brethren in the Golden State who had doubts about Proposition 8. ■

Nicholas P. Miller is associate professor of church history at Andrews University Seminary and director of the Andrews University International Religious Liberty Institute.

Adventist Collegians and the United States Presidential Election of 2008 | BY ROGER L. DUDLEY

The past few months have been an intense and exciting time on the American political scene, culminating on November 4 with the presidential elections. In 1984 and again in 2004, my colleague, Edwin Hernandez, and I surveyed a random sample of Seventh-day Adventists in the United States to determine their political leanings and positions on current public issues. The results from 1984 can be found in our book, *Citizens of Two Worlds*, and for 2004 in *Spectrum*.¹

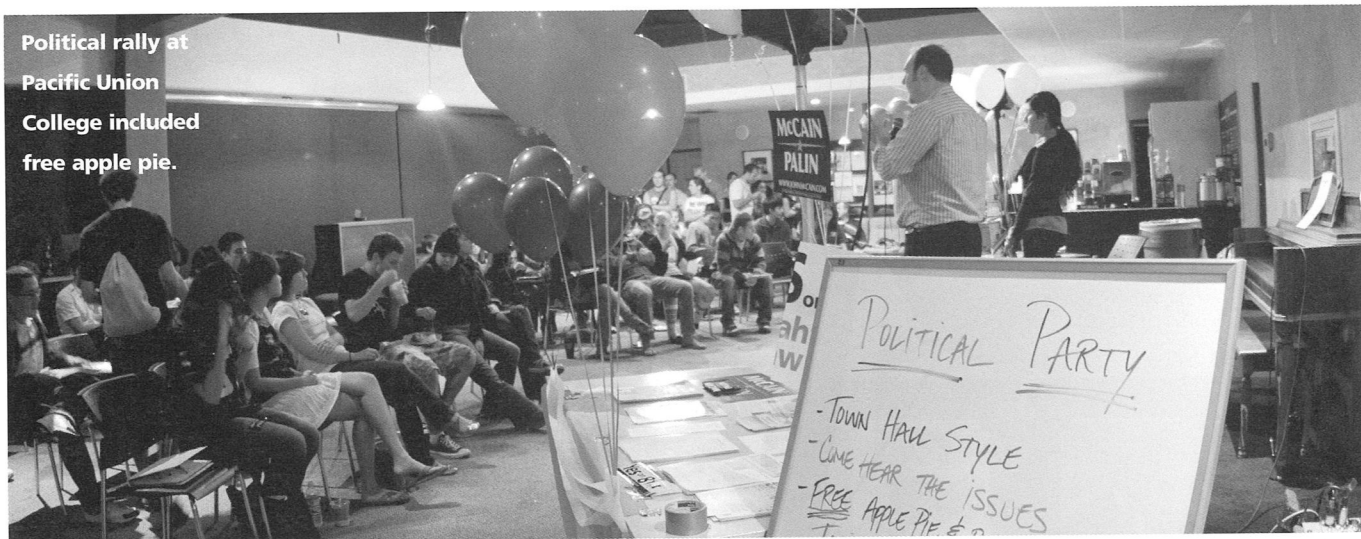
This year, it was decided to look at a different population—students in Adventist colleges and universities.

We received completed surveys from 1,188 students. The six institutions were scattered throughout the country, thus assuring a national sample. Although the selection of students was voluntary, not random, the findings show that the various poles of political and public opinion were balanced, as was religious thinking.

How They Planned to Vote

The students reflected the country as a whole in their voting patterns. If we look at those planning to vote for Barack Obama or John McCain and disregard the other three options, 57 percent of the students chose Obama

Political rally at
Pacific Union
College included
free apple pie.



PHOTOGRAPH BY HALEY WESLEY

This time, we used a different method—a Web survey. Students from six Adventist institutions participated: Andrews University, Southern Adventist University, Union College, La Sierra University, Pacific Union College, and Walla Walla University. School officials sent e-mails to their students requesting U.S. citizens to open a link and complete the survey, which was constructed using *Spectrum* software.

(Table 1; all numbers have been rounded to .1 percent in the tables). This is somewhat better than his actual national popular vote. It also reverses the pattern in 2004 (Table 2) where, although 75 percent did not vote (perhaps because of age), of the 254 students who did vote, 59 percent favored George W. Bush. Of course, these were not the same students this time, but the shift seems to mark a change in the political thinking of young Adventists.

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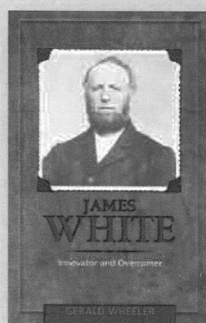
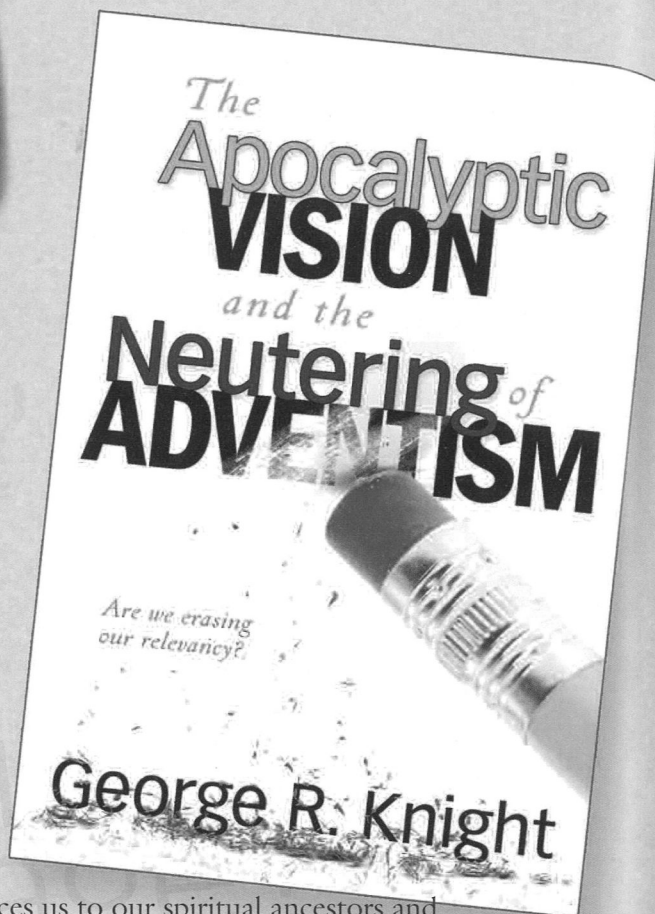
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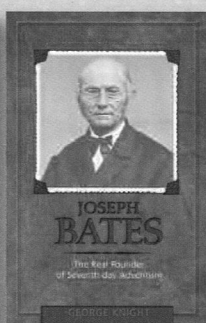
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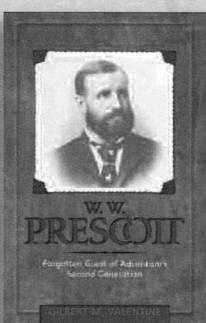
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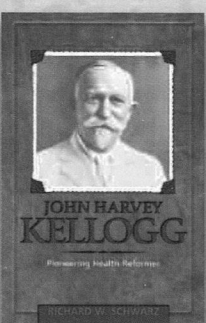
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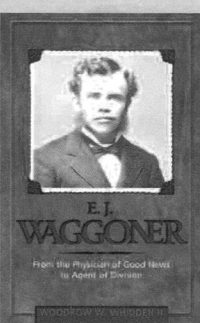
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Table 1*For Whom Do You Plan to Vote in 2008?*

(percent responding)

Barack Obama	38.4
John McCain	28.5
Other	3.5
Undecided	13.2
Don't plan to vote	16.4

Table 2*For Whom Did You Vote in 2004?*

(percent responding)

George W. Bush	13.9
John Kerry	9.5
Ralph Nader	1.2
Didn't vote	75.5

Although we did not survey adult members this year, the collegiate vote also represents a shift from the adult survey four years ago, where 44 percent planned to vote for George W. Bush and only 16 percent for John Kerry. Another interesting development was how the students identified themselves politically (Table 3). More consider themselves Republicans than Democrats. Notice that the largest identification (40 percent) was Independent. This suggests that some Republicans may have voted for Obama, but it was the Independents among collegians who gave him his victory.

Table 3*Politically, Do You Consider Yourself?*

(percent responding)

Independent	39.5
Republican	31.4
Democrat	29.1

All of our past research indicates that Adventists tend to be Republican. In the 2004 study, 54 percent

claimed to be Republican, only 16 percent Democratic, and the remaining 30 percent Independent.

Adventists voted overwhelmingly for Ronald Reagan in 1984. Does our survey of young adults portend a shift in future alliance with political identification and voting behavior? Only time will tell.

Religion and Public Issues

Our interest in this subject, however, is not simply to discover Adventist political thinking. Social scientists of religion attempt to discover how expressions of religion influence various social behaviors, such as family, business, deviance, and, of course, political action. Of our sample, 76 percent claimed that their religious beliefs influenced their voting behavior. Politics and public issues have drawn some of the greatest investigation, especially in election years, when many studies are published in academic journals and books.

One recent example is a book by David Domke and Kevin Coe of the University of Washington, *The God Strategy: How Religion Became a Political Weapon in America*.² The authors discuss the fusion of religion and politics in America and the tendency of faith to be used as a political weapon. For a good Adventist perspective on the relationship, see *Adventism and the American Republic*, by Douglas Morgan, or the Dudley and Hernandez book referenced above.³

Were there special religious issues underlying the recent election? A current article by Albert Menendez and Ed Doerr notes that matters of church and state are important to many voters because they affect society and culture in such broad areas as education, family life, health care and medical ethics, and social welfare. Some of the issues the authors explore are school vouchers, faith-based initiatives, abortion, gay marriage, and selection of U.S. Supreme Court justices.⁴

Importance of Current Issues

We selected nine issues and asked the students to rate their importance from "not important" to "most important." In Table 4, we have combined the top two ratings, "very important" and "most important," and listed the issues in descending order of importance.

Table 4

Current Issues: Very/Most Important
(percent responding)

State of the economy	91.2
Human rights and justice	88.1
Separation of church and state	82.5
The war in Iraq and Afghanistan	70.6
Inflation	68.8
Protecting the environment	65.4
Universal health care	54.7
Appointment of Supreme Court justices	46.4
Constitutional amendment	
Prohibiting same-sex marriages	39.6

effort to save souls for heaven rather than work to make the present world a better place to live. The fact that young educated Adventist adults placed human rights and justice high on the scale of importance (88 percent) may indicate a shift from vertical to horizontal emphases in the Church.

The emphasis on separation of church and state is noteworthy because it trumps areas such as the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, inflation, the environment, and health care. If we look at only the top rating (most important), it even edges out the economy, 44.5 to 43.7 percent.

One of the anomalies of American Adventism is that, although the Church is a leading voice for separation of church and state, the majority of Adventists have identified with the Republican Party and important Republi-



Andrews University students Andre Weston, Andrew Gerard, Ryan Choi, and Ethren Lichtenwalter, the Obama team, await their turn to debate.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

In choosing the state of the economy, students reflected the major concern of voters in the United States at this junction. Exit polls on election day revealed that 62 percent of those who voted—the highest percentage—considered the economy the most important issue. Students share the concern with other citizens because the economy will no doubt affect their ability to get loans and grants and pay college bills.

It may seem surprising that the subject of human rights and justice was placed second on this list since it seems to be a departure from typical Adventist thinking. Although Adventists have taken a leadership role in religious liberty, they have been less involved in other areas, such as civil rights and gender equality.

As for social justice, Adventists have resembled Evangelicals in general, who see the gospel primarily as an

can leaders have sought to bridge that separation in areas such as promotion of partisan candidates from the pulpit, tax support for religious schools, and government support of social services that discriminate in hiring practices and seek to proselytize those whom they serve. Perhaps the results of the survey indicate that the students are seeking less ambiguity.

Although the appointment of Supreme Court justices ranked second to last (only 11 percent of our respondents rated it most important), many thoughtful observers considered it the most important issue in the election. The next president will probably have an opportunity to appoint two or three justices. In the past, several of the current justices have made decisions that erode religious rights—for example, to protect the rights of believers in the workplace to observe their

faith by not needing to work on their holy days. The issue of whether justices will rule strictly on the Constitution or favor individual rights and liberties has deep roots in religious faith and practice.

From the viewpoint of the conservative Religious Right, no issue had more significance this election than constitutional amendments or legislation that prohibit same-sex marriages. Thus, it is probably significant that the students rated this concern last—less than 15 percent for “most important.” About one-third said it was not important at all. I should note that Adventists who consider this issue important probably favor such legislation.

Although our survey did not deal with California’s Proposition 8 (which would restrict marriage to one man and one woman), several Adventists leaders and organizations strongly promoted the measure and urged California Adventists to vote for it. We should note, though that Adventists who did not vote in favor of Proposition 8 or students who did not consider this a major issue do not necessarily approve of same-sex marriage. These Christians may believe that the Bible limits marriage to one man and one woman and that homosexual behavior according to the Bible is a sin. However, they do not believe it is legitimate for government to legislate behavior based in religion or attempt to force the values of a particular religious preference on the general public.

The same is true of the abortion issue. Here the students were asked to state their personal position (Table 5). In considering abortion, most students rejected the extremes of “abortion is entirely the woman’s choice” and “abortion is not acceptable under any conditions” to choose the middle ground: “abortion is acceptable in extreme circumstances such as rape, incest, and threat to the mother’s life.” This stance adheres most closely to the Church’s published guidelines.

Table 5

Views on Abortion

(percent responding)

Abortion is entirely the woman's choice.	29.0
Abortion is acceptable in extreme circumstances such as rape, incest, or threats to the mother's life	52.8
Abortion is not acceptable under any conditions	18.2

Although the collegians take life seriously, they recognize the complexity of the issue and leave it as a gray area. Although we did not ask our respondents whether abortion should be made illegal, we can assume that those who chose the first two options would not support such legislation. Even among the 18 percent who believe abortion is never acceptable, not all may favor a government prohibition since opponents generally use religious reasoning, as noted under same-sex marriage above.

Religious Behaviors and Attitudes

After exploring voting behaviors and attitudes toward current public issues, we turn to the religion of the students. Since non-Adventist students attend Adventist colleges and universities, some have wondered how many of our respondents are members of the Church. We did not directly ask for religious affiliation, but two questions are helpful. Almost 89 percent reported that at least one of their parents was an Adventist sometime during the first twelve years of their life. At least some of the remaining 11 percent may have become members subsequent to that age.

We also asked how long each of the respondents had been a member of the Adventist Church. No one failed to answer this question, and only 5 percent responded that they had belonged to the Church less than one year. We are confident we have captured the views of Seventh-day Adventist college and university students.

Table 6 lists five religious practices and asks how often the respondent participates in each. Options were “seldom or never,” “less than weekly,” “at least weekly,” and “daily under most circumstances.” In the table, we combine the top two—weekly and daily—and show the percentage in that category. Almost nine-tenths pray daily. The percentage drops off somewhat beyond that point, but the 64 percent who study the Bible are more numerous than those found in research for the world church. All in all, these figures indicate that the collegiate group is at least as active in devotional practices and sharing activities as are members of the church-at-large.



PHOTOGRAPH BY HALEY WESLEY

**Question in
the back at PUC
political party.**

Table 6

Weekly/Daily Participation in Religious Activities

(percent responding)

Pray privately	89.3
Study Bible	64.3
Read religious books /journals	49.6
Family worship	40.0
Volunteer work for church	29.4

The students in our survey attend church regularly (Table 7). About 88 percent are present at least 50 percent of the time, and the fact that two-thirds go at least once a week puts students ahead of most church members. Surveys have consistently shown that on average only about 50 percent of most congregations are present on any given Sabbath.

Table 7

Church Attendance

(percent responding)

Rarely or never	5.9
Once every month or two	6.4
Two or three times a month	21.2
At least once a week	66.5

Perhaps because of being away from home congregations and in a collegiate setting, the students are not as active locally. Less than one-fourth (24.4 percent) hold an office or other service position in their home congregations. One of the challenges that youth ministry faces is integration of Adventist college/university graduates into local congregations, where their talent and energy could be a huge plus for those churches.

Religious faith is important to this group, however (Table 8). Notice that 89 percent declared their religious faith either quite important or extremely important. Only about 3 percent said it was not really important. That faith, of course, takes different expressions (Table 9). Asked how they would self-identify their religious orientation, 24 percent were fundamentalist or conservative and 22 percent liberal. The majority (53 percent) took the middle position, or moderate. Notice that this is religious not political orientation. However, much social science research has found a relationship between the two.

Table 8

Importance of Religious Faith

(percent responding)

Not really important	3.1
Somewhat important	7.7
Quite important	24.9
Extremely important	64.3

Table 9*Self-Described Religious Orientation*

(percent responding)

Fundamentalist	1.2
Conservative	23.2
Moderate	53.2
Liberal	22.4

One factor that differentiates religious worldviews is an understanding of the Bible's inspiration. These views may range from the very conservative position of inerrancy, through a position that emphasizes the identification of biblical principles and their application to current situations, to the liberal understanding that places the Bible on the same level as other historical works. We selected an oft-used question from social science and posed it to the students (Table 10).

Table 10*Understanding of Bible Inspiration*

(percent responding)

Actual Word of God, to be taken literally, word for word	11.8
Inspired Word of God; must be interpreted in historical and cultural context	83.3
Ancient books of stories, legends, and moral teachings	5.0

The large majority takes a middle position that respects the integrity of the Word, but recognizes that it came through humans and is not a result of verbal inspiration. This seems to accord most closely with the writings of Ellen White, especially as found in *Selected Messages*, Book 1 and in the *Introduction to The Great Controversy*. Only about 5 percent see the Bible as a purely human document.

Religion and Politics

As noted above, this project is interested in finding out whether variations in religious practice and understanding are related to how an individual may vote or be concerned with various public issues. One way to discover this is through regression analysis. In regression, we take one variable, such as voting intentions, and

correlate it with a number of other variables, such as religious attitudes and practices, called independent variables. Of course, we could do that one at a time, but since there is considerable overlap among the religious variables, we could not tell how voting might relate to the group as a whole.

Regression removes overlap. First, it picks the religious variable that has the highest correlation with the voting variable and enters it into an equation. Then it recalculates and takes the next highest correlation, having removed any overlap between the two. It continues to do this until a certain level of statistical significance is reached. It stops when no other variable can contribute statistically to the equation. Table 11 displays such a regression.

Table 11*Regression on Intention to Vote for McCain or Obama*

Variable	Multiple Correlation	Beta
Religious orientation	.354	.376
College standing	.392	.392
Years as a church member	.405	-.102
Participation in family worship	.415	.096

In Table 11, the dependent variable is the question, "For whom do you plan to vote for in November?" But to sharpen the focus, we removed the "undecided," "other," and "don't plan to vote" options, so we are looking at the choice only between McCain and Obama. The religious variables to choose from are the devotional practices, church attendance, important of faith, religious orientation, and (as a control) certain demographic variables.

This regression is highly significant from a statistical standpoint. But after entering four religious and demographic variables the process is completed. None of the other variables can add anything to the prediction in the presence of these four, although some might if isolated. The multiple correlation rises as each variable is entered until it reaches the maximum of .415. The beta column shows the relative strength of each predictor in the presence of the other three.

Here we notice that religious orientation is by far the best predictor. Since it runs up from fundamentalists to



liberals and the voting plan has McCain and Obama as 1 and 2, we may interpret the results thus: the more the respondent leans toward the liberal side religiously, the more likely the vote for Obama. This wouldn't be surprising if the orientation were political, but the fact that those who are more liberal (and moderate) in religious matters were more likely to vote for Obama opens a new field of thinking and study.

From the second entry, it can be seen that those farther along in college were more likely to vote for Obama. The third predictor is negative. This means that those with fewer years as Adventists are more likely to vote for Obama. Finally, those more regular in family worship lean toward Obama, but this predictor does not add much to the equation.

We did not use the viewpoint of biblical inspiration as a regression predictor because the different options are not arranged in an ascending order. Here, though, we can use a cross tabulation and determine significance by the use of Chi square (Table 12).

Table 12

Voting Intentions and Biblical Inspiration
(percent responding)

Candidate	Word for Word	Interpret in Context	Human Document
McCain	12	87	1
Obama	9	81	10

Since we know how many planned to vote for McCain and Obama, and how many for each candidate picked each of the three options for inspiration, we can construct a six-cell table. The raw figures would be difficult to interpret because each candidate has a different total, so they are changed to percentages and rounded off to the nearest whole percentage. The inspiration options have been abbreviated for space reasons, but the full wording is in Table 10. Now it can be seen that Obama voters were more likely to see the Bible as an old book of stories and McCain's supporters to view it as the actual word of God, to be taken literally, word for word. Of course, the great majority of both sides went for the middle position.

We also did an additional series of nine regressions using current issues as dependent variables and the religious variables as predictors. All nine of these regressions were statistically significant, which means it is highly likely that a relationship does exist. However, in some cases the relationship is so weak as to be of no practical importance. Thus, in the following descriptions, we will report only those where the multiple correlation reaches at least .20.

