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SPECTRUM



The European Battle for the Soul of Adventism

GODencounters

Liturgical Adventism: Towards a Theology of Worship

Does Adventism Still
Need the Geoscience
Research Institute?

Creation, Evolution, and Adventist Higher Education

In the Eye of the
Storm: An Interview
with LSU President
Randal Wisbey

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SPECTRUM

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Cover: photograph of the clock tower of Otto-Lüpke Haus at Friedensau Adventist University in Germany. If the eyes are the “windows of the soul,” this rose window reminded us of the soul of European Adventism. Story on page 50. Photo: Tim Puko.

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Off-the-Record Conversations on The Road to Atlanta | BY BONNIE DWYER

Where and how do we want decisions made about the policies of the church? How do we address sensitive issues in an open and fair manner? Those questions came to mind amid reports of a private meeting during the General Conference Annual Council session in October.

A dinner invitation was extended to North American union conference presidents via e-mail. Seven of them arrived at the home of Ed and Ann Zinke on Oct. 12: Gordon Retzer, Max Trevino, Max Torkelsen, Daniel Jackson, Ricardo Graham, Roscoe Howard, and Don Livesay. As board chairs of North American Division colleges and universities, it turned out that they had been invited for a discussion about the teaching of creation and evolution in Adventist higher education classrooms.

Also in attendance were General Conference President Jan Paulsen and three General Conference vice presidents: Ted Wilson, Mark Finley, and Ella Simmons; plus James Gibson of the Geoscience Research Institute. From the North American Division, in addition to President Don Schneider, there was his assistant Hal Thompson.

The lay members in attendance besides the Zinkes were Garwin MacNeilus, Ellsworth McKee, Dan Houghton, Norman Rice, Dan Smith, and Rick Jaeger, a group known for, among other things, their generous donations to the church.

Dan Houghton moderated the discussion. The GC vice presidents Finley and Wilson made statements about the significance of the creation/evolution issue to the church. For his contribution, James Gibson reminded people that neither evolution nor creation could be proved. Paulsen reiterated what he said earlier in the year about the controversy at La Sierra University. He acknowledged that the concept of evolution needed to be presented but that Adventist professors should bring their students home to an understanding of God as Creator.

Since this meeting took place before La Sierra's board meeting, when it was his turn to speak, Pacific Union Conference President Ricardo Graham, chairman of the board for La Sierra University, simply said that La Sierra's board deserved confidentiality in their upcoming deliberations on the topic.

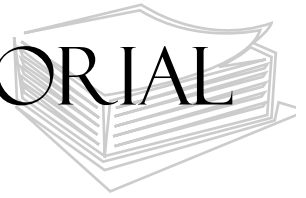
Asked about the session afterwards, one of the lay participants said he had been told not to talk about it. However, Paulsen offhandedly remarked about the meeting the next morning when Ed and Ann Zinke were presented with the highest honor of the GC Department of Education. In his comments of thanks, Ed Zinke said he had a burden for Biblically-based curriculum in Adventist schools.

From all reports, there was no pressure during the evening for specific actions to be taken, and there was no discussion of specific people. The calling of the meeting and the people involved made the point.

It is when sessions such as these are called that university board members, administrators, and faculty are made to feel that they are in the midst of a battle for the soul of Adventism. When La Sierra's board discussed the topic of creation and evolution in November, it specifically asked to have the conversation broadened beyond their campus. This topic has sparked controversy within Adventism for much of our history and has only intensified in the past fifty years.

The two private conversations—the private meeting of administrators in October and the conversation of the La Sierra Board—prompt important questions. Do wealthy Adventists have more access to the conversations of significance about church policy than the rest of us? How should we have constructive conversations about substantive issues? How do we create open, transparent, and inclusive conversations that strengthen our community?

These questions are significant in the months leading up to the General Conference session in Atlanta. ■



Creation: *Fiddling While Rome Burns* | BY CHARLES SCRIVEN

There is no substantive advantage to aggressive young-earth creationism. Simple faith in God will do. On the other hand, what I will call the “ideology” of evolution—science plus other stuff, as I will explain—has overwhelming *disadvantages*. If you take Jesus to be the true picture of the truly human, this ideology is a sure path to *de*-humanization.

I associate the first of these ideas, young-earth creationism, with voices now objecting to the way some Adventist biologists acquaint their students with the heritage of Charles Darwin. Not one person in this circle, however, can offer adequate answers to the following objections:

Objection One: There is no evidence of aggressive, young-earth creationism either in Christian Scripture or among its earliest interpreters. Some of these latter did read Genesis as a report of historical events; but some, like Origen, embraced creation while rejecting literalism. No one made young-earth creationism a litmus test for identifying heretics or for expelling anyone from full participation in church life. What is more, people on both sides of the conversation risked their lives to follow Jesus.

Objection Two: The Adventist Statement of Fundamental Beliefs does not entail young-earth creationism. It says that “God is Creator of all things and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity.” But this neither precludes the figurative reading of the creation story nor requires the literal one. “Authentic” is not invariably synonymous with “literal;” and what it brings more naturally to mind is integrity. Jesus’ parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (with its apparent premise of soul immortality) seems not to be literally true; but it still has integrity with respect to its purpose and is thus “authentic.”

Objection Three: For either the literal or figurative reading, the Bible’s stories about creation have the same *practical* significance: the earth is good, we are meant to be God’s junior partners, the Sabbath is a gift for everyone. (The twentieth century’s *foremost interpreter of the seventh-day Sabbath*, Abraham Joshua Heschel, read the first chapters of Genesis as a figurative account).

Objection Four: The Adventist Statement of Fundamental Beliefs forbids the mindset that tortures every doubt or innovation into an instance of heresy. Adventist landmarks matter; but the *ultra-suspicious frame of mind is forbidden*. Ellen White said fear of “new questions” and “difference of opinion” would lead to spiritual decline; James White opposed a “creed,” saying it would offend the Holy Spirit. With similar concern, the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs tells us (in the preamble) to *expect* that our beliefs will adjust under the Spirit’s guidance.

At a far remove from young-earth creationism is what I am calling the *ideology* of evolution. It is about more than science alone. One of the ideology’s dogmas is materialistic naturalism to which, as it is thought, all ideas about life and culture, including all ideas about development in nature, must conform. Another is the claim to superiority not only in knowledge of the world but also in knowledge of morality.

All this is familiar from currently popular books by the New Atheists. They say that with the advent of Darwinian investigation, no account of reality, beyond what science can provide, is even plausible: the world is matter, nothing more. They say, too, that religion is pernicious—pernicious not just for peddling ignorance but also for exacerbating violence.

Ideologues of this stripe cannot, however, make an adequate response to the following objections:

New York's Best-Kept Secret

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Nov 7

Ed Samuel—*Ideas of Paradise*

Nov 14

Stephen King & John Sackett—*Centura Health*

Nov 21

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Dec 5

Allison Bryan—*Outrageous Forgiveness*

Dec 12

Richard Osborn—*Challenges Facing Adventist Higher Education*

Dec 19

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Objection One: The ideology of evolution crowns and miters itself the final arbiter of truth but fails to see that scientific methodology can neither verify materialism nor explain why anything at all actually exists. It, thus, puts forward as fact what is a metaphysical bias.

Objection Two: The ideology rests on the assumption that all natural development is a function of chance under the iron sway of physical law. This suggests that human freedom is, at best, a useful illusion. It, thus, makes little sense to say (and really mean) that wise choices matter or that love and justice refer to anything remotely like what we take them to be in ordinary life.

Objection Three: The ideology assumes that nature can support a moral vision of human dignity and human rights. But nature admits of no moral principles. Certainly, it cannot be the basis for the preciousness of every human life or for deliverance from the tribalism that undergirds so much of human violence.