The first of these deals with the importance of universal health care. Table 13 displays the four significant predictors. Since the beta for gender is negative, men were more likely to place importance on this issue than women. On religious orientation, the more moderate and liberal the students were, the greater the emphasis on health care. That mirrors the political orientation of

congressional representatives. The higher the individuals on the college ladder, the more likely they were to emphasize this issue. Family worship is also a predictor, but a rather weak one.

Table 13

Regression on Importance of Universal Health Care

Variable	Multiple Correlation	Beta
Gender	.153	-.169
Religious orientation	.200	.149
College standing	.231	.112
Participation in family worship	.245	.085

Table 14 shows the relationship of importance of same-sex marriage on the religious variables. Since three of the betas are negative, the interpretation is that those who consider it more important tend to be more conservative religiously (which means they probably oppose it), are males, and take more literal views of Scripture. On the positive beta, they tend to consider their faith more important.

Table 14

Regression on Importance of Prohibition of Same-Sex Marriages

Variable	Multiple Correlation	Beta
Religious orientation	.215	-.154
Importance of religious faith	.238	.087
Gender	.253	-.084
Views on biblical inspiration	.261	-.069

Table 15, which deals with the importance of Supreme Court appointments, contains the most significant predictors of any regression. Among negative relationships, importance is related to conservative religious orientation (linked to the finding on same-sex marriage, this probably means that the respondents favor strict constructionists), sparser church attendance (strange), and holding that religious beliefs influence voting behavior. On the positive side, the students are more advanced in their college program, spend more time

volunteering for church work, are female, and participate more often in family worship.

Table 15

Regression on Importance of Supreme Court Appointments

Variable	Multiple Correlation	Beta
Religious orientation	.142	-.133
College standing	.188	.097
Volunteer church work	.216	.128
Church attendance	.235	-.126
Gender	.245	.076
Religion influences voting behavior	.253	-.064
Family worship	.260	.064

Table 16 presents the regression on the importance of protecting the environment. Those who emphasize this issue tend more to the moderate/liberal side in religious orientation, are farther advanced in their studies, and are more regular in family worship.

Table 16

Regression on Importance of Protecting the Environment

Variable	Multiple Correlation	Beta
Religious orientation	.202	.219
College standing	.218	.077
Participation in family worship	.229	.072

A different and somewhat reverse regression is shown in Table 17. Here we took the question of whether the respondent's religious beliefs influenced voting behavior, correlated it with the nine current issues, and came up with four significant predictors. Those who do make the connection tend to place more emphasis on the subjects of abortion, separation of church and state, and laws to prohibit same-sex marriage. However, they place less emphasis on inflation.

Table 17*Religious Beliefs Influence Voting Behavior*

Issue	Multiple Correlation	Beta
Views on abortion	.180	-.154
Separation of church and state	.202	-.089
Prohibit same-sex marriage	.218	-.092
Inflation	.230	.073

We don't know which side the respondents take in these issues, but the inclusion of abortion and same-sex marriage suggests that they oppose them. If so, it is rather curious that the response also emphasizes separation of church and state. However, past research on religion and politics has shown that humans are not necessarily logical; they sometimes choose options that are logically incompatible.

For the interest of readers, we have included tables on certain demographic variables, such as length of time as an Adventist (Table 18), college standing (Table 19), and ethnic background (Table 20). Also, our sample was 57 percent female, a little less than the percentage of women Adventist members in the North American Division, which was recently reported at 62 percent. We have not attempted to provide breakdowns of questions on these demographic groups because we lacked time and space. Also, our commitment to the colleges and universities that granted us permission to survey their students prevents us from reporting results by institution.

Table 18*Time as Member of Adventist Church*

(percent responding)

Less than one year	5.3
1 to 5 years	6.8
6 to 10 years	13.3
More than 11 years	74.6

Table 19*College Standing*

(percent responding)

Freshman	20.2
Sophomore	17.6
Junior	20.1
Senior or fifth year	28.4
Graduate Student	13.7

Table 20*Ethnic Background*

(percent responding)

Asian/Pacific Islander	8.6
Black, African American	4.2
Black, West Indian	3.2
Hispanic	13.5
White	59.7
Multiracial	7.4
Other	3.4

Conclusions

Seventh-day Adventists in the United States have typically considered themselves conservative, especially on values issues. Since the Republican Party has assumed the mantle of conservatism, especially since the presidency of Ronald Reagan, Adventists have tended to think of themselves as Republicans and vote for Republican candidates. Conservatives have especially advocated "family values" such as heterosexual marriage and respect for life—values dear to the Adventist heart.

This survey may indicate that younger, well-educated Adventists are beginning to move away from this position. Our participants are still more likely to be Republican than Democrat, but the larger number see themselves as Independents and the majority planned to vote for Obama, who is considered one of the most liberal U.S. senators. This indicates a change already bringing out cries of distress from some of the Church's conservative members. Much research in the past, however, has shown that college education has a liberalizing effect, so such a trend might not be too surprising.

This movement is seen not only in the voting statistics but also in the emphasis placed on important current issues that have religious implications. Although some of the students remain quite conservative, more are interested in broader concerns such as human rights and justice and separation of church and state than in more specific moral issues such as abortion and homosexual marriage.

For those who worry that the younger generation is losing the "historic faith," this survey should set minds at ease. Adventist students hold their faith to be very

important, they attend church at least as regularly as their elders, and they are quite diligent in prayer and Bible study. They tend to be moderate rather than extremist in their religious understandings, and they take a balanced view of biblical inspiration in line with the Church's most authentic teachings.

We have not found strong relationships between political voting and attitudes toward public issues with religious variables on many of the issues, but there were enough to draw some conclusions, even though they fall far short of completely explaining the variance. Basically, those whose religious orientation tends toward moderate/liberal tended to favor Obama, have a less literal understanding of the interpretation of Scriptures, and care more about universal health care. They also tend to be less concerned about Supreme Court appointments and prohibiting same-sex marriages, more concerned about protecting the environment, and farther along in their studies. In a word, respondents who were more moderate religiously were also more moderate politically. ■

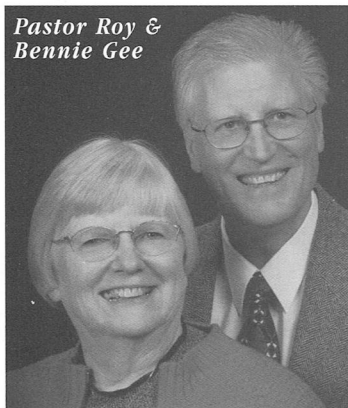
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2. David Domke and Kevin Coe, *The God Strategy: How Religion Became a Political Weapon in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).
3. Douglas Morgan, *Adventism and the American Republic* (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 2001).
4. Albert J. Menendez and Edd Doerr, "Church-State 08," *Liberty*, Nov./Dec., 2008.

Roger L. Dudley is professor emeritus of Christian ministry and director of the Institute of Church Ministry at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. He thanks Bonnie Dwyer for her support, Jonathan Pichot for constructing the Web site and collecting the responses, and Petr Cincala for doing statistical analyses.

"Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brothers to live together in unity!"
PSALM 133:1

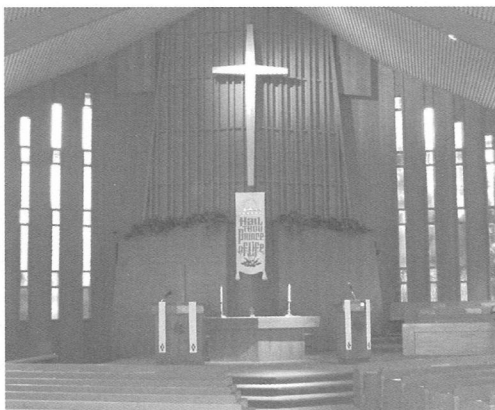
**Pastor Roy &
Bennie Gee**



Auburn Gospel Fellowship

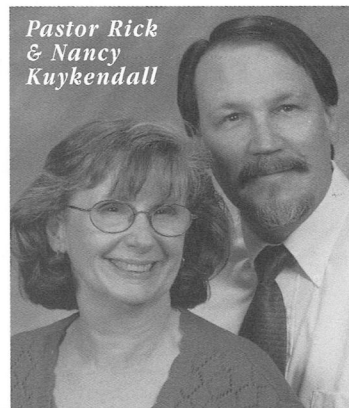
*"A Safe Place for
God's Grace"*

10:45 a.m. Sabbath



710 Auburn Ravine Road,
Auburn, CA 95603 | 530.885.9087

**Pastor Rick
& Nancy
Kuykendall**



First Congregational Church of Auburn

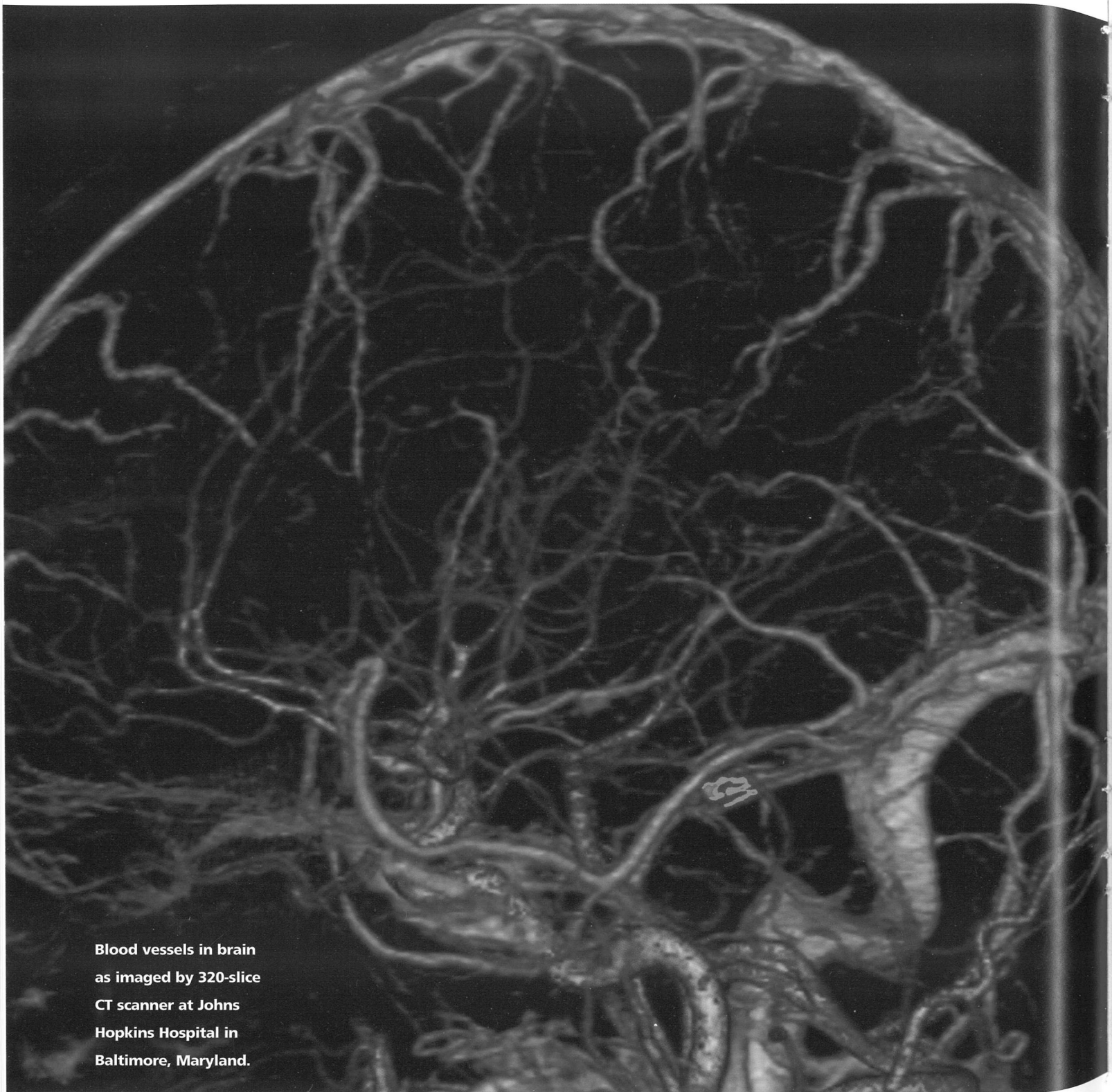
*"Striving to be an Enlightened
Christian Community"*

10:00 a.m. Sunday



Two Congregations . . . One Holy Church

FREEDOM



Blood vessels in brain
as imaged by 320-slice
CT scanner at Johns
Hopkins Hospital in
Baltimore, Maryland.

Modern Neuroscience

and the Notion of Freedom | BY SIGVE K. TONSTAD

"Do we believe that there is such a thing as death?" Socrates asks his friend and student Simmias in *Phaedo*, Plato's last installment in his account of the trial and death of Socrates.

"To be sure," replies Simmias.

"And is this anything but the separation of soul and body?" Socrates continues. "And being dead is the attainment of this separation when the soul exists in herself, and is parted from the body and the body is parted from the soul—that is death?"

"Exactly, that and nothing else," Simmias replies.¹

Simmias is neither the most notorious nor the least wide awake among "the submissive yes-men given Socrates in the Platonic canon," but he deserves to rank quite high on the list.²

Engaging and entertaining as are the dialogues of Plato, the only philosopher who succeeds in making his philosophy into readable literature, we should not miss that the partner in the conversation makes it easy for Socrates. His students do not ask hard questions, and they often acquiesce to the answers of their master even though the teacher's arguments in favor of a position are less than compelling. This instance is no exception.

Is death anything "but the separation of soul and body?" we hear Socrates ask.

"Exactly," Simmias answers, "that and nothing else."

What else could death be—other than the separation of the soul from the body? What possibilities might be lurking in the reassuring circumscription, "that and nothing else"? Well, death could be the definitive curtain call. It could be that when the last viable neuron fires its last action potential, the last quivering salvo, the human self is at an end. Death could be a lot more—and a lot more serious—than what Socrates suggests and what Simmias supports.

I wish to begin here and to make this my first point because it is myopic to consider a monist, materialist, "physics-all-the-way-down" account of neuroscience the dominant view of the human person. A monist position of any kind has been relatively rare in the history of ideas; it remains a minority view even in our science-dominated era, and it is likely to remain a minority view for a long time to come.

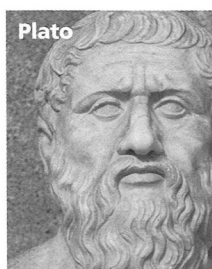
Any perceived threat to personhood and the notion of free will must take into consideration that dualism remains the dominant paradigm not only by the momentum of tradition but also because a dualist view is seen to offer philosophical advantages and perhaps even to have significant explanatory power for contested scientific evidence.

The alleged advantage in our time of the dualist position, it should be noted, relates to the issue of human freedom.³ Beginning long before Socrates and Plato but articulated with great skill and persuasiveness by these founding fathers in the history of human thought, the notion that the soul is independent of the body has prevailed—from the Greek Plato (427–347 B.C.) to the Jewish Philo (20 B.C.–50 A.D.), from the Jewish Philo to the Christian Origen (185–254), and

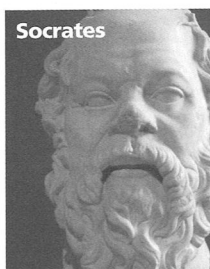


PET scanners can detect metabolically active areas of the brain.

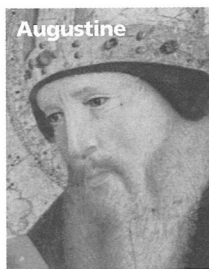
PHOTO BY JEFF MILLER



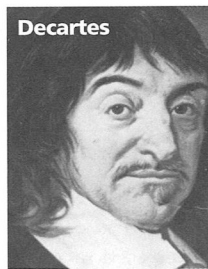
Plato



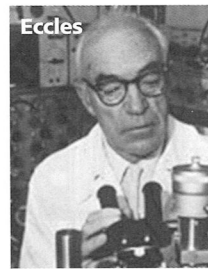
Socrates



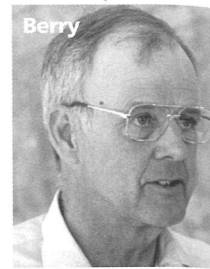
Augustine



Descartes



Eccles



Berry

from Origen and many others by way of Augustine (354–430) into the mental constitution of Christian thought.

When it seemed that the dualist outlook was receding, it received a new lease on life by Descartes (1596–1650). Dualism is held as a viable and preferred option today, re-energized by leading scientists in the twentieth century such as Sir Karl Popper (1902–1994) and Sir John Eccles (1903–97).⁴ It came as no small surprise to me to discover that the author of one of the textbooks my class used in neuroscience in medical school at Loma Linda University, John C. Eccles, argues for a dualist solution. To Eccles, a dualist view squares with neuroscientific evidence, with a modern understanding of personhood, and with the notion of free will.⁵

A recent article by Derek De Ridder and others in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, demonstrating PET correlation of brain activity in a subject that was having an out-of-body experience as part of his medical treatment for intractable tinnitus, will not significantly alter the balance of power between a monist and a dualist anthropology even though the out-of-body experience in this case is shown to be an in-the-body reality.⁶

If our subject leads us to believe that a monist, materialist, and reductive view of the human person is becoming the dominant view or the view that should concern us the most, we may not be barking up the wrong tree, but we are barking up a relatively minor tree in the history of ideas.

The Resilience of the Dualist Conceptual Framework

The legacy of dualism controls the conceptual and terminological framework even when we try to portray the indivisibility of the human person. The territory left to dualism may be shrinking, but even in circles with monist leanings a dualist conceptual residue persists. We continue to talk about soul *and* body, mind *and*

brain, mental *and* physical, inner *and* outer, higher *and* lower even though, in a monist outlook, this terminology accommodates a precarious duality where there is unity and indivisibility.

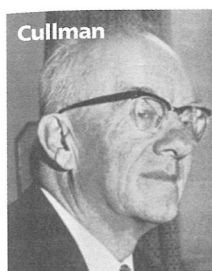
Gilbert Ryle's critique of the conceptual framework we use in order to describe the mind-brain relationship deserves to be read and re-read from time to time as a way to think through this issue, as does the less well-known work on this subject by a man dear to me, Carsten A. Johnsen.⁷

Roger Sperry decries dualism while he extols "mentalism," but he leaves the reader wondering what he means by mentalism.⁸ Sperry claims that he is a monist, but John Eccles thinks that Sperry is a dualist. Wendell Berry, seeing a dualist outlook thriving as evidenced by our neglect of the body and the earth, marks this off as the enduring anthropological flash point of Western thought. "[The] separation of the soul from the body and from the world is not a disease of the fringe, no aberration, but a fracture that runs through the mentality of institutional religion like a geologic fault," writes Berry.⁹

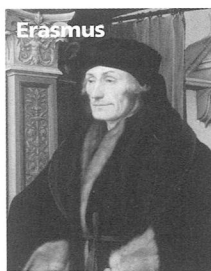
Science may be encroaching on the territory of religion on this point, but it is far from certain that science will win the conceptual turf war. Indeed, taking Descartes and Kant as examples, it is more likely that religion will prevail and is prevailing, safely ensconced in the impregnable fortress of dualism. Taking one's eyes off what happens in the realm of religion in order to address the challenge posed by neuroscience, therefore, may be to take one's eyes off the ball that is in the real game and to pursue a distraction.

In the meantime, says Berry, perceiving dualism as a constant in religion, "this rift in the mentality of religion continues to characterize the modern mind, no matter how secular or worldly it becomes."¹⁰

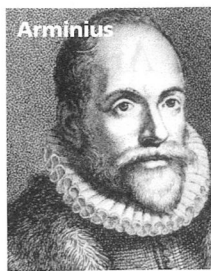
Christianity converted to a dualist anthropology under the influence of Plato, Philo, and the Church Fathers, but this conversion could hardly have hap-



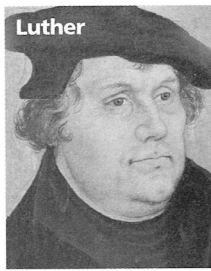
Cullman



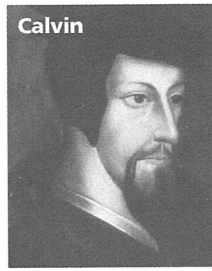
Erasmus



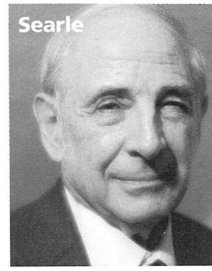
Arminius



Luther



Calvin



Searle

pened without the beguiling influence of Plato.

Is death “anything but the separation of soul and body?” Socrates asks.

“Exactly, that and nothing else,” says Simmias.¹¹ And the entire world, especially the Christian world, said, “Amen!”

In fact, when Oscar Cullmann in his Ingersoll Lecture at Harvard University in 1955 declared that the New Testament sees the human person as an indivisible unity, staking its hope on the resurrection of the body and not on the immortality of the soul, he was deluged with hate mail from Christians who accused him of undermining one of the verities of the Christian faith.¹²

Cullmann’s comparison between the death of Socrates and the death of Jesus, albeit flawed, remains a stroke of genius. If dualism seems to offer philosophical advantages for the notion of free will, as suggested by a great neuroscientist like Eccles and supported by a great philosopher of science like Popper, it is hard to see it as anything other than the advantage offered by an illusion.

Even if a monist view is seen as a view that opens the door to determinism, and even if models of neuroscience are perceived as threats to the notion of freedom, we should think twice before calling dualist anthropology to the rescue. In my view, and I wish I could be more subtle, dualism cannot be the cure because dualism, viewing it equally from the point of view of theology, philosophy, history, or even science, is better seen as the disease.

Proclaiming Free Will with Modesty

As a third point, there are weighty reasons to identify with a theological tradition that runs through Pelagius (ca. 354–418), Erasmus (1466–1536), and Arminius (1560–1609) on the subject of human freedom—more than with Augustine (354–430), Martin Luther (1483–1546), and John Calvin (1509–64). Still, we should be careful not to have too much distance between us and the latter three.

Compared to Pelagius, Augustine is psychologically more profound, and he is pastorally the more realistic and nurturing of the two.¹³ Compared to Erasmus, Luther’s raw polemic is not only far more in earnest than the analytical and detached polish of his opponent. Luther is also psychologically superior and existentially more compelling even where Erasmus wins on points in matters of logic.¹⁴ For those who find the discrepancy between what is and what ought to be in one’s life a source of ongoing vexation, it is not a defeat to lend one’s ear to Augustine and Luther’s perception of the human predicament.

Let the debacle of New York governor Elliot Spitzer in 2008 serve as a case in point. “There but for the grace of God go I,” we say, wishing to identify with the person who goes there and yet also wishing to make it clear that that person is not I. The shorter version would be simply to say, There go I, and to mean it, recognizing that the notion of freedom operates in murky psychological territory, that the plight of other people is my plight, too, and that we have not lost our dignity by paying tribute to Augustine or Luther.

I said this openly to my wife when the Spitzer scandal broke, and she, at least, did not disagree.

Personhood and Materiality

Finally, is it physics all the way down, as Daniel Jiang asks? (page 41). Is the notion of free will an illusion now that neuroscience is demanding to be heard over the voices of philosophers and theologians? The notion of choice is at the very least a reality of human experience.

One great thinker on the subject, John Searle, says that even if we imagine a straight line from physics to neuroscience, the sense that we have a choice in a given situation will persist no matter what neuroscience says.¹⁵ The entire edifice of civilization and our most basic notions of civilized behavior rest on



Computer monitors display imaged data from a functional magnetic resonance scanner. Opposite page: brain scans.

the conviction that human beings do have a choice and that it is right to call us to account for what we do. It will be a tall order to overturn this conviction and the institutions that sustain it.

More to the point, there is no straight line from physics to the brain, as even a monist like Gilbert Ryle points out.¹⁶ Carl F. Craver urges that the complexity of the brain utterly defies an explanatory method that envisions a straight line from what happens on the level of simple physics to what happens in the neuron and what happens when millions of neurons talk to each other.¹⁷

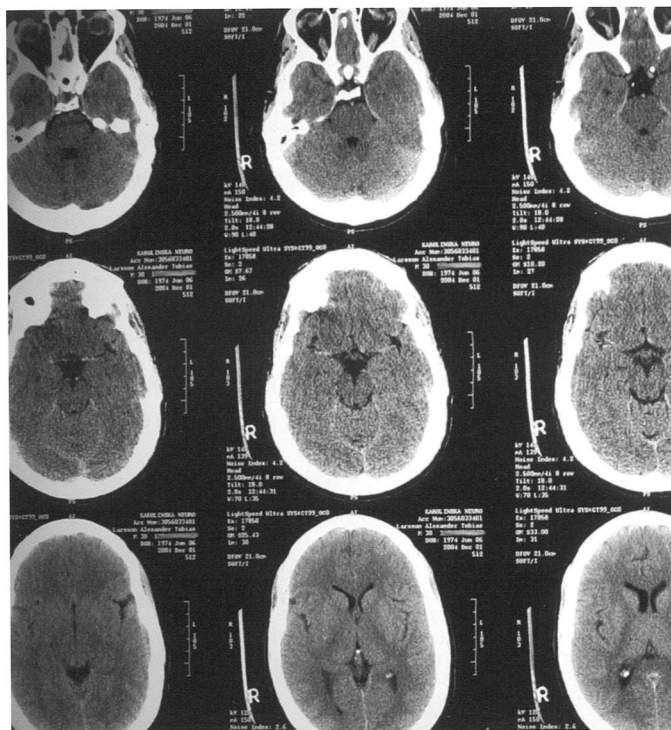
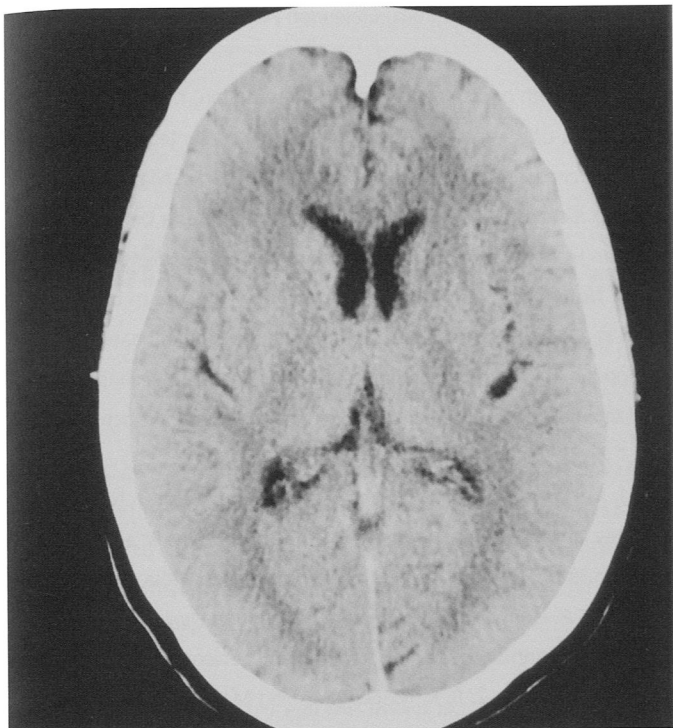
Neither the understanding of the action potential nor the understanding of long-term potentiation of memory on the level of the synapse has turned out to have adequate descriptive or explanatory power. Reduction does not work as a model; it is forced to yield to a mosaic view as a model of the unity of neuroscience.

"Unfortunately," says Craver in his discussion of attempts to simplify the complexity, "the pleasure of understanding is often indistinguishable from the pleasure of misunderstanding."¹⁸ What he means, I suppose, is that the pleasure of understanding that comes to the person who understands the level simple physics will subtly mutate into the pleasure of misunderstanding when he or she tries to apply this understanding to what happens on the level of the brain.

Even as we admit that the complexity of the brain vastly exceeds our ability to comprehend it, what do we see when we look at the brain? Hodgkin and Huxley described the action potential that in its simplest form triggers the release of neurotransmitters at the level of the synapse, but only 10–20 percent of action potentials lead to release events. John Eccles demonstrated a system precariously balanced between excitation and inhibition not only on the level of individual neurons but also on the level of modules linked in an infinitely complex circuitry.

What is this, however, but a marvelous structure enabling a Yes or a No, a decision to go ahead or a decision to desist, placing a red light and a green light before the inner eye of conscience, to put it in dualist terms? What is the brain if not a physical structure scintillating with options, an organ housing an orgy of thoughts and desires, at the core of which, in this acknowledged inferno of firing neurons and chemical weapons of mass opportunity and mass destruction, lies the possibility of making real decisions?¹⁹

If this view holds up, what is all the way down in the realm of neuroscience is a word that begins with "p," but the word is not *physics*. The other word that begins with "p," and the better word, is *personhood*. It is personhood all the way down, and it is personhood all the way back to the beginning.²⁰ Personhood in this



sense may not best be described as an emergent property of the human constitution, as has been suggested of late, either in the sense of a property hovering over the circuitry of the human brain or as a late phenomenon in the chain of evolution.²¹

Searle, who finds it easier to account for the subjective experience of freedom than to demonstrate that a human being is truly free, says "evolution has given us a form of voluntary action where we experience freedom, that is to say, the experience of the sense of alternative possibilities, is built into the very structure of conscious, voluntary, intentional human behaviour."²²

This sense of freedom, I suppose, might qualify as an emergent property of human personality, but this is not what personhood means in the paradigm I am trying to sketch, and, as Searle admits, it does not make the case that we are truly free. Personhood on the human level mirrors instead the personhood of the Creator, who has configured personhood in and through the materiality of the human frame.

With recourse to Creation and to the personhood of the Creator, a monist view of the human person need not fear the prospect of determinism. We hear the echo of personhood in Genesis, catching only the last argument of the original discussion. The subject of discussion, we recognize, is human beings, and we sense that there are arguments for and against allow-

ing such beings to come into existence. Will it be Yes or No, to go ahead or to desist; will it be the red light or the green light?

Perhaps I read into this text suspense that is not there; perhaps my misreading is rather that I underestimate the suspense that is there. What will it be, the sense of suspense aside? It will be Yes; it will be the green light, as the text makes clear. "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness" (Gen. 1:26).

In the light of this conception, perceiving that the choice made at the level of the decision-making Creator is to become manifest also on the human level, determinism is not a threat. Within the biblical framework it is personhood, not physics, all the way down. ■

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Sigve K. Tonstad is assistant professor of religion and biblical studies in the School of Religion at Loma Linda University, and a physician.

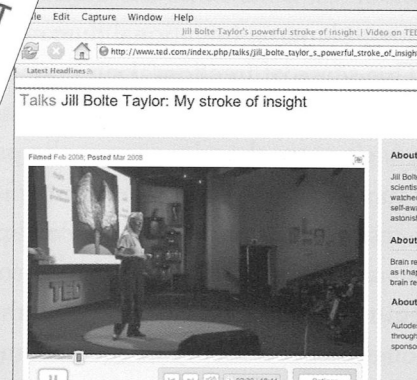
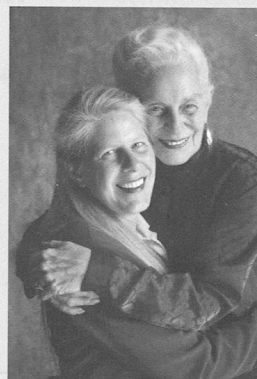
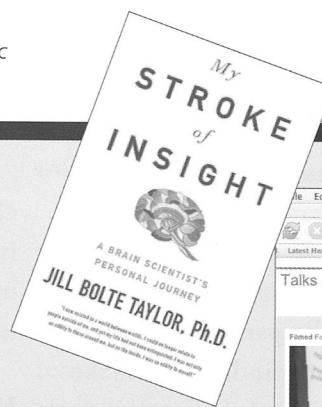
A Neuroanatomist Finds Peace on the Right Side of the Brain

When Jill Bolte Taylor suffered a stroke in 1996, the first thought that flashed through her mind was, "This is so cool."

Only a brain research scientist would find a stroke to be "cool." But it provided Taylor with new insights about the brain. She literally watched herself lose the ability to walk, talk, read, write or recall any of her life. After surgery and a long recovery that stretched over eight years she slowly regained all those left-brain functions such as reading. But she also gained new appreciation for the right brain.

In the book that she wrote about her experience, critics have praised many things including "her fearless mapping of the physiology of compassion."

"I realized that the blessing I had received from this experience was the knowledge that deep internal peace is accessible to anyone at any time. . . ." she wrote, "My stroke of insight would be: Peace is only a thought away, and all we have to do to access it is silence the voice of our dominating left mind." ■



Left: Jill Bolte Taylor's book, "My Stroke of Insight;" below left, with her mother, Gladys Gillman Taylor, Ph.D., and below right: the "Stroke of Insight" video on TED.

Physics All the Way Down | BY DANIEL GIANC

Jane Seymour, the American actress who played television's *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*, almost died in real life from a severe allergic reaction to penicillin. Here is how she describes the experience:

*I literally left my body. I had this feeling that I could see myself on the bed, with people grouped around me. I remember them all trying to resuscitate me. I was above them, in the corner of the room looking down. I saw people putting needles in me, trying to hold me down, doing things. I remember my whole life flashing before my eyes, but I wasn't thinking about winning Emmys or anything like that. The only thing I cared about was that I wanted to live because I did not want anyone else looking after my children. I was floating up there thinking, "No, I don't want to die. I'm not ready to leave my kids." And that was when I said to God, "If you're there, God, if you really exist and I survive, I will never take your name in vain again."*¹

Popular culture has come to expect such experiences with survival from cardiac arrest. Apparently, up to 5 percent of American adults say they have experienced a "near-death experience." Most Christians rejoice that such phenomena provide evidence of things hoped for in the hereafter. As often occurs, Seventh-day Adventists sulk.

Adventists espouse wholism (as opposed to dualism). Rather than seeing humans comprised of two distinct and separable components—a mortal body and an immortal soul—Adventists understand Genesis 2:7 in the more Hebraic way: that a living soul is comprised of the dust of the earth enlivened by God's breath. Thus, as media reports of near-death experiences surfaced in the late 1970s, the late Jack Provonsha, an Adventist physician and theologian at Loma

Linda University, fearlessly predicted that science would eventually find neural circuits that underlie this experience in a naturalistic manner.²

Adventists again find themselves arguing against most conservative Christians in favor of positions taken by atheists or, at best, very liberal Christians.

Provonsha will smile one day when he reads a case recently published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that confirms his prediction. (The fact that the prestigious journal actually published a report of a single case indicates how seriously the scientific community views near-death experiences.)

The case involves a Swiss patient who had a neural stimulator implanted in his brain as a radical treatment for tinnitus (ringing of the ears). Each time the stimulator was turned on, the patient experienced the classic near-death sensation of floating outside the body. Positron emission tomography (PET) scanning demonstrated activation of the right angular-supramarginal gyrus and superior temporal gyrus during these experiences. Rather than being evidence of the soul or the afterlife, it may turn out that the sensation of floating outside the body is all in the brain.³

Findings like this have spurred the development of a new discipline called *neurotheology*. Aldous Huxley coined the term in his 1962 novel, *Island*, but the field itself did not take shape until the early 1990s. As neuroscientists explored how the brain produces various types of thoughts or behaviors, they also studied religious (usually mystical) experiences. PET, single photon emission computed tomography (SPECT), and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) studies have ascertained which



**Tibetan
Monks of
Drepung
Loseling
Monastery.**

parts of the brain become activated during prayer or meditation, the frontal cortex being among them.

This seems to have an ecumenical quality because Franciscan nuns and Tibetan monks use the same areas. Other parts of the brain are activated when people consider moral dilemmas (mesial frontal cortex). Paul Zak, adjunct professor at Loma Linda University, has demonstrated that use of oxytocin can influence the amount of trust a subject has.⁴ One could foresee an unscrupulous evangelist spraying oxytocin into the air as the organ softly plays "Just as I Am" one more time.

A naturalistic explanation for these findings might suggest that humans conceived of the supernatural from the activity of these brain centers. The putative evolutionary advantage such irrational beliefs provide for individual organisms or the species might include community bonding, bravery in the face of death, or perhaps a mechanism of ordering the observable world.

Many religious people view this entire line of inquiry as one more example of misguided "scientism," by which they mean that, although science produces wonderful antibiotics, other forms of truth have validity independent of science. Such people say, "Keep your neurosciences, just gimme that old time religion!"

That works for most Christians, but I work in the neurosciences. Thus, I find myself wondering (along

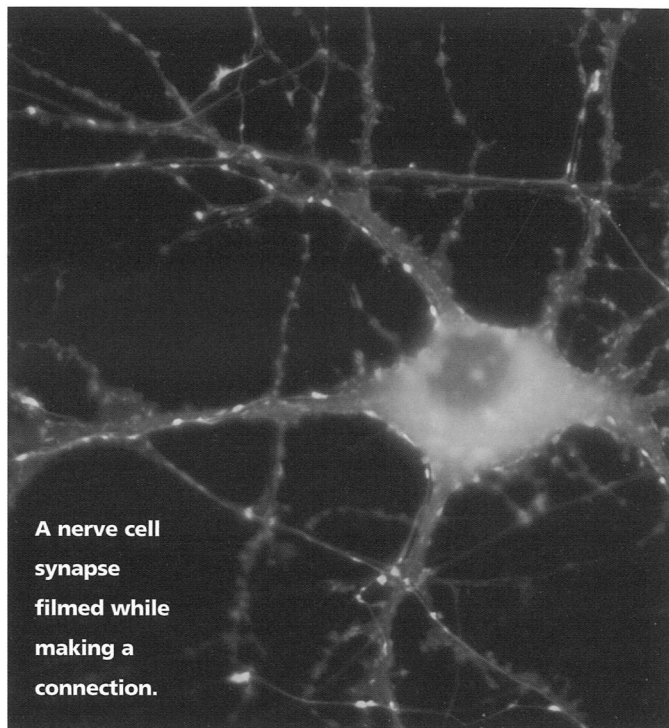
with Hindus, Buddhists, and Mormons who create Web sites devoted to neurothology) what the neurosciences tell us about ourselves and God.

For me, neurobiology poses even more fundamental issues than the part of Jane Seymour's brain that produced the sensation of her floating above her body. I want to know what made her think of God. Did she choose to promise God she would keep the Third Commandment rather than the Second or Fourth? Did she have a choice?

I still believe that God values nothing higher than the free will of his creatures. In fact, given my upbringing in a tradition that flows from Jacob Arminius to John and Charles Wesley to Joseph Bates and James and Ellen White to Richard Rice, it is hard for me to envision how I could believe anything else.

To be precise, the free will I grew up believing was libertarian free will. I could choose between the spineless, pinko George McGovern or our communist-fighting, all-American president Richard Nixon. I could choose my career: law or medicine. I could choose to be Chinese or American—at least as far as my culture went. Free choice represented such a sacred gift from God that I questioned whether physicians should

Turtles, all the way down.



A nerve cell synapse filmed while making a connection.

tamper with it by giving medications that might alter a person's choice.

This quandary abruptly ended in August 1981 during my first clinical rotation as a junior medical student. On 2SE of the Veteran's Affairs Hospital, I met Mr. Mosley. Mosley had dementia and sat strapped into a geriatric chair all day screaming for help. Sometimes he even punched at or bit his caregivers. This went on for days until the attending physician, Don Miller, told the residents to give Mosely methylphenadate (Ritalin).

Methylphenadate is a psychostimulant that "wakes up" the brain—in particular, the frontal lobes. By the next morning, Mosley sat bright eyed in bed, smiling and pleasant. Before we rotated off service, my classmate, Lyle Helm, who was assigned to Moseley, brought his newlywed wife to the ward to meet him. "What's the secret of a long, happy marriage?" asked Lyle.

Mosley gave a mischievous grin and replied, "Love the dickens out of them!"

In addition to gaining valuable marital advice from Mosley, I acquired other insights from his case that helped me develop into a neurologist. Although medications may not actually heal the damage done by disease, they can mitigate or exacerbate behaviors. For me, Moseley's case completely removed any hesitation I had about my helping patients live better through chemistry.

One typical case occurred during my behavioral neurology fellowship. One of my multiple sclerosis patients, Brian Johnson, had a different problem. Johnson was a small-town entrepreneur with a mild case of MS. He had a monopoly on car sales in a rural county of upstate New York.

Johnson's hair-trigger temper had grown problematic. An employee would commit an error in the morning and Johnson would fly off the handle and fire him. Then, over lunch, he would realize he had just fired his best mechanic and would beg him to come back to work. Usually, the mechanic would agree to do so—for a raise. An astute businessman whose goal was to retire by the age of fifty, Johnson decided that something needed to be done immediately.

I recognized his problem as typical of a condition that many MS patients experience called emotional lability or pseudobulbar affect. It results from the emotional centers of the brain (limbic system) becoming disconnected from the judgment centers in the frontal lobes. Without any compunction, I prescribed a low dose of sertraline (Zoloft, a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor) and asked him to return in six weeks.

"So, how is the temper problem going?" I asked him when he returned.

"It's great," Johnson replied. "I haven't fired anyone or

yelled at anyone. I haven't told the employees I am taking Zoloft. They keep asking me if I've gotten religion."

In fact, Johnson had not gotten religion. Instead of working for a lifetime to overcome his temper, as John Wesley might have advised, he had achieved the same behavioral result by taking a molecule that slows neuronal reabsorption of serotonin from the synapse.

The synapse is the gap between the end of one neuron and the beginning of the next. When a nerve impulse (action potential) reaches the end of one neuron, it releases packets of chemicals called neurotransmitters, such as serotonin, dopamine, or acetylcholine. These molecules diffuse across the gap of the synapse (through Brownian motion) and stimulate receptors on the next neuron's dendrite. The second neuron adds the excitatory and inhibitory influences from many neurons.

If there are not enough excitatory stimuli to reach the firing threshold, the neuron does not fire. If there are enough excitatory stimuli to trigger the neuron, it fires. Potassium rushes out of the neuron and the nerve impulse races down the nerve, past the cell body and along the axon to the next synapse. Sodium enters to equilibrate the cell's charge. Then the neuron pumps sodium out and potassium in to reset for the next possible discharge.

This sequence is illustrated by muscle stretch reflexes, such as when a physician taps a patient's knee with a reflex hammer. Muscle stretch receptors trigger a sensory neuron to discharge. This neuron synapses in the spinal cord onto a motor neuron. The second neuron travels to the quadriceps muscle in the leg and results in the knee extending briefly. This completes a simple reflex arc.