Objection Four: The ideology demonizes the religion of the Bible when that religion (for all its hypocrisy and fraud) constitutes history's single most effective revolution—

against resignation, against oppressive power, against indifference to suffering and injustice. The ideology of evolution fails to comprehend what Nietzsche saw and (to his discredit) celebrated: when God is dead, compassion for the vulnerable, the outcast, and the diseased is put at risk before the self's untrammelled will to power.

GOD'S THOUGHTS AND WAYS are beyond comprehension—for us and even (Isaiah 55:8,9) for Bible writers. Still, believing that God is our Maker matters. The words the Bible uses matter, too; and I align with young-earth creationists in loving the creation stories just as they are and in hoping I will hearken to their meaning for my life.

But since human thought cannot contain God, and since God's creative love is both so important and so much the object of unfriendly fire, *fighting over the details—fighting over creation's how and when—is like fiddling while Rome burns*. It's a distraction. It's neglect of our larger responsibility to bear witness for God.

On a long drive with my wife a few weeks back, I listened to a distinguished anesthesiologist explain why blood transfusions used in connection with cancer surgery can have fatal consequences.

Although the surgeon may succeed in removing a malignant tumor, stray cancer cells continue to float through the blood stream. Ideally, the patient's immune system concentrates on killing these stray cells. But strange blood distracts it—with *measurable negative impact* on the patient's likelihood of sustained recovery. Because the distracted immune system pays inadequate attention to the stray cancer cells—they get, in effect, a free ride—and the cancer has a better chance of making a successful new attack.

The physician's point was that medicine should develop strategies for minimizing the use of blood transfusions.

In Adventism, we fight over the details of creation. But such fighting is a kind of strange blood; and we end up paying too little sustained and cooperative attention to the threats (as from godless ideologies) that really matter. Because we waste energy on impossible-to-settle speculations—How could there have been light without the sun? Where is the dome that keeps water from crashing in on us?—the most dangerous enemies of faith get, all too often, a free ride.

If we were to minimize pointless and divisive squabbles, we'd bear a better witness. Why don't we? ■

Charles Scriven chairs Adventist Forum.



Of Syncretism, Evolution, and Present Truth

McMahon responds to Guy

IN *SPECTRUM* vol. 37 issue 3 of 2009, Fitz [sic] Guy argues that we should accept a syncretism of Scripture and Nature (evolution) as progressive present truth, or at least to live together with tradition. In fact it is a theologian attacking the “more pure word of Prophecy”, (2 Pet 1:19–21) with the theory of Evolution on a path to atheism. Moses compiled Genesis. Christ even appealed to Moses (omniscience) and all the prophets to authenticate Himself (Luke 24:27). Omniscience is omni science, or all knowledge of science, including Creation...

Breaking the first commandment of authority has not changed since Eden (Gen 2:17). God says I change not (Mal 3:6,7). He dealt with Adam and Eve who then required a Saviour. We also require a faith which evokes repentance to commandment 1. Our faith is in 6 days and not 100 days of [sic] 15 million years of creation. Christ says the Sabbath was created for man for weekly fellowship, worship and voluntary indoctrination in ethics and history.

God has invited us to reason together with Him by which we develop faith in His Word. There are four major pillars supporting our faith which are rejected by Fitz [sic] Guy.

1. Creation is by God's Word. The sub microscopic machinery in every cell and its DNA blueprint comes only by design. Information cannot be added to change species by time and chance. Change can only take place in the mind of the Creator... There is no simple to complex. Everything is complex.

2. The omniscience of the prophets. The mathematical probability of predicting the 400 prophecies in the life of Christ is zero. However, the accuracy of the prophets, which depends on the omniscience of God, also applies to the writings of the prophets in Genesis to describe our origins. This is God speaking “God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in times past unto the fathers by

the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, who He hath appointed Heir of all things by whom also He made the worlds.” Heb 1:1,2. Theistic evolution is thus destroyed by the finger of Moses in Genesis. It is then necessary to reject the omniscience of Deity, the more sure word of prophecy (Secularism). Christ even appealed to Moses and all the prophets to authenticate Himself (Luke 24:27).

3. The eyewitness account of the apostles provides the legal basis to believe in the account of Christ's life. They gave witness of the fulfilling of each prophecy and documented His demonstration of Deity, (omniscience) and by His creative miracles over animate and inanimate (omnipotence).

4. By Christ's life, teachings, miracles and authority over demons and power to forgive sins He demonstrated Deity. His life reflected sovereign grace and mercy and His death on the Cross reconciled the wrath of God and the love (Agape Gr) of God. The Cross has guaranteed His return and judgment, on His terms and not man's. Faith in God's Word and repentance for breaking commandment 1 is required...

If Creation in Genesis is a fabrication no reliance can be put on the promise of the Second Coming or Re Creation. If Genesis is correct then the secularist won't be alive to see the second creation. The first creation is held by faith in the above four points.

The name Seventh Day Adventist makes a difference to the world by highlighting a beginning and an end by God. This is destroyed by evolution...

Fitz [sic] Guy is being deceived. He cannot reconcile scientific rationalism and Scripture. The Creator God who rose from the dead wrote in stone, “in six days the Lordt in [sic] made the heavens and the earth.” There is no latitude to question Moses.

DR. H.J.A. MCMAHON
Westmeadows, Victoria, Australia

Listening In...

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The Open Remnant: A Biblical and Historical Vision
- Clinton Baldwin, Ph.D. July/09
New Testament Textual Criticism
- Michael Scofield August/09
Adventist Higher Education: Which School Shall Close First?
- T. Joe Willey, Ph.D. September/09
Science Falsely So-called: Can Modern Science Establish the Supernatural in the Nineteenth Century Health Writings of Ellen G. White?
- Lourdes Morales Gudmundsson, Ph.D. October/09
Embracing the Stranger: Toward an Adventist Theology of Migration
- Arthur Patrick, Ph.D. November/09
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Response to H. J. A. McMahon

MOST THEOLOGICAL disagreements among contemporary Adventists boil down to fundamentally different understandings of the nature and function of Scripture. From Dr. McMahon's wide-ranging letter, I conclude that he regards Scripture not only as a revelation of the character and activity of God, but also as a repository of infallible facts about the physical world. In contrast, I believe that the purpose of Scripture is entirely the former and that to expect the latter is a serious misunderstanding. Thus Dr. McMahon's letter reflects basic assumptions that not all Adventists share.

2 Timothy 3:15–17 noted that “the sacred writings” can “instruct you for salvation through trust in Christ Jesus” because “all scripture is God-inspired and useful for teaching, reproof, correction, and education in right living, so that God's people may be proficient, equipped for all kinds of good action” (my translation). To “instruct for salvation” does not mean to “instruct about the facts of natural history.” This is not what Scripture does.

Taking seriously the possibility that there may have been life on planet Earth for much more than a few

thousand years is not necessarily “a path to atheism.” Millions of practicing Christians (including thousands of practicing scientists and thousands of practicing Adventists) believe that natural history has involved long periods of time and significant changes in life forms and that this does not conflict with the Bible's theological explanations of Creation. While for many Adventists the compatibility of Scriptural revelation and scientific knowledge may be unacceptable, for others it is both intellectually responsible and Scripturally faithful—indeed, more faithful than forcing Scripture into a scientific role it was never intended to fulfill.

The accounts of Creation in Genesis 1:1–2:4a and 2:4b–25 were by no means “fabrications.” They were profoundly true and still are. They are theologically and spiritually essential because they communicate transcendent meanings and values. Although the two accounts differ from each other in content, literary style, and the order of Creation events, they both declare that the God of the Hebrews was the Creator of everything that is. This is the great, indispensable truth of the Biblical understanding of Creation. Recognizing the accounts as theological explanations rather than scientific descriptions elevates their significance from the mundane realms of physics and biology to the transcendent realm of Ultimate Reality. Too many Christians seem to be unaware that the Bible “does not answer to the grand ideas of God, for infinite ideas cannot be perfectly embodied in finite vehicles of thought” (*Selected Messages of Ellen G. White*, bk. 1, p. 22).