The exact same sequences occur inside the brain, albeit within a tremendously more complex wiring diagram. This results in more complex and subtle results. However, essentially the same chemical and electrical processes underlie the two-neuron reflex arc of a knee jerk reflex as every thought, movement, or subconscious motivation from our brains. Everything that we think, will, or do results from neurotransmitters that influence neurons to fire or not fire. The brain operates on the principles of chemistry and physics.

Even before we think a thought, neurons that lead

to a conscious thought or decision are already firing. This fact is not entirely counterintuitive.

One Sabbath, our family was hiking in the mountains of Southern California with me in the lead. Suddenly, I found myself back about five feet from where I had been walking, my hands out like a crossing guard in front of my two sons. I did not choose this action. I certainly did not analyze the situation, thinking,

A snake is crossing the path directly under where I am about to put my right foot. The snake has a diamond-shaped head and is rattling its tail like a rattlesnake. Rattlesnakes are poisonous and a bite would be painful and inconvenient. Although the snake may have difficulty striking me because it is stretched out, I would be prudent not to put my right foot down on top of it. I should also take precautions to prevent my kids, who carry some of my genetic material, from putting themselves at risk.

Instead, "reflexively," we say, my left leg propelled me backward. Only afterward did I reconstruct the reason I had jumped.

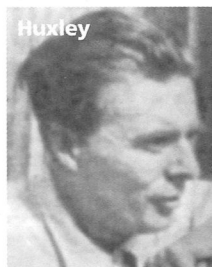


A western
diamondback
rattlesnake.

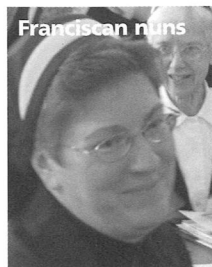
The scientific validation of this involves routine phenomena known to every neurologist. Before a person moves an arm, the electroencephalogram will show *mu* rhythm over the prefrontal cortex on the opposite side. When *mu* rhythm appears, an alert electroencephalogram technologist will ask the patient to move the opposite arm and the *mu* disappears. In neuropsychological experiments, *mu* rhythm is termed "Bereitschaftspotential" or "readiness potential."



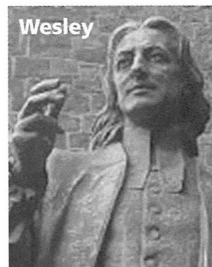
Seymour



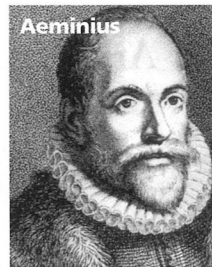
Huxley



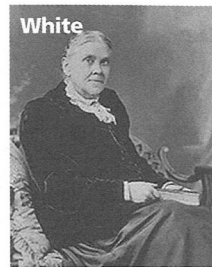
Franciscan nuns



Wesley



Aeminius



White

In one series of experiments, scientists asked subjects to move either their left or right arms randomly while watching a clock. The subjects were instructed to recall the exact time they decided which arm to move. Scientists discovered that the *mu* activity on the opposite side of the brain appeared before the subject had "decided" which arm to move. Although the original experiments suggested that the readiness potential appeared fractions of a second prior to the "conscious" decision, more recent experiments using fMRI suggest that the brain is active seconds prior to the subject making a "conscious" decision.⁵ Thus, even though the subjects "consciously" made a choice of which arm to move, the brain had already determined what that choice might be. This is not surprising if one recalls that all brain activity relies upon one neuron acting upon another.

Genetics or the environment influence complex nonconscious "decisions" commonly enough that we frequently joke about them. We speak of "becoming" our parents. After I "chose" chemistry as my college major, I realized that I had made the same choice as my father and both of my uncles. This pattern continued when four other male cousins in a row also chose to become chemistry majors. The youngest male cousin in our generation broke this pattern when he chose computer science, but my oldest son is majoring in biochemistry.

Whether it is genetic or environmental factors that account for "the apple not falling far from the tree" is not the issue. Both are involved, but genetics may be more involved than we usually suspect. Many of my oldest son's mannerisms mimic those of my father, whom he hardly knew. Identical twins raised in different families often choose the same career, marry the same type of spouse, and demonstrate spiritual interests to the same degree.

As for environmental influences, we all know of songs getting "stuck" in our heads even when we con-

sciously want them to stop. The entire marketing industry is based on the fact that environmental stimuli influence behavior. For example, Pepsi touts studies showing that most of us prefer the taste of Pepsi in blinded taste comparisons. However, most of us actually buy Coke when given the choice. Furthermore, studies of identical twins raised in different homes suggest that religious practices such as church attendance depend more on the environment than genetics.

In fact, one cannot pinpoint where a brain can actually make a decision. Remember, all such activity consists of one neuron firing or not firing based on the aggregation of previous neurons firing or not firing. It does not occur within the neuron, where the potential for firing or not firing is based on relative amounts of polarization or depolarization. It does not occur within the synapses, where transmission relies on the number of neurotransmitters in the synapse. Science writer Dennis Overbye describes this scenario as "physics all the way down."⁶

Overbye refers to an old joke. It seems that an astronomer goes to a remote village to describe the wonders of the solar system. A man comes up after her presentation and says, "I cannot understand this thing you call gravity. We believe the entire world exists on the back of a giant turtle. That, I can understand."

"But on what does the turtle stand?" asks the scientist. "Upon another, even larger turtle," the man replies. "And that turtle," persists the scientist, "upon what does it stand?"

"I see what you are getting at," the man retorts. "But, it isn't gravity. It's turtles all the way down!"

Overbye's point is that neurophysiology has been

Continued on page 78...

JOURNEYS— SOUTH OF THE RIO GRANDE

An Interview with a Chilean Artist



Editor's Note: The art of Francisco Badilla Briones first appeared on the *Spectrum* Web site in September 2008. His moving portrait of Christ's face on the Cross caught the attention of readers beyond the Café Hispano regulars.

A quick check of his Web site <www.franciscobadilla.com> shows the range of this talented painter. There are abstracts, murals, and several different depictions of Christ. One of the murals depicts *The Return*. Created in 2007 for the Central Hall at the Brainstorm School in Temuco, Chile, *The Return* is a reinterpretation of that classic painting by Fred Collins featured in *The Bible Story* books by Arthur Maxwell. It has shaped the imaginations of Adventists from the day it was printed in 1957.

When we decided to use Badilla's art on the cover of this issue, Ruben Sanchez, a regular contributor to Café Hispano on the *Spectrum* Web site, interviewed Badilla about some of his other paintings.



Sanchez: What is your understanding of your picture, *Space and Time*?

Briones: This work symbolizes Christ. It is a very material painting, with a lot of texture that represents Christ in his corporeal nature and his role as

mediator between God and humans.

Hegel suggested that art is an intermediary between the matter and the idea; here I have tried to make a work with a lot of carnality, but make it abstract and symbolic at the same time.

Q: How can art help us transcend our own space-time limitations and help us sense God in relation to concepts like the eternal, and his omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence?

A: First, we need to take time to appreciate art, to dialogue with it. In order to do this, we need an aesthetic experience that allows us to rejoice in the Lord. Art, in its symbolic language and its polysemy, opens our perception toward a better comprehension of God.

The same should happen when we hear a piece of sacred music and enjoy the experience as something that was made for God's praise.

Q: Why did you divide the picture into two parts?

A: This is a diptych that represents two episodes in Christ's life, death, and resurrection. The little one on the right has colors that symbolize death with blood and carnality.

The part on the left symbolizes Jesus' resurrection, where the white space is heaven itself, which opens in order to receive its victorious king. It



also opens itself for us to reach the Father through Christ.

The use of texture reinforces the syntax for an understanding of the corporate Christ, through his material being.

Q: *What meaning do you think Jesus' crucifixion has in our postmodern society?*

A: In our society, the Crucifixion is only history, though an important historical event that launched Western Judeo-Christian thought. I think our society does not want to see Jesus crucified. Society currently senses a need for him, but in some sense, it feels uncomfortable about him.

Q: *Isn't your painting of Jesus too Catholic and Western? If so, don't these qualities come from you having studied at a Catholic university?*

A: The problem is that we don't have a Protestant Christian iconography, so to speak, or it has been decoded, so it is natural that an image of the Crucifixion refers us to Catholic paintings. I think that problems have arisen because of the distance we as Adventists have toward images in general and our Puritan heritage.

Q: *I see your Jesus, unlike many others, transmitting a lot of peace. Is it essential to feel such a peace, which only God can give, to be able to paint it?*

A: Yes. As an artist, I must be at peace, but at the same time I must feel restlessness, to be in need of God. To make a picture of Christ, I must feel the peace that allows me to make decisions in the painting, trusting that God directs my work so it may reach the heart of the people.



Q: *Where is the symbol and where the reality?*

A: Although the painting is a polyptych, its meaning is not separated; symbol and reality are intertwined, the Cross is a symbol not represented in the conventional way, but as an image of a man who carries a piece of wood. That is, the Cross is a symbol, but at the same time it is reality here and now for each one of us.

When we think of Calvary, we see our own reality. The forms on the right symbolize the Trinity: God is above, Jesus at the center, and the Holy Spirit below.

Q: *How do symbols contribute to our perception of reality?*

A: The symbol gives us identity. It takes us back to what we are and shows us that Christ died for our sins, and this should show us our own reality. We must be able to decode the symbol of the Cross every day in our life, thus widening the perception of our reality as children of God in need of him. ■

In the Footsteps of the Stahls:

Thoughts on Adventism | BY MIKE TYLER



Above: Ana and Fernando Stahl traveling in Peru; right, with Peruvian villagers.

In late March, I stood in front of a bronzed statue of three men and I finally began attempting to answer decade-old questions. I am a Seventh-day Adventist of twenty-two years: from the womb, to Adventist elementary, middle, and high school, all the way to La Sierra University.

Yet never had I answered the question: Why am I an Adventist? Never had I challenged my religion to keep

me in the fold. Like many from my Adventist-born generation, I had toyed with the idea of leaving the Church. I had faded in and out of Sabbath morning attendance. I had gone through the phase of refusing to call myself an Adventist, preferring the title "Christian" or, better yet, "follower of Christ." However, for one like me—born, raised, and educated in the Church—Adventism is an incurable disease. Or perhaps an unshakable blessing.



It was not until a pilgrimage to Peru that I finally began answering the question of disease or blessing. It was not until that trip that I finally looked to Adventism's past to find hope for

its future. Without the hope of a church I can believe in, a church that attempts to make God's Kingdom present on earth, the scales would be tipped away from blessing toward disease.

The men frozen in bronze—Adventist missionary Fernando Stahl, Adventist convert Manuel Camacho, and a generic peasant farmer—represented a story that brought many out of poverty and ignorance. It is the story of Fernando and Ana Stahl that inspired Charles Teel, professor of religion and society at La Sierra University, to lead annual study tours to Peru. It was on that trip that I sought to find my identity in Adventism. As I asked questions of my faith, the example of the Stahls hinted at answers.

Adventism and Missions

The Stahls arrived in the Andes as self-funded missionaries, looking to win souls for Christ in South America. Fernando began by handing out literature before realizing that the local people could not read. The Stahls found themselves in a society where an 8 percent white and mestizo social elite dominated the 92 percent Aymara and Quechua peoples. The Aymara and Quechua not only lacked the ability to read, they could not vote or hold onto their land either.¹

Manuel Camacho, the second bronzed figure, held a passionate vision for education of the Andean peoples. The Stahls moved in with the Camachos their first year. That connection has been viewed as the "beginning of the Lake Titicaca Mission."² At that point, the key focus of the Stahls' mission became not only the soul, but also the mind and body. Their first step was to teach basic hygiene. As well, they weaned the Aymara

and Quechua from their addictions to alcohol and cocaine. They also taught reading skills.³

In an attempt to explain why the Stahls were so successful in Peru, Latin Americanist Dan Chapin Hazen writes in his Yale doctoral dissertation:

The missionaries minimized imposition by only expanding on villager requests. Doctrinal controversies were played down—Saturday worship, an end to idolatry, and the second coming were stressed, but more complex issues were for the most part overlooked. Instead the missionaries insisted on new standards of cleanliness and morality....Coca and alcohol were declared taboo, personal hygiene was taught for the first time, and improved modes of living, house building, etc. were encouraged. Rudimentary medical facilities provided cures for simple ailments which had previously gone untreated, and mission-sponsored markets circumvented the abuses which characterized those in mestizo towns. Most important, literacy was actively fostered.⁴

This quote provides me with a few interesting observations about the Stahls and their success. First, education was essential. The Stahls armed the Aymara and Quechua with the ability to read and clean themselves. In addition, physical needs were attended, with simple medical attention to compliment the education in hygiene being taught. Third, economic betterment was encouraged. The Stahls gave the people opportunity to avoid the oppression of the higher class with these "mission-sponsored markets." Finally, the Stahls' main mission was not simply to convert. Hazen notes that doctrine was played down and the missionaries made an effort not to impose, responding only to the people's requests.

Mission work has always been a central item in the Adventist Church. You would be hard pressed to find an Adventist who hasn't heard countless mission stories or been presented with the opportunity to do missions abroad. Often missionaries act as guest speakers in our churches and at our schools. I myself will be partaking in this mission program by teaching English in Korea next year.

Because mission work is such an important aspect of our faith, we must look at how we do missions. I think the Stahls are a spectacular example of what Adventist missionaries ought to be. Indeed, I would suggest, Adventism is successful in emulating the Stahls in many of its mission opportunities. We have medical mission-

aries in Uganda, Malawi, and other locations in Africa and throughout the world. Language institutes in South Korea, Japan, Poland and elsewhere provide the tool of the English language to many. I have heard countless stories of missionaries going to Mexico or Central America to build houses, schools, and churches to facilitate physical, educational, and spiritual needs.

Yet I have also heard countless mission accounts telling of a numbers game, where hundreds if not thousands have been baptized and supposedly converted. In Peru, I overheard a conversation discussing Adventist mission work. One member of that conversation stated that there are places we can "save a soul" somewhere in Southeast Asia for forty some-odd cents. Hearing these stories, I cannot help but ask, "What do you mean by saved?" Are these scores of new converts being provided for once the missionaries leave? Is their conversion caught up in a spiritual high that will inevitably fall when the hardships of life in poverty continue to weigh heavily? What exactly are our nickels and dimes buying that this soul might be saved?

Though the Stahls began by passing out tracts, they quickly recognized other needs, needs of the body and mind that were inherently tied up with needs of the soul. The Aymara and Quechua were being oppressed by landowner and priest alike, kept ignorant and dependent. The Stahls did not merely rely on sermons to communicate the love of Christ. Rather, they demonstrated the love of Christ by tending to the needs of these oppressed people; they provided them with a means to live healthy lives and come out of ignorance.

Because the Stahls did not stop at baptism, their mission did not lead to temporary soul savings. Nor should ours. The mind, body, and soul are connected. Jesus fed and healed, spoke out against religious and political oppression. That is the center of Christ's love: helping people live a better life here in preparation for later. That should be the center of the Adventist mission, at home and abroad.

I find mission work one of the most important things a church can do. However, the purpose of missions should never be strictly to win souls. In the loving Adventism I envision, our missions will not only try to save the soul, but also the body and mind. The Stahls' work in Peru finally gave me hope that this was indeed in our past and can also be in our future.

Adventism and Social Structures

A mob of two hundred men, led by Bishop Ampuero, arrived one day at the mission the Stahls had set up outside Puno city. Their purpose was to force the Adventist locals to participate in Catholic feasts and kiss the bishop's hand. When the locals refused, six of them were bound, beaten, marched more than twenty miles to the city, and then imprisoned. Upon hearing this, Manuel Camacho immediately went to speak with the bishop, which led to his imprisonment as well.

When the Stahls heard the news, they, too, immediately went to the city. Their first action was to bring food to the imprisoned. Then they "called upon the most prominent people of the city in their behalf.... We visited the judges, and other prominent officials of the court...."⁵ The lobbying of the Stahls was not in vain; the judge set the prisoners free. This event is cited as the triggering incident that led to freedom of religion in Peru.⁶

This attitude of social concern is also seen when examining the beginnings of Adventism. "While our denominational forbears are indeed otherworldly and premillennial, theirs is not a mentality which prepares for end times by withdrawing to a Vermont commune," writes Teel.⁷ John Preston Kellogg is said to have had a station on the Underground Railroad. Joseph Bates helped organize antislavery movements in his hometown. Ellen White even called for civil disobedience in response to the Fugitive Slave Act.⁸ Not only do we see these major Adventist figures providing for the needs of escaped slaves via the Underground Railroad, we also see them taking controversial stances against the government.

Both the Stahls and the pioneer Adventists took action out of love. The Stahls freed wrongfully imprisoned brethren, and Kellogg, Bates, and White fought to free slaves. Love for individuals translated into changing societies.

Often I have found the attitude of Adventists to be one of isolationism, an attitude that calls for the Church to stay out of state matters, to let the world turn as the world will turn, while the remnant stays protected in isolation. We prepare to run for the hills when Sunday laws come, but other than that, our church as a whole seems to have little to say about political matters.

The Stahls, however, did not hesitate to lobby government officials. Their call for justice came directly on the heels of tending for the victims.

This story, I think, represents exactly how the Adventist Church should approach social injustices. The examples of Kellogg, Bates, and White affirm this notion in their fight for abolition in the century previous to the Stahls' work. It is not enough just to tend the personal needs of the victims. As well, it is not enough just to try to take political action. The two are inseparable: we must attempt to change oppressive systems while simultaneously tending to the needs of those oppressed.

There is, of course, a risk in mixing religion and politics. Within Adventism, there are diverse worldviews. On La Sierra's campus alone, I am not surprised to find not only Democrats and Republicans, but Libertarians, as well. One may even encounter a socialist. And, of course, there will always be a plethora of the apathetic. I personally would not like to see Adventists mobilize to the right, as have many churches, throwing their weight around on issues such as abortion, gay rights, and prayer in schools. Simultaneously, I'm sure much of the Adventist Church wouldn't want the General Conference coming out on issues to the left. Adventism should never seek conformity in its members' political activity.

I recognize that involvement in politics is a sensitive subject. But I believe it is also a necessity to a church that strives to make bring God's love fully to the world. When blatant injustices arise, Adventism should be on the front lines fighting it, as the Stahls were in Puno and as the pioneer Adventists were against slavery.

Adventism and Institutionalization

In the city of Juliaca, just a bus ride away from where the Stahls worked in the 1910s, our tour group visited the local Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) headquarters. There we were given a brief overview of what ADRA is doing in Peru. At least one of their programs is a money-lending project. Women supported by ADRA are lending money to women all across the nation. From the seven agencies in the country, they have loaned out almost three million dollars. More surprising, in all of Peru, less than one-third of 1 percent of the recipients has defaulted on these loans.

Another long-term result of the Stahls' mission is the plethora of schools that have cropped up in the Lake Titicaca region. Hazen's research indicates that there may have been as many as two hundred Adventist schools in the area.⁹ The results are astounding.



Fernando Stahl

According to a study by anthropologist Ted Lewellen, the Adventists in the region, which comprise an 18 percent minority, have much of the political power, better schooling, and larger families. Interestingly, Lewellen also notes that the Adventists generally choose education over profit.¹⁰

These are the results of Adventism's institutionalization in the Puno region of Peru. From this, it would seem that as Adventism grew in Peru it did not fall victim to some of the hardships of institutionalization. As sects grow into churches, there is a tendency to favor structure over service, a selfish choice, and the risk of idolatry seeps in. These are just a few of the dangers of institutionalization.¹¹

This is a process that Adventism has struggled with since its early days. At Adventism's beginnings, we considered any form of organization equivalent to Babylon, for only God had the power to organize another church.¹² However, as time passed, the notion of a "Gospel Order" began to be debated. James White called for some structure, and he redefined Babylon not as organization, but as confusion.¹³

Though there was opposition to White's "Gospel Order," by 1863 Adventism had begun to organize, embracing a business-like ownership of property, though still resisting the "great iron wheel" of organization that had been identified with Methodism. White cited "servant leadership as the indispensable check against the abuses of power which accompany

complex and specialized institutional structures...."¹⁴ However, after White's death, the nightmare of the "great iron wheel" seems to have become a reality, with fewer people making decisions for the entire church body.¹⁵

Personally, I have long been uncomfortable with the notion of institutionalized religion. It tends to lend itself to the shallowness that leads to forty-five cent conversions. The larger a structure becomes, it seems to me, the more it turns inward on itself. And what good is a mission-centered religion out of touch with society and social issues?

However, I cannot deny the benefits of Adventism's institutionalization. I am a product of its education system, without which this article would not exist. The Adventist institution has provided family, friends, and even me with employment opportunities, as well as an enriching global community. This institutionalization is very much responsible for Adventist culture, that incurable disease or unshakable blessing with which I am struggling.

Teel concludes that a "creative tension" between sect and church provides a give-and-take system that ultimately benefits.¹⁶ However, I do not entirely understand what he means by "creative tension." Or perhaps I cannot see it. Has our motivation for justice across the globe reminded the massive structure of conferences, unions, and divisions how the Stahls reached out in love and changed a society? Have we made an effort to impact society, as did the Stahls? Or have we fallen in on ourselves, content to educate and indoctrinate within the structures we have built?

Unfortunately, I cannot answer these questions, for how can I be objective when I am a lifelong product of the institution? How can I fairly decide if Adventism is a disease or a blessing? I won't pass judgment on what has happened in the past, but I will give advice for the future. We must always be aware of Teel's creative tension, never fooling ourselves into thinking that our structures might be perfect or that our ideals can function without organization. Most importantly, though, we must strive to be like the Stahls, standing against injustice and healing the wounds of the

oppressed. This is Christ's love in action.

I come back to that original question in front of the three bronze figures: why am I an Adventist? I suppose the only answer I can give is "because I have hope for Adventism's future." I have attempted to address a few of the issues that the Adventist Church faces today and will face tomorrow. They are difficult issues that no one person can fully answer. But my ideal Adventism of the future must face the difficulties in missions, social structures, and institutionalization. The Stahls made sure that Christ's love was at the center when they faced these things. No matter where our mission takes us, no matter what governments we find ourselves under, and no matter what our structure, we must always find this love at the center. ■

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Mike Tyler graduated from La Sierra University in June 2008 with a degree in English and is heading out to teach his native tongue in Korea.

"Evangelists" and "Liberationists"

Logging Passages South of the Rio Grande | BY CHARLES TEEL

An individual gospel without a social gospel is a soul without a body. A social gospel without an individual gospel is a body without a soul. One is a ghost. The other is a corpse.

—E. Stanley Jones, *The Unshakable Kingdom*

In the face of severe injustice, suffering, and oppression, the Stahls identified with the poorest of the poor and incarnated the gospel in ways that profoundly impacted the spiritual, social, economic, and political life of the Peruvian highlands. The experience of our friends Fernando and Ana calls us to live with the tension of enacting the "now" of God's kingdom while recognizing that the "not yet" fullness of that kingdom eludes human history.

—Gustavo Gutiérrez, Stahl Center Conference, 1997

These two quotations, from an evangelical missionary patriarch and the father of liberation theology, offer hints that leading spokespersons in such camps as "evangelist" and "liberationist" may too readily be categorized as rooted in radically opposing camps: evangelists being concerned mainly with saving individual souls and liberationists tilting chiefly at the windmills of societal structures.

However, the stuff of history guards against rigid classification and the freezing of categories, as may well be gathered from Gutiérrez's response to the standing ovation accorded him by members of the American Academy of Religion on the thirtieth anniversary of his influential book, *A Theology of Liberation*.¹ "Theologies are born to die," he stated. Then, with a twinkle in his eye, he concluded, "as are theologians!"

The purpose of this essay is to report on thirty-some field course offerings that students from La Sierra University, Loma Linda University, and Andrews University—along with community members—have participated

in over the past three decades as they have wrestled with contrasting ways that Christians south of the Rio Grande relate to issues of religion and societal change.

The terms *evangelist* and *liberationist* build upon what social historian Ernst Troeltsch introduced as "ideal types": polar opposite characteristics at continuum extremes that do not exist in reality yet serve as heuristic devices to aid in analysis.² In this report, evangelist and liberationist types are associated with images held by individuals and communities in the Christian tradition that continue to be challenged by tension between what might be contrasted as the evangelists' "rightly dividing the word of truth" (*orthodoxis*) and the liberationists' "rightly enacting the word of truth" (*orthopraxis*).

Participants in these tours have experienced natural and human wonders south of the Rio Grande. In addition, they have probed positions advanced by the religious left and right in Mexico, Central America, and

Lake Titicaca, Peru.



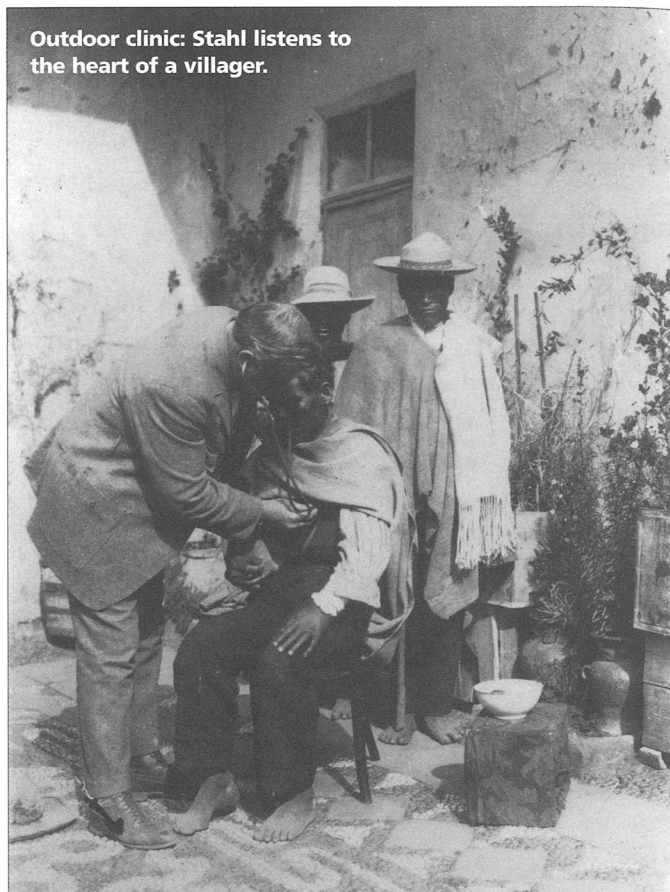
South America, as glimpsed in the following partial list of sources drawn upon and contexts experienced

- Worshiping in the newly refurbished cathedral in Cuernavaca, Mexico, and conversing with the archbishop who welcomed our group in his homily
- Dialoging with a Catholic nun/physician, who practices not far from Guatemala's Lake Atitlán and who effectively headed a national health care program in her country
- Quizzing mothers who gather monthly to report on their *micro empresas* (small businesses enterprises) in the Peruvian Andes while taking an indigenous meal prepared in clay pots over open fires at a working ranch on the shores of Lake Titicaca
- Attending services with an Adventist congregation on Lake Titicaca's "floating islands" and hearing children sing in Quechua, Aymara, English, and Japanese
- Shadowing Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) workers engaged in agricultural programs on the Peruvian Amazon
- Interviewing such individuals as cabinet officials, congress persons, priests, pastors, and dwellers in peasant villages who commented on the life and work of Adventist missionaries Fernando and Ana Stahl—the pioneering Adventist couple lauded above by liberationist Gustavo Gutiérrez and reported in Andes studies journals and *Spectrum*.³

During the 1970s, our groups worshiped regularly in a renovated eighteenth-century cathedral in Cuernavaca, Mexico, where simplicity abounded. Much of the gold and glitter accumulated over the centuries had been sold and invested in initiatives that empower the dispossessed in the Cuernavaca Diocese. Likewise, paint had been removed to reveal long-hidden murals and plaster taken off to expose the texture of hewn stonework. Not a trace remained of the familiar hierarchy of saints.

A contemporary Christ presided over the altar, with the Virgin occupying a less-than-conspicuous position on a side wall. Simple cotton robes enlivened by serapes and colorfully embroidered miters replaced ostentatious vestments. The liturgy used vernacular Spanish in place of the traditional Latin, and the music provided by flute and pan-

Outdoor clinic: Stahl listens to the heart of a villager.



pipe fairly celebrated the congregations' indigenous roots.

Sophisticated urbanites and peasants from the countryside heard their pastor, the Catholic bishop of Cuernavaca, invite them to participate in a spiritual renovation in their lives akin to the physical renovation they made in their house of worship. For visiting students and community members from *el Norte*, it was a spiritually moving experience—even for those who could not claim fluency in the Spanish language.

The Bishop's call to personal and social commitment concluded a homily that offered both pastoral comfort and prophetic challenge. "As individual persons," he suggested,

we gather weekly to celebrate that we have experienced salvation—that we are saved, forgiven, and accepted by God. God first loved and forgave. And now, gathered at the table for holy communion, we are now called to love and forgive—not in order that God will love and forgive but because God has loved and forgiven.

In turn, the bishop built on the theme that, just as God loves and forgives individual persons and offers us healing and wholeness, God also calls us to make such qualities manifest in structures and institutions of shared community life.

God's people are thus called to confront and confess personal and individual sin; no less are we also called to confront and confess social and institutional sin. Just as the Gospels and the prophets appeal to love and justice in very specific terms, so our interactions with the Word must result in specific application and action in the world—else the Word, not to mention God himself, becomes an idol.

How might we keep the word from becoming an idol? By prophetically speaking God's word to this time and place. On the local scene, this means that we can hardly ignore the sugarcane cutters and others who stand at the mercy of forces, institutions, and power politics that discriminate against them. We must continue to alleviate conditions by building better barracks for housing, of course, but we must also rectify the unjust institutional structures that produce these conditions.

On the international scene, we must heed the call of brothers and sisters across the border in Guatemala, and stand with them in their travail as they face warring factions. The martyrdom of Bishop Oscar Romero in neighboring El Salvador is now being shared daily by Christian leaders and lay workers in Central America—their only "crime" being their actions on behalf of the poor. As heirs to a prophetic tradition, we must be reminded that prophecy includes not only "foretelling" but also "forthtelling" in the tradition of Hebrew prophets who denounced unjust social structures that had strayed from God's call.

The bishop's liturgy and homily offer an example of the equality and fraternity that he hoped to see incorporated in social structures, an order of service that contrasted markedly with most "first world" Catholic worship services of the time. Officiates sat on simple pine chairs in front of the altar and discoursed with the people. Teenagers from the countryside attired in peasant dress contributed folk music to the liturgy.

Defying Latin machismo, women led in numbers equal to men throughout the service. Occasionally, the bishop lapsed into the exclusive *hermanos*, but he generally introduced his admonitions with the inclusive *hermanos y hermanas*. The service concluded with the spontaneous kiss of peace that leveled caste and class in a most intimate and personal manner.

Following the service, the bishop sat with our group and queried, "So most of you *Norte Americanos* are Protestants? Are you aware that the root of being a *Protestante* is to protest—to protest against that which is unjust and to protest in favor of that which is just." The bishop paused, smiled benevolently, and raised a forefinger for emphasis: "I trust that you are all being good *Protestantes*!"

In Mexico City, we experienced worship with an urban evangelical congregation that assembled amidst chrome, glass, walnut paneling, and linoleum-quarried stonework having given way to wood structures by the time Protestants arrived on the scene. Members carried Bibles, hymnals, and adult education quarterlies.

Upwardly mobile and aspiring families appeared predominant. Men were uniformly suited, women conservatively attired, and children freshly scrubbed, with faces and shoes shinning. The five-hundred-seat sanctuary teemed with devout members of a voluntary association that obviously meant much to them.

The sermon on human depravity emphasized the plague of sin that affects man "from the sole of the foot even unto the head." (With regard to "man," it should be noted that *hermanos* alone figured in the pastoral greeting, and males dominated the liturgical leadership roster by a ratio of seventeen to zero.) The topic unfolded as key proof texts were linked. Problem: "For all have sinned"; "The wages of sin is death"; "The stain of guilt is ever before me." Solution: "There is no other name whereby we might have saved"; "What must I do to be saved?" "Repent and be baptized."

The pastor presented six persons for baptism by immersion, quizzing each candidate on every point of the baptismal vow and inviting verbal attestation to these propositions of faith as witnessed by the congregation. Following the baptism, the pastor invited "any who wished to join God's true church" to come forward. Fifty persons—one-tenth of those gathered for worship—surged forward and were embraced by congregational elders.

Robust countenances and shinning eyes evidenced a newly felt sense of cleansing, release, and reconciliation. As congregants exited the narthex, a "right hand of fellowship" extended by designated greeters deepened the spirit of belonging, a sense of bonding experienced by long-standing congregational members no less than initiates and would-be initiates.

The order of service was virtually identical to that in Main Street, Iowa, which made it easy to follow for study tour participants whose grandparents or great grandparents had homesteaded on the Great Plains. Furthermore, most persons in our group were familiar with the songs, since the hymns had been lifted directly from the North American hymnbook with translated lyrics that bore the names of Kirkpatrick, Smith, and Larson.

Yet a good number of the participants expressed concern with what they perceived as an imported liturgy, a narrow definition of sin, a lack of a social consciousness, a marked exclusiveness, and an attitude of triumphalism. Some also criticized what they perceived as a "doctrinal dress down in which the pastor appeared to have all twenty something doctrines nailed down for eternity and once and for all delivered to the saints with true believer certainty."

"On the other hand," countered one tour participant from Europe who had experienced a bleak post-civil war period prior to World War II, "how much do those raised in peaceful suburbs of Southern California know of *uncertainty*—and hence such may be less than authoritative on the subject of certainty!"

This participant went on to note that "populations in El Salvador and Guatemala in the 1970s share much with those of us who inherited the uncertainty and disillusionment that follow a divisive civil war. These included empty stomachs, ideologically split communities, neighbors arrested in the middle of the night, horrible torture, and family members executed strictly on the basis of ideology."

The participant continued: "The flower that blooms amid the rubble of Picasso's *Guernica*, painted in response to the horror wrought by Nazi aerial bombings of civilians in a town by the same name, is a call for hope in the face of chaos." She continued: "And these newly baptized members and other congregants experience community and experience hope."

The participant admitted that the gloss presented in the morning sermon offered symbols of eternity that appear

fixed and final, but also contended that such rigid categories will be redefined and recast by new members in time. Accordingly, she argued, "this congregation offers members more than fixed symbols of eternity: it offers stability, nurture, socialization, schooling, and access to life chances as well."

Can hope, community, salvation, and liberation be experienced in more than one way?

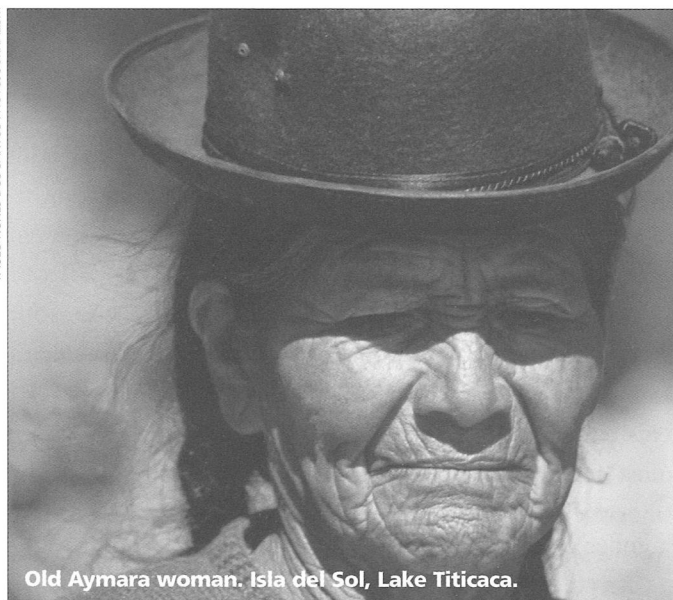
During the early 1980s, our tour participants held sessions with various groups asked to "unpack" the following terms: *word*, *salvation*, *church*, and *evangelism*. These sessions occurred in contexts as diverse as a medical missionary clinic on the coast of Guatemala, a Catholic Base Christian Community comprised of priest and people living in a city slums, the manicured campus of an evangelical seminary in a Mexico City suburb, an agricultural project in Belize, a cathedral courtyard in Southern Mexico, and a chapel in Guatemala's highlands.

WORD In a suburban classroom, evangelists offered a schematic in which *word* occurs as Infallible Word (God) becomes Inerrant word (Bible) and, in turn, is propagated to the masses. "God wants to be understood and God has communicated his word through the Holy Bible. The Bible is absolute; it is one; it is constant; it is consistent; and it is simple," said an evangelist. "Man's central problem is that that he is more concerned with words than with *the* word. Our students can be very direct in giving God's word to the masses," he continued. "They regularly take megaphones to city square and announce 'Listen to the word of God! The word of God!' 'I will heal this land!'"

Three Catholic sisters of the Maryknoll Order who lived and worked in a Mexico City slum offered a very different understanding of *word*. "Our understanding is that the word of God is the manifestation of God-ness in history," one asserted. "This word of God is thus not something objective and absolute on India paper with gilded edges, bound in a leather cover, and standing apart from history."

Although the Bible does record the manifestation of God in history as prophets and people heard and responded in history, to limit God's word to the Bible is to limit the ongoing presence of a God in history. In

PAULO NUNES DOS SANTOS PHOTOJOURNALISM



Old Aymara woman. Isla del Sol, Lake Titicaca.



Fernando Stahl (left) and Manuel Camacho (center)

short, they asserted, "God did not stop calling to us with John's Apocalypse letter to the seven churches, for God continues to speak God's word in history—and to demand from us a response in history."

SALVATION A leading evangelist contemplated the meaning of sin and salvation. Sin is separation from God. Salvation is reconciliation with God. All have sinned. The wages of sin is death. But salvation is the free gift of God to those who believe. By accepting Christ, the believer is justified, forgiven, delivered, regenerated. "Four spiritual laws make clear the dynamics of salvation: (1) God loves you; (2) man is sinful; (3) Jesus Christ is God's only provision for sin; and (4) we must individually receive Jesus as Savior and Lord."

The evangelist concluded with a biblical text, "There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." In this manner, individuals experience salvation.

Two lay Catholic missionaries active in nurturing grass-

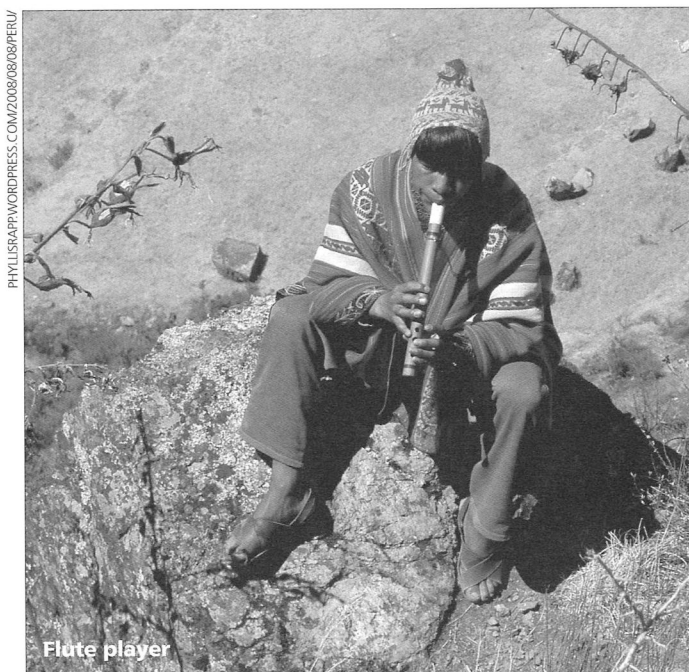
roots study/action groups known as Base Christian Communities contended that salvation only includes not only confession of belief/orthodoxies, but also engagement in practice/orthopraxis. They cited the biblical passage, "Not everyone who says unto me the 'Lord! Lord!' will enter into the kingdom of heaven."

To experience salvation and to accept Christ as Lord, they noted, is to experience wholeness as individual persons and to call for this wholeness to be fostered by institutions in God's world. "Sin, no less than salvation," they argued, must always be seen in these larger contexts, in addition to personal contexts.

CHURCH In the corporate headquarters of a prominent evangelist missionary society, *church* was succinctly defined: "Church is made up of people called out of the world to save individuals from destruction: the kingdom is extended as the church ministers to the needs of these called out people."

A religious lay worker, adept at introducing North Americans to the Central American experience, defined church in a manner that contrasted markedly with that of the evangelists: Although the church will mediate salvation and healing to lost souls, it does not follow that the church exists to call people out of the world. Rather,

the church is called to be a gathered community commissioned to operationalize the visible presence of God in the world—the very world that God so loved. The church will thus minister to individual souls: the church will no less call for justice and righteousness to be embedded in the warp and woof of the temporal order.



Flute player

EVANGELISM In a Central American evangelistic center, an evangelist noted that evangelism, or the propagation of the gospel, is articulated precisely in Matthew's Great Commission: "Go, teach, baptize." The evangelist continued by observing: "Lamentably, many Christians in Latin America have experienced great confusion with regard to the Great Commission." Some misguided Christians would extend the kingdom by advocating social, political, and economic causes. Some lead out in student protests; some argue for workers' rights; some march against governments.

According to him, however, Matthew's commission leaves little doubt about the nature of evangelism. Accordingly, "through tract distribution, one-to-one evangelistic contacts, and mass meetings, our organization is saving ten souls per minute throughout 1980 in Central America

alone." The evangelist shared another statistic: In South Korea, evangelistic techniques have been so finely honed that a soul is saved for less than one U.S. dollar.

A lay missionary exiled from Chile emphatically countered the evangelist's contention: "The purpose of evangelization is not only to save individual persons, but also to save persons who live in local and national communities." To evangelize is not only to *teach*; to evangelize is to *act*. The liberationist concluded: "Our call is to *announce* the good news of the gospel and also to *enact* this good news!"

"The ultimate proof that the Lord is living is to *live* the Lord's life," he continued, "and this living of the Lord's life is witnessed not only in how we live our individual lives but in how we live our lives institutionally in community as well." To evangelize is thus to engage in social transformation outreach endeavors no less than in personal transformation endeavors.

From the late 1980s, these field experiences have included more than two dozen tours to Peru's Andes and Amazon as students and community participants follow in the footsteps of pioneer Adventist missionaries Fernando and Ana Stahl.

Interviews with the likes of theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez, eminent historian and National Library director José Tamayo Herrera, former minister of health David Tehada, and veteran Maryknoll priest Esteban Judd Zanon suggest that the answer to the question, "Were the Stahls evangelists or liberationists?" must emphatically elicit a simple Yes! It is clear that their witness mediated salvation in the form of challenging unjust social structures no less than fostering the assurance of salvation to thousands of individuals.