God is certainly omniscient, but the Biblical authors did not claim that they themselves were omniscient. And our Adventist prophet did not think so either. “The Bible,” she said, “must be given in the language of men. Everything that is human is imperfect. The Bible was given for practical purposes” (*ibid.*, p. 20). The idea of omniscient prophets and apostles is a conjecture that is seriously challenged by the phenomena of Scripture itself.

Whether we Adventists will ever engage in genuine dialogue with each other regarding our differing understandings of the nature and function of Scripture remains to be seen. True dialogue will happen only when we are willing to listen to—and learn with—each other. Dr. McMahon's letter is an important reminder of how broad the spectrum of Adventist thinking about Scripture actually is.

FRITZ GUY
Loma Linda, California



GODencounters | RACHEL DAVIES INTERVIEWS ALLAN MARTIN

GODencounters is an experientially-based faith movement that is touching the lives of Adventist young adults. Co-founder Allan Martin says GODencounters is not about indoctrination, but about worship, discipleship, and relationship. Although GODencounters does sponsor retreats, gatherings, and publications, its leaders take an organic, “everything we have is yours” approach to programming. *Spectrum* asked Martin how GODencounters works and how it is impacting Adventist life.

Davies: *What is GODencounters and how did it begin?*

Martin: GODencounters is a movement among new generations wholeheartedly pursuing an intimate 24/7 experience of the living God, recklessly living for His renown.

In 2000, I was church planting in Florida. One of my colleagues, Jeff Gang, was asked to plan activities for the young adult division of our conference camp meeting. The young adult facility sat 700 people, but there were only about twenty or thirty who came—mostly because they didn’t want to go to the general meeting. Since my colleague knew I was doing young adult ministry at my church plant, he asked if I would be willing to join him in rethinking what happened with the young adults at camp meeting. We didn’t want to do just another program; we wanted to deepen our devotion to Jesus through worship. So we got a group of young people together to talk through what eventually became GODencounters, an international movement with thousands of young adults involved in spiritual gatherings, private faith practices, and affirming communities in real time and online.

The name itself really presents the core of what we’re trying to do: encounter God. Although we do use constructs and programs and events and gatherings for GODencounters, the heart of our efforts is to see Jeremiah 24:7 come to life. My loose paraphrase of that text is that God is going to place it in our hearts to return to

him. He is going to call us his people, and we are going to call him our God. So GODencounters is not some kind of successful club you join or wonderful new product you can buy. It’s about heart-hunger—new generations seeking God to discover who He really is.

Davies: *Tell me about the seven discipleship themes in your “curriculum.” How are they implemented into your retreats, activities, and overall mission?*

Martin: GODencounters aims to deepen devotion to Jesus by developing disciples who walk recklessly in His footsteps. Our desire is to:

- Live lives of worship
- Be agents of present gospel
- Gracefully express compassion
- Pray without ceasing
- Embrace Sabbath as soul CPR
- Morph into his likeness
- Celebrate in jubilee

We generally give emphasis annually to one single theme. Individual groups don’t have to do it this way; but we feel that given the mobility of our generation, it is important to try for depth with one theme in the span of a year. Our hope is that by the end of a given year a participant will have gone deeper in his or her practice and understanding of the current GODencounters theme. We try to express the theme through more than just the spoken word (homiletics) at our gatherings. We use visual arts, architecture/design, media, hands-on activities, and discussion groups. Our hope is that participants will comprehend the theme in languages they resonate with.

Davies: *How is GODencounters coordinated?*

Martin: I serve as the curriculum coach for GODencounters. Much of what we try to do is offer mentoring and encouragement to young adults leading out in their own contexts. We don't have a "program-in-a-box" for GODencounters, which I think sometimes makes it difficult for people to understand how it operates. I would say that the GODencounters gatherings, whether they are conferences or retreats or other things, happen only if there is a core of local young adults committed to making it happen. The other stuff, like the book, the music, the online elements, etc., all stem from the creativity and generosity of people who are pouring themselves into the movement. For instance, at one gathering we had a couple of interior designers who said "We're not able to preach or sing, but we want to contribute to our gathering. We want to create some prayer rooms." And so they used their interior design capabilities to do an amazing transformation of what had been typically sterile Sabbath School rooms into these holy places where people spent hours praying, meditating on who God is in their lives.

Davies: *How widespread is GODencounters right now? How many people are involved?*

Martin: Via the internet, obviously we are getting hits from around the globe. The North American Division is full with groups and gatherings from coast to coast. In the Trans-European Division, we know that the pastor of one of the largest churches is using the GODencounters book with her young adult small group. Recently the youth director of the South Pacific Division brought a group of students to Andrews for an intensive on the GODencounters movement. We've been in heavy dialogue with young adult leaders there eager to start something comparable, although they may not call it GODencounters *per se*.

Davies: *GODencounters is designed to lead young people into an intimate encounter with God. How do you think the church at large is doing in the area of personal spirituality? What impact is GODencounters having on this?*

Martin: I think the church at large has a passion to foster personal spirituality. I believe the Adventist church, where it is well expressed, has allowed itself to be an agent for Christian formation and discipleship; and God's fame has spread as His followers have been Christ's hands and feet

in the world. But there is always room for growth. We haven't always spoken the language that helps people develop their spirituality. We may be able to get them to develop brand loyalty. We can teach them all our language and our logos so that they understand what veg-elinks are and what LLU stands for and what ADRA is. But personal spirituality is really a process of metamorphosis.

Davies: *Is this why you would rather refer to GODencounters as a movement than a program?*

Martin: Yeah. The very last thing we want to see happen is for GODencounters to get franchised or something of that sort. As God stirs people to return to His heart and as they discover a God who is pursuing them far more passionately than they will ever pursue Him, the natural result is devotion and intimacy with our holy God.

Davies: *Can you point to any other places in the church where people are intentionally fostering personal spirituality like what's happening with GODencounters?*

Martin: Oh, yeah! I'll run into people or we'll have a gathering and share our stories, and I'll sense that there are a variety of places in the church where passion for God is transforming peoples' lives. But the part that makes it a little confusing is that sometimes we report results; and I don't think results necessarily equate with passionate spirituality.

I think the litmus test for us with regard to GODencounters is whether or not, daily, we are still looking at life as a journey of becoming. In that becoming, some days I feel like I'm in the pigsty like the prodigal son. But I have an "aha" moment and decide to return home. Although the pigsty surely doesn't look good on the statistics of my faithfulness to God, it is a part of my journey. So I think there's a continuum when we talk about GODencounters which is very different from the more modernistic, empirical model that says, "Okay, we did *this* and we invested *that* much money and the results are in *this* many conversions or in *this* many dollars toward a new institution." Because of this, it's kind of hard for us to compare currency with other programs.

Davies: *What do you think of people who focus on the number of young people leaving the church because they find it irrelevant?*

Martin: I think it's really important to go in for a physical examination every so often. You're hoping that whoever is doing the evaluation will give you accurate results based on the statistics and the tests that they've run. When I go to the dentist, he tells me I have to floss. If I don't floss and my teeth continue to deteriorate, that's shame on me. So I think there's great validity to gathering the church data and results. I think it's important to understand that we have cavities when known and respected researchers say there's a 40%–50% rate of attrition in the church. Then is not the time for us to go out and buy another bag of M&Ms and say, "Well, that's just statistics. Let's keep going the way we're going because, after all, we can still chew." But the part I'm always concerned about is how we remediate these problems. How do we put aggressive investments into making solutions? And then further, what can we do preventatively, proactively, to keep problems from developing in the future? What are we doing right now to make the church a place that's inclusive, that's about becoming and belonging and believing, as opposed to simply behaving?

Davies: *If someone reading this interview wanted to get involved with GODencounters, what would he or she do?*

Martin: I would suggest that such a person get the book and begin the journey personally or with like-minded friends. Also, anyone can join our Facebook group for updates or attend a GODencounters gathering. ■

Allan Martin is Associate Professor of Discipleship and Family Ministry at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. He also serves as the young adult ministry coordinator for the North American Division.

Rachel Davies is a member of *Spectrum's* web team and is the youth and children's pastor at the Toledo, Ohio, First Seventh-day Adventist Church.

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<http://www.facebook.com/pages/GODencounters/105031787513?ref=ts>

MySpace:

<http://www.myspace.com/godencounter>

Website: <http://www.GODencounters.org>

Free downloadable MP3s for your GODencounters journey

<http://www.PacificPress.com/GODencounters>

GODencounters: Pursuing a 24/7 Experience of Jesus

<http://www.adventistbookcenter.com/GODencounters>

Comments from the website conversation:

Rachel, would you, David, or Allan be able to tell us what relationship this group has or plans to have with the larger emerging movement? It would be mutually helpful to connect with those doing similar work so that we're not reinventing spaghetti and calling it "long thin tasty [vegetarian] pasta."

Posted by: KM | 17 September 2009 at 5:52

I'm not in a place to address how GODencounters fits into the "larger emerging movement." How would you see GODencounters as being "connected" or "not connected?" Who do you suggest it should connect with? Do you mean individuals? Church or para-church programs?

The impression I got during my interview with Dr. Martin is that GODencounters can't be reinventing anything, because it isn't inventing anything! GODencounters provides some resources and a name (or "logo") for those who want it, but it gets wherever it goes by way of individual creativity. Blessings, RD

Posted by: Rachel Davies | 18 September 2009 at 2:07

KM asked a very relevant question that needs to be answered by the founders of GODencounters and especially by Dr. Martin since he comes with an academic background besides the fact that he has been presented to us as a NAD coordinator for young adult ministry. Interestingly enough, I've come across other NAD coordinators assigned to various ministries and I'm not sure how they function in relation to one another where there may be overlapping responsibilities. (For example, Campus Ministry: Isn't this a ministry to roughly the same age group as to Young Adult, ages 18–23?)

The first thought that came to me was it's a movement that specializes in Spiritual Formation or Spiritual Direction. If so, there's an entire literature on the subject and courses in seminaries like Andrews are offered there. As far as the Emerging Church or Emerging Movement is concerned, Hollywood SDA Church seems to be one example of a congregation of young adults that is well along this path.

Posted by: Joselito Coe | 18 September 2009 at 5:03

Thanks *Spectrum* & RD for your interest and inquiry about GODencounters. As new generations seek out a 24/7 experience of the living GOD, I have been witness to GOD's tenderness and strength as it has been expressed in young lives as well as mine.

The conversation with Rachel was delightful and her interview capture here is elegant and affirming. Admittedly however, I've found it challenging to describe what GOD is doing with my limited words.

GODencounters calls, like the woman at the well, for each of us to "come and see." It is the pursuit of Jesus that is center stage in this movement. I have no doubt labels will be used to try and put handles on the movement. Adventism, emergent, pentacostal, exhortation, expository, urges, teaching, experien-

tial, and likely a host of other descriptive labels will be applied in an effort to get a handle on this “God thing.”

I, too, am trying to grapple with what exactly this is. Suffice it to say, more often than not, I like the blind man, simply confess that something happens when I encounter Jesus. I have hopes as you continue your important life journey, that your path will draw you closer to God’s heart [Jeremiah 24:7].

Thanks for your lively commentary and interest.

Posted by: a allan martin (not verified) | 18 September 2009 at 8:04

Rachel—I’m not endeavoring to tag the group by any means. But I am asking about their context. There are any number of groups that “pursue Jesus”; I’m sure that GYC would also describe its work as pursuit of Jesus. But GYC has contextualized that pursuit in a very different way.

No doubt the manifestation of this particular approach will change when it shows up in someone’s living room. That is as I would expect.

If “context” is unclear where other than the Bible and their private experiences have the founders drawn their inspiration from? Who else inside the Adventist church and outside the Adventist church have they shared ideas with and learned from? Do they currently have peer or elder mentors? Who? And what formative value do they find that this context gives them? I think these are fair questions because our context always shapes us and what we’re able to share.

As for who the group/groups “should” connect with, that might depend on the founders, where they currently situate themselves, and where they feel called to move next. Joselito mentioned the literature on spiritual formation. Ryan just came back from an emergent village conference. There’s a whole world of writing and activity targeted at discipleship, ecclesial transformation, and folks under 35—and I wouldn’t be surprised if people drawn to the language and approach of GODencounters also saw parallels elsewhere if they aren’t already engaged. Have the founders anticipated that?

Posted by: KM | 19 September 2009 at 4:35

Thanks KM,

I understand better what you are asking now. Good questions. I’ll let Dr. Martin and other directly involved people take the lead with their answers.

Posted by: Rachel Davies | 19 September 2009 at 11:41

The question of context with regard to GodEncounters is an interesting one, especially when the issue of the context for GYC is

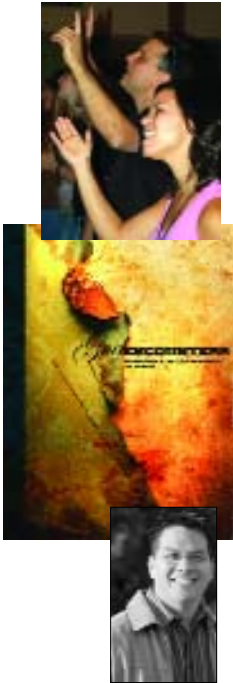
thrown into the mix. Clearly, the Adventist Church does have some young adult pastors who are influenced by, and even involved with, Emergent and/or the emerging church movement. Though, I should point out that several streams of this movement have now been identified¹, and “emerging” represents multiple contexts rather than a unified field of thought. If one wishes to place the GodEncounters movement somewhere on the emergent spectrum, it would probably fit best within the praxis-oriented stream, with an emphasis on experiential worship, orthopraxy, spiritual practices, and missional thinking.

I just attended a week of spiritual emphasis on the theme of “missions” delivered by one of our up-and-coming young adult preachers (who has also presented at GodEncounters). Not a word was said about getting on a plane and traveling to another country. It was clearly “missional” thinking (amply sprinkled with purposeful stories)—about having Jesus’ heart and becoming Jesus’ hands to those nearest you. As I dialogue with this young adult preacher, or other young adults I know who are involved in the GE movement, I find them merely conversant with, but not necessarily sold out to, emerging ideas.

We must remember that McClaren’s emerging church is the context in which these young adult leaders grew up, just as McGavaran’s church growth movement was the context for the training of many Boomer leaders. We rarely get to choose our context, only how we will relate to it. And I find that while many Boomers speak with fear about the emerging church movement, young adult pastors are at ease with its vocabulary and have learned to think critically about the conversation, even as they mirror parts of it.

Keep in mind, of course, that emergent is primarily a movement within the context of the Caucasian church as it struggles for viability in North America. To the extent that the Adventist church in North America is increasingly becoming a church of immigrants, the relevance of the emergent conversation to Adventists might be questioned. Nevertheless, given the leveling effects of mass-mediated culture over the course of one or two generations, even the most vibrant immigrant churches and structures would do well to be put on notice.