It is equally clear that their witness contributed to vast social change as the privileged position of the social elite of Peru's Lake Titicaca basin, who comprised 8 percent of the population, was effectively challenged when the Stahls initiated the first indigenous and coeducational system of schools in the vast Peruvian highlands. Their initiative is recognized as a sweeping evangelizing/liberating action and lauded by dozens of investigators on three continents.

Chapters from Fernando Stahl's *In the Land of the Incas* come alive as tour members enter the Stahl home on the shores of Lake Titicaca; cruise in a *titora* reed boat among Lake Titicaca's "floating islands"; pause at the Inca Trail's Sun Gate entrance to view the wonders of Machu Picchu;

look at Cusco's pre-Inca, Inca, and Christian monuments; and take a meal at the Ana Stahl Clinic on the banks of the Amazon River.⁴

The penultimate experience comes from delivering medicines to Amazon clinics and distributing school supplies to great, great, great grandchildren of thousands whom "Mother" Ana Stahl birthed on these banks. The ultimate experience comes from relaxing for the first time on the tour, basking in a swinging hammock at an Amazon lodge.

While evaluating the Religious Left and Right, the least responsible approach is to resort to bumper sticker assertions like "The Religious Right Is Neither," or "The Left Shall Be Left." Neither is constructive, nor are generalizations that merely pit otherworldly, soul-saving evangelists against this-worldly, structures-saving liberationists. Such approaches wrongly assume that the lines are uniformly and clearly drawn.

Tours of the schools, orphanages, clinics, and agricultural projects run by the evangelists demonstrate that complete otherworldliness is rarely the case. Nor are these humanitarian endeavors simply holdovers from a colonial missionary past in which "first world" models are imposed on indigenous populations with no sensitivity to cultural settings.

One case in point is an inpatient clinic run by evangelicals in rural Central America. In a culture where values place priority on the presence of kinship groups during illness, the clinic architecture boasts a roof with twelve-foot eaves that allow the extended family to settle in—complete with open fire, bedrolls, and *tortillas con frijoles*.

Conversely, it is unfair to picture proponents of liberation theology as materialistic Marxists devoid of any notion of the transcendent. One member of a Catholic religious order who takes her medical expertise to Indian villages in the Central American highlands cited the theology of liberation as grounds for her service. Upon being asked where she, a Maryknoll Order sister and physician, finds the resources to give of herself so unconditionally to a vocation that makes such tremendous physical and emotional demands, she lowered her eyes and paused.

The pause did not signify she was groping for a response. Rather, the question had touched something very personal and private: "My pilgrimage of faith has always been made in the context of Christian community," she

asserted. "It is a community of prayer, a community of worship, and a community of action." Then she added: "In my case, it is through prayer and worship in community that one finds the strength for action—for keeping on."

The illustrations given above should not conceal differences between the groups. Our definition sessions suggested that when evangelists present their presuppositions and definitions they tend to emphasize transcendence/piety/individualism, whereas liberationists accentuate immanence/action/communalism. When pushed by questioners, however, each side often offered qualifications that implicitly or explicitly recognized the incompleteness of these generalizations. Yet these evangelists and liberationists rarely appear to be talking to—let alone working closely with—one another.

One measure of the extent to which the evangelists, for example, have defined Catholicism to be outside the rank of Christianity is a printed prayer request posted in one of Mexico's evangelical prayer chapels: "Pray that Mexico will one day be converted; the country is 98 percent Catholic." In short, evangelists tend to dismiss liberationists as irreverent and liberationists tend to dismiss evangelicals as irrelevant. Such exclusiveness on both sides serves only to heighten extremes that might be tempered were evangelists and liberationists engaged in the sticky business of dialogue.

RHETORIC Neither side has a monopoly on code terms and slogans. Numerous terms go undefined and are left hanging. Evangelists tend glibly to employ undefined yet value-laden terms that range from God-talk "propitiation" to political-talk "socialism" and "communism." The liberationists' "struggle" against "oppression" and appeal for "solidarity" against "neo-imperialism" at times remains diffuse and less than focused. In a setting where definitions tend to go begging, exchange—and therefore growth—appears stunted.

BIBLE Evangelists quote Bible texts eagerly, but appear to slight biblical theology. Just as truth may elude a plethora of "facts," so the systematic articulation of biblical themes may well escape the blitz of proof texts. In contrast, liberationists often appear to score well on selected theological themes (the Exodus and the Cross being central) while exhibiting minimal Bible knowledge. Religious leaders of a Base Christian Community demonstrated little knowledge of the creation narrative, even though the lesson for the



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week was based on that Scripture passage. Evangelists no less than Liberationists might benefit from a more systematic approach to the biblical text and to biblical theology through a conversation in which each listens to the other.

SALVATION Evangelists find it far easier to cite statistics on those “saved” than to deal systematically with the meaning of salvation for persons and persons-in-community. When questioned for examples of “social sin,” the best one baffled Central American evangelist could offer was a vague reference to student demonstrations in Korea. Although liberationists can handily list many illustrations of social sin, some still appear to wrestle with sin and salvation at a personal level.

In response to a question on how a local rancher might participate in “personal sin,” one liberationist concluded that he might sin in oppressing his wife by not equally dividing the profits accrued through their jointly held family enterprise. Perhaps the notation of sin and salvation would be sharpened by mutual participation in exercises that allow for development of working definitions.

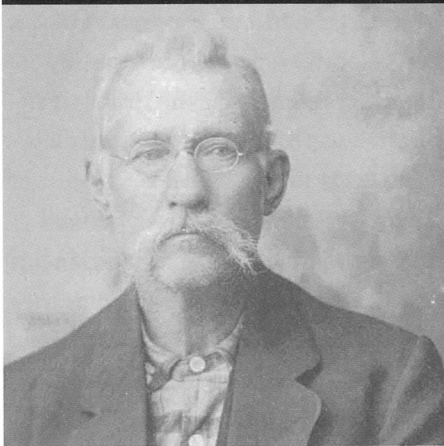
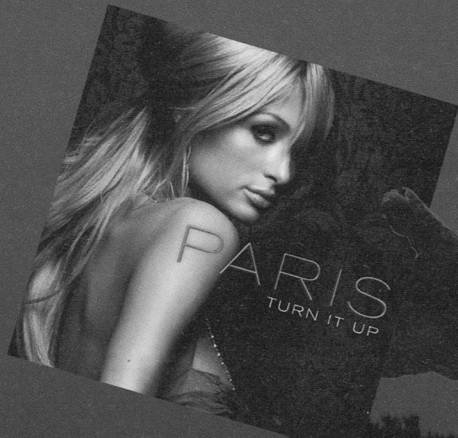
POLITICS *Naïveté* is a term commonly applied to most religionists’ awareness of the political order. Central American evangelists who claim to be “above” politics clearly qualify for this designation. In the ebb and flow of social and political change, no one has the option of being above politics. An act so simple as teaching an indigenous family in the highlands of Guatemala to grow corn more efficiently can be a political act. How? The father no longer needs to do migrant labor on large ranches in the lowlands two months each year.

This robs coastal landowners of their cheap labor pool, challenges the economic status quo, and has resulted in agriculturalists (as well as priests, physicians, teachers, and others) being marked by death squads. Individuals who have given presentations to our groups have witnessed this reality. It is not possible to stop the world and let the evangelist off.

Likewise, liberationists also risk exposing their naïveté. An ever-present temptation, fully recognized by some yet hardly perceived by others, is to identify the Kingdom of God with a given political party or economic system. Instead of being in a position to critique that system, the

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THE END OF TIME?



Adventist Jitters | BY REBECCA MUNSEY

Imminent return was the motivation of the individual. Any action could be justified by the urgency. Then decade followed decade; period followed period; and finally the urgency of imminent return lost impulse.

At first, it was hardly noticed; "IT" the sly loiterer whispering trash in the mind about the length of time, the time line, how to occupy the time.

Mission outreach, offerings, jobs, and placements still drew on the impulse of urgency, but it was becoming a side current—something that could run in us increasingly polluted and unnoticed, a kind of white noise.

But then a moment's quiet—a full stop. What was it? The thing that was so urgent? So imminent? Was the imminence the thing, or the urgency? Or was there an even larger con? Was the larger con the return?

The query had first been about the date. When would it happen—that length of time? The time line. Now, no one really cared; the silent query was about the con.

This Generation Shall Not Pass

Jathan is twenty years old, attends Walla Walla University, and is a sixth-generation Seventh-day Adventist. His grandparents five generations removed hosted the first-ever camp meeting for Seventh-day Adventists in Illinois. Both of them, George and Rufina, were circuit-riding preachers ordained in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Rufina was heavily criticized for leaving her babies home to go preach, but for her there was a fervent urgency that warranted the risk.

When they moved west, George physically helped the push to build Walla Walla College with prayer and nails. The letters from that time that survive in our family give a real sense of belonging to the club of those who had gone before. They were consociates to something of

great consequence. There was enjoyment in the press of urgency; God's return was imminent.

Jathan fingers these letters from a century and a quarter ago and marvels at the paper.

"You won't get this kind of lasting crispness from recycled paper," he tells me.

"No," I reply. "I guess you won't."

On the Road with the Icon

No one really minds a good con. A bad con is one that doesn't know what you really want.

In 1972, when I was fifteen, I was attending Gem State Academy. We knelt on the floor to see if our dress hems scraped the carpet. We studied the *Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne and discussed the moral dilemmas of Hester Prynne.

I was disciplined three times while attending Gem State. Once for novels I was reading—found in my dorm room or that were underlined. Once for wearing the "make-up of a whore of Babylon." And once for general attitude complaints. Almost anyone who attended Adventist Academies after 1950 would tell a similar story. Mine is not unique.

What was the mind-set I was reacting to? Television. It was the mind-set of George Carlin, *A Clockwork Orange*, and the rise of idolized celebrity culture. This was my world. I was being asked to pretend that the moral dilemmas of Hester Prynne were alive and relevant, which they were not.

What of a child born in 1972, looking closely around them in 1987? By the 1980s, most cultural and social memories had been erased. *A Clockwork Orange* had given us the vision of where we were headed, but it was soon withdrawn. No one really had the stomach to watch its violent truth then, but we were new to the violence vector.

Adventists in the 1980s were almost fully without a sense of consociation. They were a demography. A demography with specific preferences. The vectors were difficult to recognize—the change was beginning to be felt more strongly. It is the change you see, that you discipline against, and wring your hands about—not the vectors. Like nonswimmers lumbering toward the water, Adventists searched for some solidly accessible thing, something with its own authority, the thing that did not need our witness. When we found it, it was unexpected but already familiar.

And what of my nephew born in 1988? As a bright, curious, aggressive male in natural, intuitive reaction to the culture of Natural Born Killers, Reservoir Dogs, Sam Kinison, and Gangsta Rap, he had a one-in-ten chance that he would be on some sort of drug for depression or to calm him down, clam him up, make him controllable and able to sleep at night, and overcome the symptoms of what he was in natural reaction to.

SEE YA!

While Jathan was attending a Seventh-day Adventist grade school he began to tell me:

"See ya, wunt want to be ya."

It was a phrase popularized by drug dealers in the 1980s—a salute as their drug addicted customers scuffled away to get high.

"See ya, wunt want to be ya."

A Conversation with No Point

I am thinking about a conversation I could have with Jathan now that he is twenty. I would show him *Godzilla vs. Mothra*, the Japanese version from '64, where a giant Lizard does battle to the death with an evil winged creature. It fascinated me the first time I saw it.

His reaction would be mild, even bored. He might say, "My first *Godzilla* was the '98. Like *Jurassic Park* only tamer; *Jurassic Park* done another way." He would be talking about a different version where the blood is realistic and the creatures....glossier.

I would play an album by Bread (*Baby I'm a Want You*) and I would make him watch an episode of Phil Donahue with me. Phil would introduce a new problem to us and the important thing would be a discussion about the problem, not any solutions.

I don't believe Jathan would see a conspiracy in any of

these artifacts. He just wouldn't recognize that he is seeing artifacts of things that he is still in reaction to, that are still part of his demography. He would have no sense of a situation that was a potent experience.

WHAT?! WHAT?!

So I would show him a collection of advertisements for Daniel and Revelation Seminars. I would point out that each year the beasts get more graphic, more terrible-glossier. "Look at the whore of Babylon," I'd say, "see how sexy she's gotten?"

We would listen to an album of the Wedgewood Trio or the Heritage Singers and we would sit and watch an hour of 3ABN together—well, maybe thirty minutes. We'd watch Danny Shelton introduce a problem or an experience and then try to imitate therapeutic openness, but without any real discussion, just an imitation of openness.

The problem would be something gone wrong in the demography, a problem that could be enjoyed by the demography as a whole. *I'm a gay Seventh-day Adventist*. No, that is a personal difficulty. *I am a twenty-something Seventh-day Adventist youth on fire for God*. Better, yes. *I am an abused Seventh-day Adventist youth who had left the church, been into drugs, and am now back*.

Very good, that's an hour. The important thing would be that we would all seem to be communicating about the problem; we would be in agreement about seeming to communicate.

For Jathan, these would be a series of unrelated events. He would stare at me blankly and say: What?! What?!

He would not recognize that he was seeing Dominant subsume Substrate.

Swept up in some gentle nostalgia, he might say to me: "See ya, wunt want to be ya."

Your Child's Disorder May Be Yours, Too

Popular culture is confusing, but it is easily accessible. It carries its own authority and does not require our witness. We can relax and be entertained. It is why special music in churches feels like an audition for Angels Broadcasting Network.

Listening, I feel like a judge on *American Idol*; that's Ed Sullivan done differently—with cruelty and humiliation. It's how a pastor giving a PowerPoint sermon can stand in front of a movie still of Christ dying on the cross and implore the congregation:

"Do you claim the blood of Christ for your own?
DO YOU CLAIM THE BLOOD FOR YOUR OWN?
DO YOU?"

And in the pew in front of me I can hear a man answer, "Yes! I CLAIM THE BLOOD FOR MY OWN," while he flips through photographs on his cell phone.

What Is Going Away?

What is going away? What has already gone? Jathan's grandparents are part of the last generation who has any memory—any active living memory—of consociation. They are exhausted from the effort of urgency. What they all—that generation—have in common is that they



didn't think of themselves as part of the mix. They thought of themselves as having different values, different priorities. They were a part of something with substance and consequence but no entertainment value.

They watch as their grandchildren get tattoos of butterflies and crosses on their flawless skin. They pray at weddings where rings are exchanged and gasp over the diamonds that appear everywhere on the body—even on the watches. They wonder why we are so needy for display; does so much attention need to be attracted to the individual by dress and attitude? When we tell them that this is our world—it should be attractive—and we live in it beautifully, in connection with our culture so we may be witnesses, they seem more bullied than convinced.

My generation belongs to the mix but with a hopelessly

conflicted personality about doing so. My generation is the referee between the generation of consociation and the generation of demography. As such, we offer value-free ritual. We didn't want to belong to the club of those who went before because we believed it was the club that failed us, or maybe the message of the club that failed *with no sense of the cultural objects we attached to ourselves so unguardedly.*

Nor do we want Jathan's generation not to belong to anything at all. Our marriages dissolve one after another, we are depressed, distressed at getting old, and in doubt about why Jathan's generation doesn't feel the angst of belonging to the demography. Why don't they seem to be anything more than a slight expression of certain demographically expressed preferences. Why don't they feel any urgency?

There seems to be no sense in any of us of the sequence in which the cultural objects took their shape or the consequences. That's reckless.

Would Ellen White have watched Food Network, or only 3ABN? Does it matter if there are fewer people today that have read Ellen White than there were in 1900? What would it matter in the face of movies, online games, or television?

Jathan's generation is in the mix and of the mix, and a few of them will move the mix forward. They see all the movies and play the online games. They know who the celebrities are and what the celebrities wear. And since the dancing celebrities carry no real weight there remains room for other novelties.

I spoke with a young man just back from an overseas mission in a nasty, dirty country. I was sympathetic: what a nasty, dirty little country—and so far away. He tells me that the way he and his wife kept in touch with their culture, their home, was through online games. They both enjoy graphically violent online games as a way to relieve stress. They are glad not to be missionaries still in a nasty, dirty little country but once again home, where the Internet connection is consistent.

Jathan's generation is in the mix and wants the status and respect that come from strangling aesthetic, eviscerating ethics, and numbing sensitivity.

Can You Hear Me Now?

There are many people who watch television simply to prevent themselves from thinking. Still, claims that one's soul has hardened raise suspicions in all of us. Confession

drifts easily into melodramatizing (no pride equals that of self-lacerations). It is that dread of one's emerging self that counts twice; stranger's skepticism doesn't.

And what of the situation into which we are now steered? A future where the value of the story keeps going down? Our culture itself is being remade, reduced to clips bites, fractals, and mixes. Sitting through a sixty-minute session of worship seems like an unreasonable commitment.

We use DVR to pause, fast forward, hold for some other time—anything not to have to stay with something from beginning to end. When the narrative is disposable—obsolete—how will we teach a story as important yet as fragile as the story of God's meeting men where they are?

The more video games become our entertainment model, the less patience we have for conventional story lines—once upon a time, a widow lost a coin and she was scared, upset, and worried.

The bare ugly simple truth is that all of us feel something intruding into our personality, destroying the oneness and tranquility God offers, splitting it like a wedge, breaking it open—possibly forever.

Facts We Know but Don't Speak Of

There was a short time—in the 1970s and 1980s—when seriousness was also a part of the mix. There was real discussion.

Seriousness is no longer part of the mix. The ideal is for agreement. Why ask the tough questions? It is crazy hard to think about any of it.

The gospel has gone to the whole world and the end has not yet come. Why is that? Why is it that the gospel has gone to the whole world? It has gone so widely, so thoroughly in fact, that churches now talk about the etiquette of converting from one denomination to another and allowing a culture to remain vital while including something else. The gospel in one way or another has been preached to the whole world, the end hasn't come, and we aren't talking about it.

Why is that? A powerful generation is going away from us—the last group for whom consociation had a meaning, for whom a sense of urgency could still be felt.

The vectors aren't always recognized, only the change. You see people in reaction, notice a change, and then don't speak of it. No one likes to believe that the

vector that carried them into demography can then be completely lost within the demography. But that is what happens. All of the ideas and belief, the convictions, are gone, and we are left with only value-free rituals.

My uncle Frank performed a ritual of some significance last week. It will be the last time he is able to do so. He dedicated his most recent great-grandchild to God. As a girl, she is born into the mind-set of *Pretty Woman*, *27 Dresses*, and Britney, Paris, and Lindsey. She will be in reaction to the notion that to be feminine, a woman is to be constantly on display, a kind of pathology in and of itself.

As a medical norm, she will begin puberty at eight, not ten—as her own mother did—or twelve, as her grandmother did. She will know the affections and attentions of hyperactive boys processing too much information absent a reliable guide to healthy masculine development. Will Quentin Tarantino's *True Romance* be their guide, or will *Knocked Up*? She will be in reaction to a culture that places no value on critical judgment. What matters in her culture are choices and preferences, and choice in important matters is becoming just too troublesome.

Her great-grandfather, Frank, is of the last generation who knew big words like *consociate* or *adulthood*. The word *adult* meant something very different for him than it will for her. The culture makes available to her only the grimmest, most false-seeming adulthood possible. Endless adolescence is what will be offered her, the attraction of inappropriate attention, aspiration, and the most amazing, dazzling material possibilities. That is it. Nothing more is available to her, maybe a little mist of energy that will feel rather like love and will be called her "spiritual side."

Adults are now those adolescents in a position of control, in the world of children who are part of nothing larger than the shimmer. Adults once made difficult choices, set unpopular priorities. They remained mindful of larger issues. Adults could be trusted to say No, there is no need for this in my life, this is a value for some but not for me.

Are we all just part of nothing larger than the tantalizing gleam of today, unable to feel urgency or imminence for any coming event? ■

Rebecca Munsey is a *Spectrum* reader in Boise, Idaho.

Paradigm Shifts in Adventism

Needed or Unwanted? | BY BØRGE SCHANTZ



Some of the Christians who expected Christ's Second Coming and experienced the Great Disappointment of 1844 did not lose courage. They met, gradually organized, and formulated their fundamental beliefs around 1880.

They accepted the Reformation principles of righteousness by faith, but they thought that the Reformers had not gone far enough. There were Roman heresies that remained in Protestant churches. There were forgotten biblical teachings that were not revived.

The first Adventists thought they were called to finish what the Reformers had left undone. They labeled their special message *present truth*, a term derived from 2 Peter 1:12: "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth" (KJV).

They claimed that the forgotten biblical teachings they had rediscovered were God's appointed message before Christ's Second Coming. Erroneous teachings would be exposed when these special biblical messages were presented. The early Adventists believed they were a prophetic movement called to preach present truth. The term *present truth* constituted what they later called the "Advent message."

With these terms, vital Bible teachings (Sabbath, conditional immortality, health principles) were amalgamated

with end-time prophecies. This combination of eschatology and doctrine were regarded as the seal of God.¹

The call to proclaim present truth received strong endorsement when Ellen G. White wrote that the Third Angel's Message and the Sabbath were to be regarded as "the sealing, separating message" of God.² In other words, to gain a passport to the Holy City, one must not only accept Jesus Christ as savior, but also obey *present truth* as defined by the Church.³

Paradigm Shift in Seventh-day Adventist Eschatology

The Seventh-day Adventist Church faced the twentieth century with a message based on traditional doctrinal absolutes it inherited from Evangelical/Protestant traditions. It augmented these with biblical doctrines developed during the formative years of the movement.

The mission statement of the General Conference succinctly expresses the Church's message:

The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to communicate to all peoples the everlasting gospel of God's love in the context of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6–12, and as revealed in the life, death, resurrection, and high priestly ministry of Jesus Christ, leading them to accept Jesus as personal Saviour and Lord and to unite with His remnant church; and to nurture believers as disciples in preparation for His soon return.⁴

This mission statement is succinct and direct. Still, Adventist structures, evangelistic methodologies, theologies, and prophetic interpretations are all influenced by the world in which they exist. Over the past century, societal changes have caused the Church to make adjustments and modifications in the methods it uses to proclaim present truth.

Paradigm shifts have slowly but surely taken place. These have resulted in attempts from leaders to meet the needs of the day by efforts to incorporate current events in the religious and political world within Adventist eschatological patterns. At times, conservative boards and members have found it difficult to understand and accept these changes.⁵

End-Time Eschatology

Eschatological motives are part of the word *Adventism*. The Church is a “remnant” that fulfills end-time prophecies. In the decades up to and after the Second World War, the Church’s literature, Sabbath morning sermons, and public evangelism focused on religious and political events, scientific developments, and natural catastrophes in various parts of the world, and how the Scriptures’ predicted these events.

In contrast to these rather negative omens, the Church declared that preaching the gospel to the whole world (Matt. 24:14) was an eschatological sign of the Kingdom. In this way, missionary involvement became a work of God, as well as a work *with* God. By involving itself in worldwide missionary activities, the Church thought it could play an active role in hastening the Second Coming.

Between-Time Eschatology

Apocalyptic eschatologies were the main topics of preaching and printed materials produced by Adventist in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But the history of Christian missions has revealed that an extreme preoccupation with the nearness of the end of the world often crowds out the proclamation of the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. The result is a failure to build lasting structures needed for the future mission involvements.⁶

Likewise, early Adventists tended to ignore institutional factors vital to securing the movement’s future. Living in expectation, church members saw no need to be involved with the rapidly changing world in which

the Church existed.⁷

As with first-century Christians, nineteenth-century Adventists were concerned with the delay of his coming. The waiting time resulted in spiritual inactivity and even caused apostasies. In their eager expectation for Jesus to return, early Adventists overlooked texts implying that the Lord might delay his coming (Matt. 24:14; 2 Thess. 2:1–12; 2 Peter 3: 3–9) and warning that “no-one knows about that day or hour” (Matt. 24:36).

However in accordance with the parable in Luke 19:12, 13, some Adventists eventually transformed the delay into an opportunity and a justification for action.

Therefore He said: “A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Do business till I come.’” (Luke 19:12–13 NKJV)

This parable encouraged Christ’s followers to occupy, trade, and do business during the waiting period. The paradigm shift from an *end-time eschatology* to a *between-time eschatology* was gradual and not achieved without trauma. From the 1870s, Adventists began to focus their attention on refinements of doctrines, administrative structures, and an ever-increasing variety of enterprises devoted, for example, to publishing, education, and medicine.

Religious groups tend to go through similar stages as they develop from sects to denominations. The creation of detailed policies, bureaucracy, and institutionalization occur late in the process. This change can be seen as a symptom of decline and loss of vitality. However, a framework of institutions and policies was needed in order for early Adventism to survive.

Institutionalization had a double focus: to strengthen the Church and to reach the public. The systematic benevolence (tithing) system introduced in 1859 provided a firm economic basis. Appeals for financial support made it possible for the growing Church to plan for world missions.⁸ In itself, this was a paradigm shift.

Adventism’s approach to mission began with the exclusivist “shut door experience” police (1844–51) and expanded to concern about preaching to Caucasians in North America. By the 1870s, literature evangelists and missionaries were being sent to Protestant/Christian areas in Europe, Australia, and South Africa. Around 1890, the Church targeted the non-Christian world with evangelistic efforts.⁹

In the "do business till I come" period, present truth was still preached. Interpretations of end-time prophecies were updated as new wars and calamities occurred and sophisticated means of communication were invented. The two paradigms (end-time and between-times) coexisted, but often in an unhappy marriage and with various kinds of tensions. The between-time concept no doubt gradually gained the upper hand.

Social Concern Eschatology

Over time, another paradigm gradually crept in. In 1960s, general global concerns that held the interest of people in the late twentieth century received attention in Adventist sermons and literature. This shift emphasized present truth less than before.

This paradigm was a humanistic philosophy that stressed apocalyptic preaching less and placed more emphasis on general religious topics, including social and psychological aspects. This new priority did not occur without tension and resistance from conservative members. They were anxious about maintenance of the original remnant's uniqueness and the Advent Message as emphasis moved away from apocalyptic theology to doctrines shared with mainline Christians.

Social activities for societies and individuals are powerful, worthwhile, and biblical. However, they have the side effect of pushing spiritual matters into the background and making witness for distinctive doctrines a questionable activity.

In Western countries, social concerns are best observed in a trend within some educational and medical institutions. Whereas emphasis on social services had previously incorporated both physical and spiritual dimensions, spiritual aspects were gradually pushed into the background.

In general church activities, such as lectures and literature, it is currently apparent that the nearness of Christ's coming and signs of the times no longer stand in the forefront. This, despite the fact that people today are troubled by issues previously at the center of Adventist preaching. Various kinds of wars, terrorism, Islamism, global warming, climate changes, and financial disasters could be timely elements for public evangelism if newly interpreted within biblical themes.

One bishop in the Danish Lutheran Church stimulated a national debate recently by proclaiming that climate changes and other calamities among people and in nature

could be fulfillments of Bible texts as signs of the world's end. In lectures, sermons, television interviews, and articles, he referred to New Testament prophecies about wars and rumors of war, earthquakes, famines, distress among nations, and signs in the sun, moon, and stars.

Fellow bishops, pastors, and churchgoers reacted strongly to what they regarded as over-imaginative interpretations of New Testament texts. They associated the bishop irrelevantly with what they termed "dubious Christian sects," such as the Jehovah's Witnesses.¹⁰

In this case, it was sobering and disappointing that Seventh-day Adventists, with a history of more than one hundred years in Denmark and a name that highlights the Second Advent, were not even mentioned in media references as a tradition that preaches about signs of the Second Coming.

Presently, lectures, seminars, Voice of Prophecy Correspondence School lessons, and articles in Seventh-day Adventist publications slant steeply toward subjects such as family relations, stress management, marriage, child-rearing, problems with teenagers, health and diet, and personal finance. Generally, the only place our end-time doctrines are still being taught is on private and church-supported television channels.

One Sabbath morning, I was abruptly asked to preach at a divine service. I quickly searched my sermon file and found a lecture about the Second Coming of Christ that I had presented years before. I adapted this public lecture for an Adventist audience, although I thought it would be spiritual milk for babes. After the service, however, quite a few hearers told me that they appreciated the sermon and commented that they had not heard about this pillar of our fundamental beliefs for years.

It should be observed that reports of church population show either no growth or losses in Western churches, but increasing numbers in traditional mission territories. Out of about sixteen million Adventists, more than 80 percent live in the developing world. In this area, where political and economic conditions are often difficult, contextualization and adaptation of present truth to local environments bring amazing results. This happens despite minimal financial support.

Obsession with social concern in Western churches has affected financial support for traditional missions negatively. In the past, mission appeals were often made to spread the gospel, but today these appeals

tend to focus on development and relief.

Traditionally, the Seventh-day Adventist Mission Statement has emphasized the main objective of the Advent movement as proclamation of the everlasting gospel to all people. Worldwide mission has been not only a sign of Christ's Second Coming, but also an effort to hasten that event. Social services offered by schools and medical facilities have been extremely important factors in this worldwide task. They have educated and assisted the needed, breaking down prejudices and preparing people to accept the everlasting gospel.

Today, however, those supporting agencies and activities have acquired a tendency to become goals in themselves, in some cases even dominating the biblical mandate to preach the gospel to all nations. No doubt one reason for lack of balance is heavy financial support from governments and private non-Adventist donors. Often these donors stipulate that their funds should be used to address social problems and promote development.¹¹

Advantages and Dilemmas Caused by Paradigm Shifts

Paradigm shifts happen unobserved all the time. New paradigms are generally developed from old ones as circumstances and situations change. Societies and churches continually evolve, which suggests that every generation must face these shifts.

The causes are legion. Main factors are developments in technology, transportation, communication, and behavioral sciences. These factors have great potential to advance society, but they may also become secularizing influences.¹²

Another cause for such shifts is that we live in a world where adherents to various kinds of religion are no longer separated geographically. Modern communication, immigration, and integration have made all of us neighbors. People are exposed to religious and cultural differences that they not only need to understand, tolerate, and accept, but also live with.

One paramount cause for paradigm shifts is the gap between generations that all societies experience. The younger generation—often postmodernists—question not only church structures they have inherited, but also the belief systems of their parents.

Change is always threatening, often leading people to view paradigm shifts negatively and meet them with scepticism. However, such shifts are not necessarily neg-

ative. Although inevitably unsettling, they present new challenges and opportunities. We need to figure out how to hold on to "absolutes" in established paradigms while embracing positives in new ones.

Thus, if we try to balance present truth (biblical absolutes) with current social concerns, proclamation of the gospel will be strengthened. All three paradigms are important. However, overemphasis on any one results in unbalanced priorities. Rightly understood and managed, tensions caused by paradigm shifts can be healthy and creative.

Paradigms Scrutinized

The main controversial issues that the apostle Paul addressed in his epistles were matters that arose from the paradigm shift that took place when Christianity emerged as a continuation of Judaism. The apostle stands out as moderator and reconciler par excellence in this delicate process.

Paul was a Pharisee: he was particular about all matters related to the laws of Moses, Hebrew religion, and Jewish culture. His training in Jewish law was combined with his cross-cultural experience as he grew up in the Diaspora.¹³ These factors made him better able than any other apostle to distinguish cultural baggage in the old paradigm (Judaism) and determine its relevance for the new paradigm (Christianity) when preached to Jews and Gentiles. Paul could discern and focus on issues in the old paradigm that were divine absolutes needing to be maintained while focusing on the new paradigm, the gospel.

Today, in similar situations, the old and new must be carefully analyzed. Decisions can then be made about which elements agree with biblical absolutes and should not be touched. Other elements of cultural and popular character can be left out safely.

Adventists should make a clear distinction between core biblical truths expressed in the Church's doctrines and mission statement, on one side, and neutral trends and modes dictated or influenced by culture, on the other. The former should always be maintained, whereas the latter demands adaptation.

Obedience to the Great Commission makes it necessary for us to evaluate the various elements in paradigm shifts—visible as well as subtle—that could become goals in themselves, not the means to fulfill a divine call to bring people into a meaningful and personal relationship to Jesus Christ and his church.

In the history of Adventist missions, problems have

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Winter 2009 Schedule of Meetings

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------|--|
| 1/03/2009 | 11:00 | Atonement & Salvation: Les Wright |
| 1/10/2009 | 11 & 2:15 | Financial Challenges Facing Adventism: David Denis |
| 1/17/2009 | 11:00 | How to Read the Bible: Terry Anderson |
| 1/24/2009 | 11:00 | Joint with City Lights |
| 1/31/2009 | 11:00 | Adventists, War and Military Service: Ron Lawson |
| 2/7/2009 | 11:00 | Modern Physics, the New Rabbit Hole? Ed Samuel |
| 2/14/2009 | 11 & 2:15 | From Doubt to Faith & My most Interesting Archaeological Discoveries: Larry Geraty |
| 2/21/2009 | 11:00 | Christians, Unfair Trials and Capital Punishment: Jonathan Gradess |
| 2/28/2009 | 11:00 | Joint with City Lights |
| 3/07/2009 | 11:00 | How to Read the Bible II: Terry Anderson |
| 3/14/2009 | 11 & 2:15 | Life in Occupied Territories & Christ the Fifth Way: Ron Osborn |
| 3/21/2009 | 11:00 | Reformed Church or Reforming Church: Kristine Gibbie |
| 3/28/2009 | 11:00 | Joint with City Lights |

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arisen when such supporting structures as medical or educational institutions became major foci of the Church and replace the main objectives. In all activities and enterprises, the main objectives should be kept clearly in view.

As a Christian movement, Seventh-day Adventists are called to bring a unique message to the world. While seeking to maintain a balance between all elements in this comprehensive task, we must keep our special calling in the forefront untouched. ■

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A native and resident of Denmark, **Børge Schantz** has served for forty-seven years as a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, missionary, evangelist, field president, and departmental director, as well as founding director of the Seventh-day Adventist Global Centre for Islamic Studies.

Jesus, the Work, and the Kingdom

Reflections on Church Life and Mission | BY LOWELL C. COOPER



Some church historians suggest that the legalization of Christianity in the early part of the fourth century fundamentally changed the Church's self-understanding and conception of its task, with the result that it transitioned from being a movement to being an institution.

Maybe some of the legacy from that time shapes the ongoing tension between mission and machinery, between form and function, proclamation and practice. It is important that both scholarly and administrative pursuits engage with the constant challenge of communicating present truth in the ever-changing contexts of society. Propositional truth must be expressed also in practical and relational terms.

"In the name of Jesus"—What does it mean?

The Apostle Paul concludes a series of statements about the character of the "new" man with these words: "Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way" (Col. 3:17 *The Message*). "In the name of Jesus" has become something of a subtitle

for much, perhaps all, of what the Church does. We pray, sing, plan, build, dedicate, inaugurate, celebrate, teach, preach, and heal in the name of Jesus.

The phrase is somewhat of a brand identity for Christian life and action. What does it mean? Jesus used the phrase on several occasions as the qualifier of authentic Christian action.

Matthew 18:5: "Whoever receives one little child like this *in My name* receives Me."

Matthew 18:20: "For where two or three are gathered together *in My name*, I am there in the midst of them."

Mark 9:39: "...no one who works a miracle *in My name* can soon afterward speak evil of Me."

Mark 9:41: "...whoever gives you a cup of water to drink *in My name*, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."

Mark 16:17, 18: "...these signs will follow those who believe: *In My name* they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

John 14:13,14: "And whatever you ask *in My name*, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything *in My name*, I will do it."

John 14:26: "...the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send *in My name*, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

John 16:23, 24: "...whatever you ask the Father *in My name* He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing *in My name*. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."

It is obvious that doing or saying things in the name of Jesus is somehow qualitatively different from doing/saying things without employing the name of Jesus. What difference could the name make?

A recent item of mail contained a letter thanking me for ordering a new feature in the phone and Internet service at our house. I had not recalled ever ordering the third-party convenience that was described. I sinned grievously by concluding that my wife had done it. When she came home from work, she was not halfway through the doorway when I addressed her in the interrogative case and the accusative voice.

Of course, she had not done what I had assumed. In a phone conversation with the company that sent the letter, I learned the date on which the order had been placed. Furthermore, the request had come via the Internet by someone using my name. I denied ever authorizing the order and decried the presumptuous and unlawful intent of the party who had done so. Though the matter was not life threatening, I felt violated.

Jesus spoke not only about the promise of doing things in his name, he spoke also about the peril of using his name. One can presume to act in his name, but it is only a pretense and Jesus has nothing to do with it.

Matthew 7:22-23: "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied *in Your name*, cast out demons *in Your name*, and done many wonders *in Your name*?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you....'"

Matthew 24:5 "...many will come *in My name*, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many." (See also Mark 13:6)

The promise and the peril of acting in the name of Jesus has profound implications for the Christian. What shall we understand as the meaning of this phrase and

what impact should it have on the life of the believer and the Church? At a minimum, to do something "in the name of Jesus" means:

- To act under the authority of Jesus
- To act in the interest of Jesus
- To act like Jesus

If this is so, it is worthwhile to review the life of Jesus to be sure that one understands the convictions and values that shaped his ministry. Though this is by no means an exhaustive summary about Jesus, a serious reader of the Gospels cannot help but discern at least these characteristics of Jesus life and ministry.

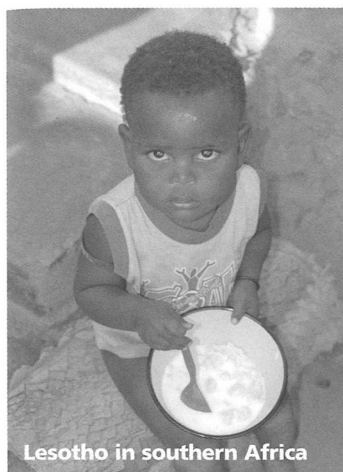
Jesus Valued the Least, the Lost, the Last, and the Lowest

He gave much attention to those overlooked by society: children, the poor, the sick, those maimed or mentally challenged, and sinners of the worst kind (Matt. 4:23, 24). In the minds of many, his reputation was sullied by the time and attention he gave to those society had marginalized.

The contrast between Jesus and the crowd, between Jesus and his disciples, is highlighted in the story about the healing of blind Bartimaeus. This is the second last healing miracle recorded in the Gospels. It occurs when Jesus and his disciples are on their way to Jerusalem, his trial and crucifixion. Just fifteen miles from his goal he stops for roadside ministry, which really would make no difference to the great end he had in view.

Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem, where the final scenes of his earthly life will be played out in awful and public array. His ministry is coming to a climax. All the strands of his teaching, the great focus of prophecy, are about to be revealed. Big things are at stake. Yet the Master stops! This single moment, which really would be unnoticed amidst the heightening drama just on the horizon, represents a moment of destiny for a solitary soul. A work of love is never a small thing. Jesus put a high value on small acts: the widow's mite, the cup of cold water....

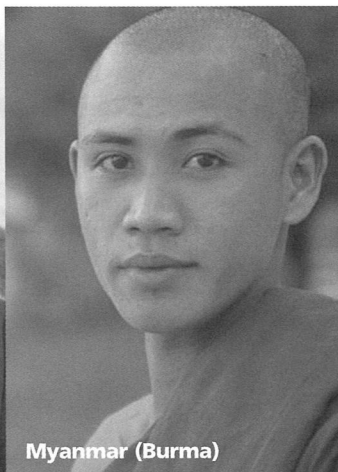
Jesus arrests our preoccupation with quantity and mass by demonstrating a consuming interest in the plight of one person. The message of Jesus is that an individual matters greatly. The growth of the Kingdom



Lesotho in southern Africa



Australia



Myanmar (Burma)



Mongolia

is not measured in averages or rates or bushels or in millions. It is prefaced upon the importance of one. One sheep out of a hundred, one coin out of many, one planet out of billions.

This story exposes and explodes the tension between the spiritual and the secular, between theology and sociology. The crowds that followed Jesus and his disciples heard the same cry he did. But they dismissed it as something that was not of interest or concern to him because it wasn't of interest or concern to them. They had built a wall of distinction between the religion and relief. The burning issues of the day were theological: Who is the Christ? Have you kept the Sabbath? How much tithe did you pay? Is it all right for the chosen to eat cheese? And the crying need of humanity was relegated to the periphery of life.

Jesus shows that theology and service belong together. Any attempt to segregate the two diminishes both. Jesus' response to the cry of Bartimaeus shows that poverty, suffering, unemployment, sickness, and hunger are also religious questions. Yet we often say: Keep the church out of economic and social issues, stick to salvation themes. Jesus demonstrated that all human need is his business. It still is.

Could it be that the Church concentrates itself in the realm of theology and doctrine to the exclusion of ministry? That we use our brains and our tongues more than our hands and our feet? That our investment of energy in questions of doctrine leaves us little time and strength for service? Offering a prayer is hardly a sufficient Christian response when what the person needs is potatoes.

Christ claims our help in many a strange disguise:

Now, fever ridden, on a bed He lies;

Homeless He wanders now beneath the stars;

Now counts the number of His prison bars;

Now bends beside us, crowned with hoary hairs.

No need have we to climb the heavenly stairs

And press our kisses on His feet and hands;

In every man that suffers, He, the Man of Sorrows, stands.

—Anonymous

Surveys of Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle and practices reveal that one of our weakest religious practices is engagement in and service to the community where we live. If we are truly living and acting in the name of Jesus, shouldn't we expect a very visible presence at sites of deepest human need?

There are signs that things may be changing. Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions are increasingly adopting service modules as part of the educational curriculum. A church in Seoul, Korea, features a special ministry for elderly people in its community. Aged people come in large numbers on Sabbath. After worship service and a meal provided by the church, medical professionals from the congregation conduct a free medical clinic. Other members operate a hair salon. Still others provide a massage service. All this, in the name of Jesus.

Jesus Placed Emphasis on the "Nowness" of the Kingdom

The good news that Jesus brought was good news about today, not just the future. When he sent out the twelve, he instructed them: "as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"

The Sermon on the Mount and the kingdom stories are full of immediate meaning for the hearers. The imagery of Jesus' followers being light and salt speaks of kingdom realities in the present.

The whole point of what Jesus was up to was that he was doing, close up, in the present, what he was promising long-term, in the future. And what he was promising for that future, and doing in that present, was not saving souls for a disembodied eternity but rescuing people from the corruption and decay of the way the world presently is so they could enjoy, already in the present, that renewal which is God's ultimate purpose—and so they could thus become colleagues and partners in that larger project. (N. T. Wright, Surprised By Hope, 192)

Acts 1 presents an inside look at the big concerns of the disciples and the big concerns of Jesus.