GYC, of course, offers another alternative to the effort to recapture the young. Bankrolled by wealthy boomers, it ignores the GenXers altogether and appeals directly to the rank-and-file mentality of the Millennials who have begun to feel the effects of living in a world that is oh-so-gray. This context of neo-fundamentalism is as frightening to a GenX pastor as the emerging movement is to the Boomer. While certainly not all young people are climbing aboard, GYC is fast becoming

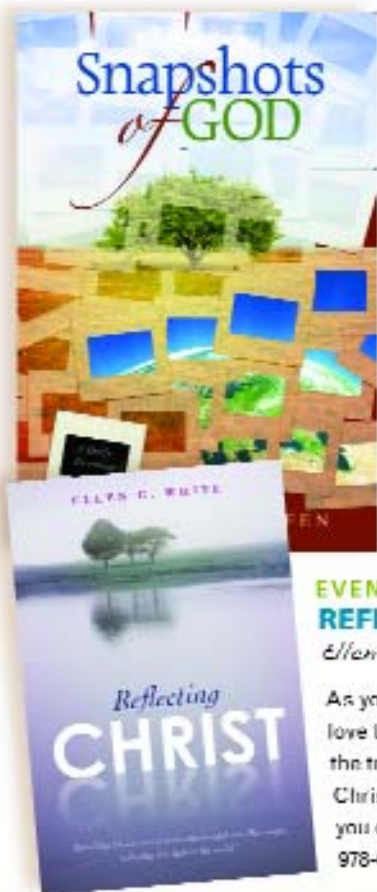


Above: young adults at a GOD-encounters retreat in Pennsylvania; GODencounters, the book; Allan Martin, co-founder of the GODencounters movement.

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ing a landmark in Adventist Millennial spirituality. It will be interesting to see what will take place when this new generation of young leaders comes to professional maturity and takes full possession of the pulpit as many GenXer leaders are now doing inside and outside of the GE movement.

¹ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/february/11.35.html>

Posted by: Steve (not verified) | 19 September 2009 at 2:28

Steve, this was an excellent response and I very much appreciate both your contribution and your tone. Thanks for making the time. :)

I'm also inclined to reject the milk/meat characterization of either approach—but that's part of my context!

Best wishes to all of you.

Posted by: KM | 19 September 2009 at 6:23

Rachel, as the other "co-founder" here, I appreciate *Spectrum* doing this interview with Allan. I can't think of many other Seventh-day Adventist leaders who are more passionate about seeing young adults find their place in the church. Since I was there in the beginning, I can say that GODencounters was simply born from a desire for worship to be a way of life and not just something that happens at the 11:00 am hour one day a week—for the founders as well. What's come since then has been a collective voice of hundreds of young people who are simply looking for meaningful ways to encounter. It's exciting to see what has "emerged" over the years. Thanks for all you do Allan!

Posted by: Jeff Gang (not verified) | 20 September 2009 at 2:12

It appears, to me at least, that the founders of GODencounters have a general sense of a problem that's not unique to Adventists regarding young adult drop-outs; that they offer a remedy of a 24:7, drawn from Jeremiah 24:7, worship (?) or encounter with God. I'm not a judge of how much this faith-movement for/of young adults has already grown. My sense is it will require better definitions and more precision in terms of structure and biblical content if they expect to grow further still. (As much as GYC does!)

Jeff Boyd's review of GODencounters cites Rainer and Rainer's *Essential Church?: Reclaiming a Generation of Dropouts* 2008, where the authors list, in their opinion, the Seven Sins of Dying Churches (pp 16–19); and they recommend a four-phase model for the Essential Church (pp 6 and 21):

Simplify—the church develops a clear structure and process for making disciples. Deepen—the church provides strong biblical teaching and preaching. Expect—the church has an attitude that communicates to its members that they must be committed to the local congregation. Multiply—the church has an outward focus, driving to reaching people for Christ and starting new churches.

http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/files/lwcF_PDF_Rainers_Essential_Church_Sampl..

Finally, we don't live in a vacuum as separate individuals or small groups, but in society and within the larger faith community. Whatever

ideas or attitudes we have acquired, we've learned this from those who were here before us. Briefly, I'm not sure if KM's query about social (faith environment) context has been answered (yes, by Steve) by the founders of GODencounters:

If "context" is unclear: where other than the Bible and their private experiences have the founders drawn their inspiration from? Who else inside the Adventist church and outside the Adventist church have they shared ideas with and learned from? Do they currently have peer or elder mentors? Who? And what formative value do they find that this context gives them? I think these are fair questions because our context always shapes us and what we're able to share.

Posted by: Joselito Coo | 20 September 2009 at 3:25

This is one Baby Boomer pastor who applauds GODencounters! I'm thankful for the work done by Alan Martin, Jeff Gang and everyone who has had a part in the emergence of this wonderful movement.

As one who made this sort of ministry a priority when I served as pastor I am thrilled to see a movement of dedicated, excited young adults that has emerged without the deep pockets of other highly financed activities we are witnessing today. This movement has made its appearance seemingly on its own—or better yet—it has appeared solely by the impetus of the Holy Spirit.

I believe it is a mistake to attempt to earmark the movement as being weak on biblical or theological content. While the approach to Scripture is different, (i.e., this is not a proof-text approach to God's Word), it is nonetheless Scripturally rich. Experiential? Yes, but it is my belief that all quality movements begin this way and then as the participants mature in Biblical understanding the movement gains momentum....

GODencounters, it appears to me, assumes the basic truths of Adventism but views them in light of the Gospel. It is my observation that doctrines are seen in this movement as different faces of a diamond through which Jesus may be viewed. Focusing on seven values or themes provides a healthy way for people to experience that which is right and good in Adventism.

I hear so many complain about how this generation is leaving the church and how those who remain do not support the church financially. But when as a pastor, my church gave young adults a "piece of the pie," we were amazed at how quickly the old truisms died. They accepted responsibility, accepted the leadership mantle, supported the ministry financially and demonstrated a greater commitment to and support of the larger church. I believe GODencounters will produce the same or better results.

I do not believe we have heard the last from this movement. I fully expect great things just as I have seen with a similar work when I pastored in Arlington, Texas. Mark my words—God is at work in this. I can't wait to see what more He will do!

Posted by: Mike Tucker (not verified) | 21 September 2009 at 2:56



Reflections on the Ellen White Conference | BY ALDEN THOMPSON

The unbelievable intensity of the Ellen G. White conference in Maine has made it hard for me to settle down and write. A host of inter-related issues are churning around in my head. But Augustine (via Chuck Scriven) spoke a great truth: "I have learned many things that I never knew before, just by writing." So I am writing. Here are some random reflections.

The conference is part of the Ellen White Project, a collaborative effort engaging Adventist and non-Adventist American religious historians in academic dialogue. Sixty-five individuals have been engaged to produce a major scholarly work examining the full range of Ellen White's life and influence on American religious culture.

From the very first lecture on Thursday night by Joan Hedrick (author of a Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Harriett Beecher Stowe), our days at the conference were full of good things. Sabbath morning, we had a worship service with a homily by Kendra Haloviak of La Sierra University. We sang, prayed, and remembered that this was the day the Lord had blessed.

Ron Numbers called this the most important EGW event in ninety years. George Knight said he never thought he would ever see these people all together in the same room.

The Participants.

Who were the people that Knight never expected to see together in the same room? Here is a sampling:

A. The first generation of EGW critics. These were on the ground floor in 1969 when the Association of Adventist Forums was formed and began publishing *Spectrum*. Some are still active in the church, even employed by the church; others currently have no formal ties to the Adventist community: Roy Branson and Ron Numbers were both mem-

bers of the original AAF board. William Peterson and Don McAdams both wrote memorable articles on Ellen White's use of sources; Jonathan Butler's notoriety came from his article on Adventist eschatology. The first edition of Numbers' *Prophets of Health* was published by Harper and Row in 1976. Vern Carner, founder of the journal, *Adventist Heritage*, was also present. Carner was a key player in the publication of two collections of historical essays, Edwin Gaustad's *The Rise of Adventism* (Harper and Row, 1974) and Gary Land's *Adventism in America* (Eerdmans, 1986). A 1984 conference on Millerism and a subsequent collection of essays edited by Numbers and Butler, *The Disappointed* (Indiana University Press, 1987), was in honor of Carner's work in Adventist historical studies.

B. Women. Three of the twenty-one proposed chapters were written by women. A total of sixty-seven names were on the official list of invitees, eighteen of them women. Of the women, eight are Adventists, all from SDA campuses. Three were from La Sierra University (LSU): Kendra Haloviak, Ginger Harwood, and Marilyn Loveless; two were from Walla Walla University (WWU): Terrie Aamodt and Beverly Beem; Lisa Diller was from Southern Adventist University (SAU), Joan Francis from Washington Adventist University (WAU), and Susan Gardner from Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU). A number of strong voices of both genders urged that the chapters on women's issues come first in the book.

C. Notable Scholars. The conference attendees good-naturedly bantered about "insiders" and "outsiders." The array of notable, published scholars attending the conference was impressive; twenty-two had no obvious connection with Adventism. Significant published authors included Paul Boyer, Ruth Alden Doan, Joan Hedrick, David Rowe,

Ann Taves, Laura Vance, and Grant Wacker. Published Adventist authors included Ron Graybill, Floyd Greenleaf, George Knight, Gary Land, Douglas Morgan, Jon Paulien, Greg Schneider, Gil Valentine, and Woodrow Whidden.

D. Church People. For church employees, an invitation to an Ellen White conference co-organized by one of Ellen White's most vocal critics, Ron Numbers, would not necessarily be a cause for great joy. Yet the primary organizers are deeply committed Adventists, convinced that Ellen White was a significant figure in American history and deserves serious scholarly study. Julius Nam of Loma Linda University (LLU), Terrie Aamodt (WWU), and Gary Land of Andrews University were the leading "church" lights in the planning process. But Ron Numbers was very much on board, ensuring a remarkable number of qualified non-Adventist participants who, in my view, played a crucial role in the conference. Merlin Burt from the White Estate and two former employees of the White Estate, Ron Graybill (LLU) and Arthur Patrick (Avondale, Australia) often provided helpful background information. Bert Haloviak from the General Conference archives played an essential "insider" role. Eric Anderson, president of SWAU, W. G. Nelson, academic dean at Kettering College of Medical Arts, and Craig Newborn, pastor of the Oakwood University Church, also ensured that the church presence was solid and unequivocal.

E. Outsiders. Two of the twenty-one proposed chapters were written by "outsiders," both of them women: Ann Taves on Ellen White's "Early Religious Experiences" and Laura Vance on "Women's Roles." Joan Hedrick captivat-



Ron Numbers

ed the conference with her opening lecture on Harriet Beecher Stowe; Grant Wacker's Friday night lecture on Billy Graham was also well received. Otherwise, one "outsider" and one "insider" responded to each proposed chapter. Time and again, the visiting scholars

expressed their delight at being invited to participate in the conference. Several of them told the whole group that this conference would rank as the "best" one they had ever attended. And I would have to say that their participation was part of what made it so good. They put their finger on weaknesses, affirmed the strengths, and, in general, did exactly what the organizers had hoped they would do.



Alden Thompson

Personal Observations

My impression is that several of the participants, especially those whom I have described as first-generation EGW critics, have moved on to other things. But they were still interested enough in Ellen White studies to come and enter into a serious dialogue. The third edition of Numbers' *Prophetess of Health* (Eerdmans, 2008) contains a new preface by Numbers but otherwise appears to be a re-issue of the second edition (University of Tennessee Press, 1992) with its "Introduction" by Jonathan Butler and a psychological analysis of Ellen White co-authored by Numbers and his wife Janet. Numbers has also been active in publishing works on the history of "scientific creationism." In 2006, an expanded version of his 1992 book, *The Creationists*, was reissued by Harvard University Press. That topic, however, never came up for public discussion even though Numbers addressed it in his proposed chapter.

My dialogue with Numbers over his proposed chapter on "Science and Medicine" illustrates where I am likely to take issue with those critics who focus primarily on the problematic early EGW statements. It was from Numbers' first edition of *Prophetess of Health* (1976) that I first learned that Ellen White had taken her boys to a phrenologist to have the shape of their heads examined. Typically, Christians find ways of making peace with the wild things in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament. But Ellen White is much more recent. Surely we shouldn't have to take time and place into account for a "prophet" so recent as the 19th century! So, like most Adventists reading Numbers, I was surprised. But about that same time, I had also embarked on the project of reading Ellen White's *Testimonies for the Church* from start to finish (1855 to 1909). There, I was equally startled to

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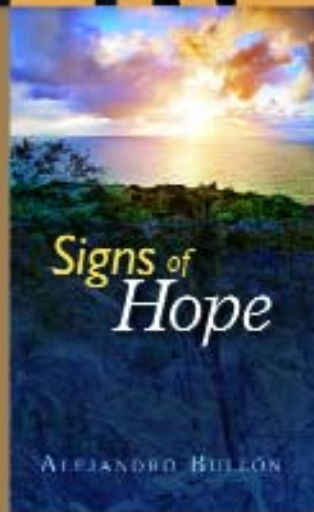
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read this quote in 1T 296 (1862): “Phrenology and mesmerism are very much exalted. They are good in their place, but they are seized upon by Satan as his most powerful agents to deceive and destroy souls.”

Given what we know today about phrenology, a traditional (inerrancy) view of inspiration has no way of explaining how such a point of view could be inspired. But twenty-two years later she wrote: “The sciences that treat of the human mind are very much exalted. They are good in their place; but they are seized upon by Satan as his powerful agents to deceive and destroy souls” (*Signs of the Times*, November 6, 1884). Aha! Now we have a statement that we can live with. But is the second statement inspired and the first one not?

Calvin Stowe, husband of Harriet Beecher Stowe, to the rescue—via Ellen White! And having just heard Joan Hedrick’s fascinating opening night’s lecture on Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of the nation-transforming book, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, we were all alert to the Stowe name. Several Adventist voices at the conference noted that Ellen White’s statements on inspiration include those published in Book 1 of *Selected Messages* (1958), one of which is a revision of a statement originally written by Calvin Stowe. “It is not the words of the Bible that were inspired,” Stowe had written, “it is not the thoughts of the Bible that were inspired; it is the men who wrote the Bible that were inspired.” Ellen White revised that statement to: “It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired.” 1 SM 21 [Ms 24 1886]. I find it significant that she left out his denial of “thought” inspiration. Her own settled position includes thought as well as person, but the crucial contrast is person instead of word. For me, it has been enormously freeing to be able to see the “person” as inspired rather than the “words.” That enables me to see everything in Scripture as “inspired” because the messages come through inspired persons. But those messages are not inspired “words” coming directly from God as absolute truth.

Numbers’ proposed chapter at the conference included this sentence: “She expressed strong feelings about ‘the sciences of phrenology, psychology, and mesmerism,’ denouncing them as theories of Satanic origin.” This is the question I pressed: “If Ellen White saw these ‘sciences’ as being of Satanic ‘origin,’” I asked, “why would she take her own boys to a phrenologist, and why would she say that they were ‘good in their place’?” Our brief but pointed public exchange did not resolve the

issue. But Numbers spoke to me afterwards, seeking clarification. That follow-up informal exchange was a more helpful one than our public one, I think.

Numbers has the knowledge and resources to produce a carefully nuanced history of Ellen White’s views on health and science. He noted, for example, that Ellen White wrote little on the subject of sex after 1870. He also noted that “she did late in life recommend blood transfusion, undergo an extensive series of x-ray treatments for spot on her forehead, and receive a vaccination against smallpox.” My question is: How did Ellen White get from point A to point B? An answer requires careful historical work. The following two quotations, for example, help explain why Adventist institutions of higher education did not go the way of the Bible colleges—a question that several of the “outsiders” raised. A school of medicine requires real science. Did Ellen White support that? Indeed she did. Speaking against the tendency to appeal to her word and example as the basis for action, she exclaimed: “If you have not got any better conviction—you won’t eat meat because Sister White does not eat any—if I am the authority, I would not give a farthing for your health reform.” (Talk by Mrs. E. G. White Before Representative Brethren, in the [Battle Creek] College Library, April 1, 1901,” Ms 43a, 1901, p. 13. [Ellen G. White Estate, Washington, D. C.]).