After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." So when they met together they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

You cannot blame them for asking the question. The Messiah and his Kingdom were centuries-old dreams of the Jews. They decorated their national life with pronouncements of the prophets. During the repeated cycles of oppression and subservience to their enemies, they polished the dream of ultimate victory and dominance. So it is not surprising that they would think of this as the appropriate time for its fulfillment. Their hopes and dreams had been dashed by the Cross and revived by the resurrection. They had become hungry for miracles. The momentum was all on their side. Surely this was the right time.

Throughout the centuries since the book of Acts, there have been many who have watched and waited with the same question uppermost in their minds. We also have been watching the signs, not only watching them but interpreting them, plotting them on timelines and charts, and proposing various scenarios as to how the end—or is it the beginning—will take place. Surely

we are even now at the edge of an auspicious time. Hence, the question also lingers on our lips: "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the Kingdom...?"

It is interesting, and puzzling, that Jesus didn't answer the question. Here was the opportunity to paint the mother of all end-time charts, thus sparing us decades of conflict and injury to each other. Instead of answering their question about the future, he shifted their attention to the present.

He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

There are three important things to note here:

1. Jesus' reply indicates that, for the followers of Jesus, preoccupation over the timing of the Kingdom shouldn't be allowed to divert one from service in the kingdom that is already here.
2. Jesus shifts the emphasis from speculation about the future to demonstration in the present. He urges us to leave the future in God's hand and instead show people what it means to live here and now as the children of God.
3. Jesus shifts the emphasis from restoration of the past to transformation of the current. You can't take refuge in the "good old days." The disciples were doing just that when they asked for the restoration of a kingdom that was like the echo of David's day. Jesus' answer implies that you cannot set the clock back. But we can, under the power of the Holy Spirit, help to transform the present, to shape and mold today so that it can be used for the purposes of God.

True, Jesus did teach that we should be mindful of the times in which we live. His parables of watchfulness and readiness have an enduring application to any age—and especially to ours. But his answer to the disciples is a clear indication that we are not to become preoccupied with the time of his return. Instead, we are to seize the opportunities of the present moment for the glory of his name and the illustration of his character. Some things we can work for; other things we must wait for. You can work for a living, but you must wait for sunrise. You can plant a garden, but you must wait for spring.



Indonesia



Bangladesh



Oaxaca, Mexico

Jesus Understood the Nature of a Finished Work

"Finishing the work" is a favorite among Adventist expressions. One can hear it used worldwide but its use is rarely, if ever, accompanied by an explanation of what it might mean. It is most often, almost exclusively, used in connection with quantitative analyses of where we are and what we have done.

Perhaps we do this somewhat reflexively because of the Great Commission to go into all the world and make disciples. Although no one ever says it directly, the implication, at least from some of our reports, suggests that the task is being accomplished at a good pace. Still others leave one with the impression that we are done when the last person on earth is baptized.

When is the work really finished? It is a tough question and loaded with assumptions. There is a danger that even thinking about the question and searching for a definition of "finished work" will lead one to discouragement and despair.

It was not so for Jesus. He could confidently declare: "I have finished the work which You have given Me to do" (John 17:4).

How could this possibly be true? When Jesus made the claim, recorded as part of his prayer in John 17, not all sick people were healed. There were still blind people, poor people, corrupt leaders, faulty religious systems, and all kinds of fallen humanity at every turn. He had barely gone beyond the borders of his own nation, let alone the whole world. There is no evidence of his having visited ancient civilizations elsewhere on the globe. No record exists of him having been to North America. Yet he declares, "I have

finished the work You gave me to do."

Surely the secret to understanding this bold statement lies in the adjacent declaration, "I have glorified You on the earth." It is a qualitative claim more than a quantitative one.

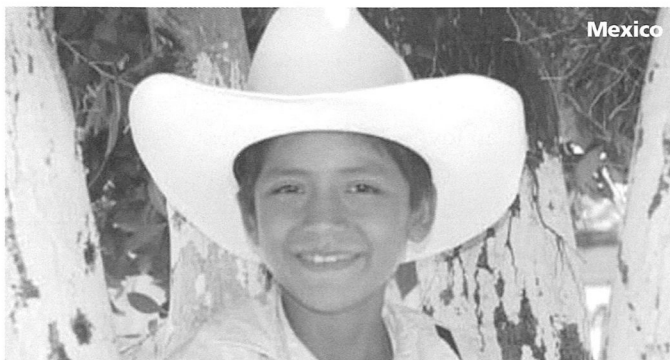
Although the work role given to us is different from that given to Jesus, can we not also view our task as bringing glory to God? If so, can we not capture a new sense in which we can be engaged in finishing the work—by focusing on the qualitative aspects of all that we are and do.

Here lies the power of truth. The unstudied, unconscious influence of a holy life is the most convincing sermon that can be given in favor of Christianity. Argument, even when unanswerable, may provoke only opposition; but a godly example has a power that it is impossible wholly to resist. (Ellen G. White, Acts of the Apostles, 510)

It was said of Basil the Great that his words were like thunder because his life was like lightning. What if that could be said of the Church? What if the qualitative aspects of our living in the name of Jesus became so noticeable that the world would stop to listen to our words? Whenever I hear that term *finishing the work* I am reminded of some words that were written for occasions when we painfully realize that we cannot do it all.



India



The Prayer of Oscar Romero

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

Amen.¹

The Southern Asia Division ministerial secretary conducted a workers' meeting during my early days of service in India. I have no recollection of the presentations during the entire day. At the end of the day, the ministerial secretary said, "Now to close the day,

I will give you a short quiz."

He wrote on the chalkboard a simple but incomplete statement: "_____ will do the work if _____ will provide the _____." He then invited us to fill in the blanks. We made several attempts.

"Pastors will do the work if the laymembers will provide the funds."

"Laymembers will do the work if pastors will provide the training."

"Seventh-day Adventists will do the work if God will provide the Holy Spirit."

With obvious disappointment in his scholars, the ministerial secretary shook his head in dismay at every suggestion we made. We just couldn't get it right—and we realized it, too. After a time of silence he began, "Fellows, if you ever forget this you will end up spinning your wheels and going nowhere, you will rev your engines but never find the gears." Then he filled the blanks and informed us of the statement's source: "God will do the work if we will furnish Him the instruments." (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9:107)

Conclusion

Carrying out Christian mission and witness in the name of Jesus is a marvelous privilege for every believer. The promises and prospects are really limitless when you listen to what Jesus said about things done in his name. From his own example, we learn the importance of people, even the lowest; the power of the kingdom is a present reality; and that finishing the work is deeply qualitative. It consists first of all in bringing glory to God. Ultimately, this is what it means to live and work "in Jesus name." ■

Notes and References

1. The words of this prayer are attributed to Oscar Romero, but they were never spoken by him. They were written by Ken Untener for a homily spoken by John Cardinal Dearden in November of 1979 at a mass for deceased priests.

Lowell C. Cooper is a vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He presented this sermon at a worship service for the Adventist Society of Religion Scholars, Boston, Massachusetts, on November 22, 2008.

community of faith may become co-opted by it. All “isms” may represent, at best, only temporary steps toward the Kingdom, taken within a very provisional order.

The only absolute order for those who seek first the Kingdom is the far distant one. At this particular moment, that transcendent order calls us to read signs of the times with a discerning eye in an unencumbered manner to witness to that which God has declared will be. As the Cuenavaca bishop cautioned: “When the community of faith reduces the Kingdom of God to any ‘ism’ of humankind, it loses its capacity to perform the critical prophetic function entrusted to it.”

2008 POSTSCRIPT ON GAP CLOSING It should be pointed out that evangelicals of the twenty-first century—perhaps having taken a page from such socially conscious evangelist colleagues as Jim Wallis, Tony Campolo, and Ron Sider—are currently embracing programs that take salvation well beyond the personal realm.⁵ Witness heightened evangelical involvement in environmental concerns, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and prolife definitions that go well beyond a traditional anti-abortion stance.

No less personage than the “father of liberation theology,” Gustavo Gutierrez, praises the work of Fernando and Ana Stahl for the manner in which they combined personal transformation and social transformation: “In the face of severe injustice, suffering, and oppression, the Stahls identified with the poorest of the poor and incarnated the gospel in ways which profoundly impacted the spiritual, social, economic, and political life of the Peruvian highlands.”

Gutiérrez echoes the endorsement of fellow progressive Catholic priest Estéban Judd Zannon, who reintroduced this author to the Stahl story almost two decades ago. At that time, he declared with enthusiasm, “The Stahls are our spiritual forbears.” He went on to note that the Stahls “incarnated” the gospel not merely in churches and chapels, but also in clinics, health education programs, in open markets, and—above all—in establishing the first coeducational and indigenous education in the Peruvian highlands. Recall the priest’s conclusion, delivered with a drum roll flourish: “The Stahls were missionaries, visionaries, and revolutionaries!”

2008 PERSONAL POSTSCRIPT I was raised in parochial Loma Linda, California, during the 1950s. Dwight D. Eisenhower

was in the White House and all was well with the world. This was a Loma Linda of orange groves and void of freeways, minorities, or sin. *Leave it to Beaver* portrayed the promise of an idyllic family life to families of that unincorporated town who had rationalized the virtues of television. Our local populous avoided public policy issues to the extent that its citizens eschewed voting—until John F. Kennedy ran for the U.S. presidency.

Personal rewards garnered from participating in these international study tours include the privilege of meeting a wide variety of people, gaining insights from seeing new corners of the world, and experiencing new takes on religion and public policy. Additional rewards, some discussed earlier, include visiting such sites as the vast Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City, with its thousands of artifacts; learning about different cosmologies while watching the sun set and/or rise at Mexico’s Chitén Itzá pyramid and Peru’s incomparable Machu Picchu; and touring the Cathedral in Cusco while witnessing the syncretism that emerges as cultures connect.

The rewards also include sailing Lake Titicaca en route to worshiping with an Adventist congregation, standing at the Stahl statue in Plateria on the lake’s shores, and cruising the mighty Amazon, along which Ana Stahl delivered thousands of babies. Then there is the excitement of hearing firsthand from informed academics within and beyond the community of faith, no less than from professors and peasants who have experienced salvation, in part, through the witness of evangelists as well as liberationists. Even from evangelists cum liberationists?

But the most valued reward comes in the form of comments by students and community participants who echo the gist of the following sentence: “On this study tour, God, God’s church, and God’s world have grown bigger for me.”

The sociology of religion suggests that the tension that arises between withdrawing evangelist types and the social engineering liberationist types is an ever-present reality. As a sociological phenomenon, the Christian church faces in each generation the paradox of the evangelists’ demand for the sanctification of the self through a witness to the gospel that demands detachment from the world and the liberationists’ demand that puts hands and feet on such terms as justice and righteousness in an effort to face down

the tensions and struggles manifest in the external order.

Evangelist types tend to caution that the religious community is to function as a colony of heaven, and thus remain unspotted from the world and save persons from it, whereas liberationist types tend to assert that the roles of salt of the earth and the light of the world demand individual and social commitment to the world that God so loved as expressed through endeavors of social transformation.

The evangelist cautions against false doctrines that lead to accommodation. The liberationist counters that calls proclaiming good news to the poor, release of the captives, sight for the blind, and liberty for the oppressed inform a platform that may find guidance as directly from the Gospel of Mark (read Luke, Isaiah, and Amos) as from the philosophy of Marx.

Ernst Troeltsch suggests that there will always be a historical sea saw as church types compromise with culture to embrace the world and as sect types resist such compromise. Might conditions exist in which evangelist and liberationist types find sufficient space for an ongoing dialogue from which a "prophetic remnant" type might emerge? ■

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Charles Teel is professor of religion and society at La Sierra University, Riverside, California.

FREEDOM ■ Continued from page 45...

shown to consist of a series of physical phenomena with no evidence for a decision point where the brain can exercise free will. There is no evidence pointing toward René Descartes' "soul" living in the pineal gland, which makes free choices. There is no President George W. Bush within our brains declaring, "I am the decider."

Let's pause here to make sure we are clear on what we are NOT discussing.

1. This is not the question of whether our behavior is based up genetics or environment—nature versus nurture. As mentioned before, the answer to that is a resounding, Both! Neuroscientists are finding evidence that our genetics play a greater role than we usually suspect. However, all cognitive and behavioral phenomena appear to result from one or the other with no apparent role for "free will."
2. This is not a question of whether scientific thinking is superior to other forms of thought or truth, such as poetry or philosophy. The neurophysiology of all thought is based on physical processes of the brain. The brain is the mind. Seventh-day Adventists, as monists, have been saying that for more than a century; we may not have always fully realized the implications.
3. This is not a question of whether the brain can grow or come up with novel thoughts. Once again, the answer is a resounding, Yes! However, novel thoughts are the result of the brain reacting to its genetic and environmental cues through the strengthening of certain circuits and the dying away of other circuits based, once again, on physics. Neurons do not "decide" which direction to grow or when to initiate cell death (apoptosis). These are based on genetic "programs" and environmental cues. Yet novel thoughts occur as a result of genetic and environmental interactions.

The thought that neuroscientists have lost our minds disturbs even those who subscribe to it. Science writer John Horgan writes in a *New York Times* opinion piece, "Free will is something I cherish. I can live with the idea of science killing off God. But free will? That's going too far."⁷ Postmodern thinkers find it acceptable that neurobiology explains Jane Seymour's near-death experience as a result of activation of the right angular-

supramarginal gyrus and superior temporal gyrus rather than God. But it is much more troubling that neurobiology further suggests we have no free will.

Several theories have been advanced that attempt to salvage some shred of free will for humanity in the face of neurosciences discoveries and implications that lean toward determinism.

For example, Stuart Hameroff suggests that because of the random nature of quantum physics, not all the future is determined.⁸ However, this reduces "libertarian free will" to random actions. Rather than supporting a person's ability to make choices, it simply acknowledges that quantum physics introduces an element of randomness because the workings of our nervous system are based on physics. However, a brain that decides on the basis of randomness is no more "free" than a brain that decides based on other forms of physics.

In contrast, William Newsome proposes that complex systems like the stock market or a supercomputer that performs artificial intelligence may transcend more simple processes from which they arise.⁹ Termed "emergent phenomena," such complex systems are capable of developing novel, unforeseen decisions. Although the brain is undoubtedly marvelously complex, it is not comprised of millions of self-conscious Lilliputians trading shares of Google.

Rather, it is made of millions of neurons aggregating electrical potentials and firing or not firing based on this aggregation. The fact that intelligence emerges from the neurons of the brain (or the circuits of a supercomputer) exemplifies this, but in what sense does this provide free will?

A number of philosophers have proposed that, although the non-conscious brain might propose which arm to move, the conscious brain is still free to reject the proposal. Although we may not have "free will," at least we have "free won't." This does not account for the fact that the rejection of the proposal is itself based upon the firing or non-firing of sequences of neurons initiated in the non-conscious stages of thought.

Still, most humans think they have free will. According to Mark Hallett, a movement disorders researcher at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, "Free will does exist, but it's a perception, not a

power or a driving force. People experience free will. They have the sense they are free. The more you scrutinize it, the more you realize you don't have it."¹⁰ All you can see when studying the brain is, in Overbye's phrase, "physics all the way down."

Scientist Michael Silberstein summed it up for Overbye by noting that every physical system ever investigated turned out to be deterministic (one action causing the next reaction) or random (like quantum physics). "Both are bad news for free will," writes Silberstein. If humans have free will outside of the reach of physics, "It must be—what—some weird magical power?"¹¹ The only way to escape the determinism of physics appears to be...metaphysics.

What practical difference would it make if we did not possess libertarian free will intrinsically? Not much, I suspect. After all, most people believe they have free will. Furthermore, most people assume that most other people also have free will and act accordingly. Perhaps this is a question of importance only to philosophers and theologians. Most of us will continue to assume that we choose what to wear each morning (except for those who rely on spouses).

For Calvinist Christians, this should merely reinforce John Calvin's insights developed long before modern neurosciences. God creates some brains to respond to him, others cannot. It's all in Romans 9. End of story.

For Arminian Christians who espouse dualism, a deterministic brain also poses no serious problems. As long as a metaphysical soul exists, it can be, in George W. Bush's terms, "the Decider." The soul is free of the constraints of physics and thus free to decide.

This leaves atheists and Adventists.

If one accepts a purely physical universe, it's physics (classical and quantum) all the way down, and there does not seem to be free will—at least in a meaningful form. If so, I suggest that atheists must be careful to tamper with the brains that have evolved. The vast majority of the people in this world have their brains wired for the metaphysical. Wresting the supernatural away from them may have serious, unforeseen consequences.

Realizing that humans generally appear to seek a

"higher purpose" for their existence, I suggest it would be better to encourage people to find meaning in benign religions (let's say Buddhism) rather than trying to prove atheism for themselves. Better to keep their brains occupied contemplating non-existent realms than to allow their brains to turn into genocidal Khmer Rouge trying to coerce compliance to a human utopia. But don't blame Pol Pot. Although he had an unfortunate set of genes and experiences, he did not have a choice.

For Seventh-day Adventists, who believe that humans are unitary organisms not dualistic body-soul (or brain-mind) combinations, it seems to me that God must relate to the diseased, impaired organs of our brains if he is to interact with humans. Since my brain continues to believe in God and free will, it continues trying to fit the discoveries of neurotheology and neurobiology into an open Arminian worldview.

Did God, like a computer operating system designer, make our brains with "back doors," where he can influence the physics of our brain? Perhaps God designed into human brains centers that appreciated the mystical experiences or mechanisms that allowed for trust. Certainly the human aspiration for higher meaning in life that causes us to devote our lives to ideals like God, democracy, or communism has long been cited by Christian apologists as evidence of God's existence. Now we may have some ideas of how he accomplished that.

I do not know how a supernatural God balances all the neuronal and synaptic mechanisms to allow our physical brains to make a free choice, but it seems that it would be possible for God to present our brains such a choice and then politely step back into the waiting room to give them time to think. Thus, God presents our brains with choices without foreknowing our ultimate decision in the matter. I sense echoes of such a process in the Genesis 3 account of the Fall. Perhaps we could call this limited form of free will theogenic free will. As an Adventist neurologist, that is what my brain likes to believe.

An alternative and equally satisfactory Adventist solution proposes that God endows each person with a metaphysical entity beyond the physics of our brains that can retain free will. Although not capable of independent consciousness, this demi-soul can be "the

Decider." We might term this intermediate condition between monism and dualism "1.5ism."

All people who accept metaphysics have something to offer our postmodern, materialistic world: the possibility of choice. Surely a dialog with secularists on the issue of neurobiology and free will would prove more fruitful than endlessly debating embryology or the age of the earth.

If our brains accept God, we have the metaphysical "magic" necessary to allow for free will as a direct, miraculous, magical gift from God. Perhaps God was actually giving Jane Seymour's brain a choice to enter into a deeper relationship while she experienced floating over the resuscitation team. Perhaps Jane's brain responded by promising to respect him more. Perhaps God, who loves you, Jane, and me just as we are—as physical organisms (not mystical souls or minds)—accepted her vow and came in. ■

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Daniel Giang is a professor of neurology at Loma Linda University.

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A UNIFIED THEORY OF MATTER AND FORCE | BY PAT CASON

Observing millions of subatomic particles, scientists at the Stanford Linear Accelerator found a basic but subtle lopsidedness in nature that may explain why the universe contains mostly matter, rather than being devoid of stars, planets and people.

—from *The New York Times*, July, 2001

Blessed be the halt and lame, the planet titled on its off-kilter axis, for they shall exist. Blessed be the deficit of antimatter, imbalance between what is and isn't, for matter matters. Blessed be the team of scientists

examining millions of subatomic particles, for they shall find what poets know in lines scrolled out across the page by pen, that undulating stylus of the heart's seismograph. Blessed be Dave Brubeck's

Quartet, for "Blue Rondo a la Turk" with its ONE-two-ONE-two-ONE-two-ONE-two-three against a POOMchik-poom CHIKpoom-chik beat recorded the summer I turned three and lurched into Prairie Creek, where I'd have drowned

but for my eccentric uncle, who clung to roots in the river's bank to fish me out in time—blessed be Brubeck's Quartet, for the cosmos swings, and I am in it.

Blessed be all off-balance characters and misfits including men who collect bottles from garbage cans and shout at the moon, their three-legged dogs, the girl who weaves fluorescent colored strings through her matted dreadlocks, for apparently

off-center kooks freaks oddballs nuts are the driving force behind the existence of everything, everywhere.



Blessed be my chipped blue cup, the cat with one blue eye, one yellow; all other domestic, alien things, including irregular regularities, like erratic menstrual cycles, for they shall sometimes produce gap-toothed kids.

Blessed be the subatomic particles with quirky names, the concept of electron wobble, for because of them I exist, the universe matters, the cosmos swings. Blessed

be the heart's athletic asymmetry of shifting alliances; all uncertainties, confused compasses, crooked roads and twisted fates, for because of them, and Brubeck's

"Take Five," the universe and all that is in it exists—yes, blessed be the Dave Brubeck Quartet for because of it the universe not only exists but the damn cosmos swings, baby!

Pat Cason received an M.F.A. in Writing (fiction) from Pacific University, and works in public sector mental health in the Pacific northwest.