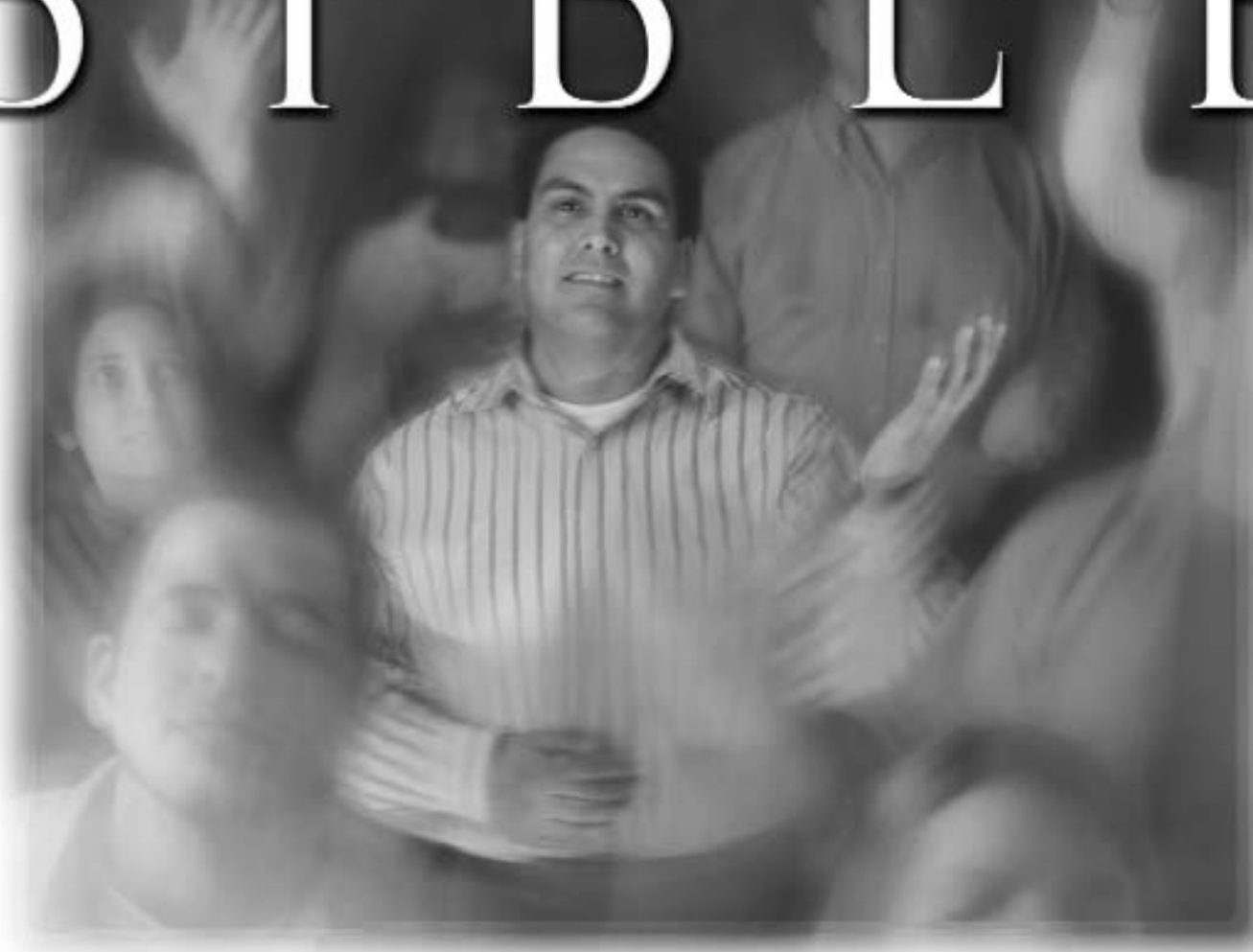
A more flamboyant statement is one from the Testimonies in 1870:

My voice shall be raised against novices undertaking to treat disease professedly according to the principles of health reform. God forbid that we should be the subjects for them to experiment upon! We are too few. It is altogether too inglorious a warfare for us to die in. God deliver us from such danger! We do not need such teachers and physicians. Let those try to treat disease who know something about the human system. The heavenly Physician was full of compassion. This spirit is needed by those who deal with the sick. Some who undertake to become physicians are bigoted, selfish, and mulish. You cannot teach them anything. It may be they have never done anything worth doing. They may not have made life a success. They know nothing really worth knowing, and yet they have started up to practice the health reform. We cannot afford to let such persons kill off this one and that one. No, we cannot afford it! 2T 375 (1870)

Continued on page 64...



B I B L E



TOP PHOTO: BEND, OREGON, SDA WEBSITE, BOTTOM PHOTO: SPECTRUM MAGAZINE WEBSITE

Liturgical Adventism: *Towards a Theology of Worship* | BY D. J. B. TRIM

Envision with me an Adventism that is liturgical—that recognizes and embraces the centrality and value of worship to the Church and in human relationships. Worship is one of the most heated topics within Seventh-day Adventism; but usually debate is focused on the details of how worship services are conducted, rather than addressing the fundamental function, or purpose, of worship. This article outlines a Biblical theology of worship and advances five chief arguments about worship's *purpose* and *function* in the Church.

1. In scripture as a whole, worship is God's primary requirement of His people; and we, therefore, ought to put time, care, and resources into doing it well.
2. Worship heightens our spiritual life because it generates a strong sense of the numinous and transcendent; it helps build a relationship with God.
3. Worship is also a way to build relationships with fellow believers; worship helps make the Church whole.
4. Worship also builds a sense of community with Christians of the past and of other denominations which can strengthen our own identity.
5. Worship ought to appeal to the senses *and* the mind; this implies structure, purpose, and beauty.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* reveals that the origin of our word "worship" is the Old English word "worth-ship."¹ Thus, as one study of worship among early Christians observes, "To worship God is to ascribe to Him supreme worth."² In worshipping, we are recognizing, acknowledging, declaring, yes, and celebrating, God's "worthship." Worship, then, fundamentally is a *response* to God's unique worthiness to be praised. However, what is it *for*? And what can it *achieve*?

FIRST, scripture indicates that worship is God's first requirement of His people: both historically (in the Old Testament and the Gospels) and in the future (as indicated in Revelation) and thus, logically in the present as well.

The sanctuary service, as established in the Mosaic code, was based on collective acts of repentance and atonement, of course, but also of worship. Even the acts of atonement were set rituals in which divine power and might were acknowledged and thus, were acts of worship; but there additionally were collective acts devoted solely to praising, thanking, and celebrating God. Furthermore, consider the tabernacle, full of things of extraordinary beauty and material richness and magnificence, all crafted by *divinely* ordained artists of the highest caliber. The tabernacle emphasized the power, holiness, and magnificence of God and thereby demarcated the sacred from the mundane. The very design of the tabernacle drew people in, as through a filter, from the outside where all was secular, through to the Holy Place and then the Most Holy Place, the "sacred rooms," which were so consecrated that even the priestly robes were to be left behind when the priests went into the temple's "outer court."³ The design of the sanctuary stressed to the people of Israel the sacredness, the specialness, of their God. The tabernacle, and later the temple, were three-dimensional pointers to God's true place in the cosmos and in the lives of the people of Israel—structural hints to God's people to recognize and acknowledge His worth. For millennia, then, the religion of the one true God was both materially and conceptually centered on worship.

When we come to the New Covenant era, the early encounters people had with the infant Christ provide us with a striking model in which God made manifest as man is met, recognized, His Godhood acknowledged and worshipped. The magi from the East had the epiphanal real-

ization that the peasant infant before their eyes was “He who has been born the King of the Jews.” But their epiphany was twofold, for they also recognized that they were not merely beholding juvenile earthly royalty—they were encountering God. And this evoked a response: “they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy” (“indescribable joy,” as Phillips translates it); and “they bowed down and worshipped him.”⁴ Earlier, the shepherds, like the Magi, *responded* to their encounter with divinity by worshipping: “the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen.”⁵ Then, eight days after, in the Temple, Jesus and His parents met the holy man, Simeon, and the prophetess, Anna, both of whom comprehended that they were seeing God in human flesh and so *responded* with worship: Simeon “blessed God” and broke into the wonderful prayer of praise still used by Christians, the *nunc dimittis*, while Anna “gave thanks to the Lord.”⁶

Thus, God revealed Himself to kings and shepherds; to wise foreigners and to holy Jews; to man and woman: all alike. And the common response, of Magi and shepherds, holy man and prophetess, to meeting the newborn Messiah and to recognizing His divine nature was to acknowledge His worthiness to be praised—His “worthship.” The wise men “bowed down,” they “fell on their knees,” and adored Him; the shepherds “glorified and praised” God; Simeon “blessed God;” Anna “gave thanks” to the Lord.

The lesson of these encounters is that the appropriate human response to Jesus is worship. Further evidence for this is found in John’s vision of heaven in Revelation. Of the Three Angels’ Messages that Seventh-day Adventists rightly have always emphasized, the first is, simply, a call to worship: “Fear God, *give him glory*. . . *Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.*”⁷ Worship is overwhelmingly important and is repeatedly emphasized, especially in Revelation 5: 8–14, 7: 9–12 and 15: 2–4. John sees the “many angels around the throne, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders,” all of whom worship Christ with music, hymns and incense.⁸ They are then joined by a great, countless multitude of the saved,⁹ who repeatedly unite with the celestial beings in music and song, declaring their *thanksgiving* that Christ has “redeemed” them by His blood, and their *acknowledgment* that “He alone [is] holy,” He alone is “*worthy* . . . to receive . . . honor and glory and praise!”¹⁰ Moreover, the four living creatures and the twenty-four

In the Beginning—A Creation Liturgy

Given the poetic nature of Genesis 1:1–2:4a, one has to wonder if the passage wasn’t originally a creation hymn, like some we have in the biblical book of Psalms (19, 104, etc.) and elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (Proverbs 8:22–31; Job 27, etc.). These were to be sung orally, in community. The intended results of the congregation’s chanting would thus be doxology, praise to God, the majestic creator. With this idea in mind, a Hebrew class at Walla Walla University was assigned the task of putting the chapter into poetic form, creating in the process a worship liturgy complete with speaking parts. This fresh translation, formatted as a hymn in celebration of the Creator, intended for liturgical reading, likely comes as close as any translation to the original intent and performed results of Genesis 1.

Nar ⁽¹⁾ In the beginning God created
 the heavens and the earth.
⁽²⁾ And the earth was empty and void,
 and darkness was over the face of the deep,
 and God’s spirit was hovering
 over the face of the water.

First Day

Men ⁽³⁾ And God said,
Women “Let there be light,”
Men and there was light.
⁽⁴⁾ And God saw the light
 that it was good.
 And God separated between
 the light and the darkness.
⁽⁵⁾ And God called the light day
 and the darkness He called night.

All And it was good.

 And it was evening, and it was morning—
 the first day.

Second Day

Men ⁽⁶⁾ And God said,
Women “Let there be a dome
 in the midst of the waters,
 and let there be a distinction
 between the waters.”
Men ⁽⁷⁾ And God made the dome,
 and He separated between
 the waters which were below the dome
 and the waters which were above the dome.

All And it was so.

Men (8) And God called the dome “Heavens.”
And it was evening, and it was morning—
the second day.

Third Day

Men (9) And God said,
Women “Let the waters be collected under the
heavens to one place,
and let the dry ground appear.”

All And it was so.

Men (10) And God called the dry ground “Earth,”
and the accumulation of the waters he
called “Seas.”

All And God saw that it was good.

Men (11) And God said,
Women “Let the earth sprout vegetation—
seed-producing plants,
fruit trees—
producing fruit of their own kind on
the earth.”

All And it was so.

Nar (12) And the earth brought forth green vegetation
bearing seed after its kind,
and trees
bearing fruit with its seed in it after its kind.

All And God saw that it was good.

(13) And it was evening, and it was morning—
the third day.

Fourth Day

Men (14) And God said,
Women “Let there be sources of light in the dome
of the heavens
making a distinction between
the day and the night,
and let them be markers also
for appointed times
and for days
and years.

elders again and again fall down in bodily veneration of God;¹¹ and “the multitude” of humans carry “palm branches,”¹² thus, physical actions are joined to the praise rendered by instrument, voice, and thought. In sum, God’s “worship” is acknowledged physically and visually, as well as orally and musically, and thus aurally, and with incense—in other words, worship appeals to all the five senses, a point to which I shall return later.

To adore, to glorify, to praise, to bless, and to thank Our Lord in response to all God has done in creating the world and in saving us, and particularly in honor of Him who was God’s gift to the world; this is what we are called to. God *desires* our worship. Certainly, worship is a primary obligation of the Christian; and the fundamental purpose of worship is to praise God. Worship is our response to the divine and ought to be God-focused.

This leads to my SECOND argument: that contemplating and acknowledging God’s worth and expressing thankfulness for His condescension to our human condition provide us with a strong sense of the sacred, the numinous, and the transcendent. Because worship is God-focused, it places us in a proper frame of mind *vis-à-vis* the divine, reducing the importance of self. It is striking that when the rites and rituals of the temple were regularly celebrated, when the ancient Israelites worshipped, they stayed close to God. When long periods passed without regular observance of the rituals of worship, so much so that they were forgotten, then the Hebrews strayed into rampant paganism.¹³ Simeon was exalted and transcended by his encounter with the infant Christ. It is indeed natural that, when we are focused on God, when we are fixed on acknowledging and celebrating *His* divine characteristics, it will bring out *our* shortcomings; when we are focused on God’s worth, self is more easily put aside—when we worship God, we are more likely to be in the mental and spiritual place where God wants us. And then the sense of the transcendent and celestial that worship can produce can further bring about in us a great sense of joy at communion with the divine. In sum, worship helps us build a relationship with God and heightens our spiritual life.

My THIRD argument is that scripture consistently portrays worship as a way to build relationships with fellow believers as well as with God. The joy and exaltation of worshipping God provides a strong sense of community with those who worship alongside us and can produce a common purpose. In the Old Testament, worshipping together helped to produce unity and cordiality among the Israelites; in the New Testament, worshipping together was the catalyst of effective mission because it built a spiritually powerful body of believers. Worship thus builds community within the Church and makes it more effective in both missiological and pastoral terms.

Unity amongst Christians, remember, is what Christ asked God for in the Garden of Gethsemane.¹⁴ That Jesus prayed about this just before His crucifixion gives us an idea of the importance with which He viewed unity amongst the body of believers. So, in arguing that worship helps make the Church *whole*, I am saying that it helps achieve one of Christ's key desires for His followers. A crucial but little-stressed factor in the explosive expansion of the early Church was that the Church was united by communal acts of worship. In the first four chapters of the Book of Acts we find, as is well known, that the believers shared meals together and shared their money and goods with each other, too.¹⁵ However, they also regularly shared worship together as well: "in prayers," in "praising God," raising "their voices to God in one accord."¹⁶ When the believers were united in one accord, sharing meals, but also sharing worship, sharing in the praise of God, the result was that "the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." The unity engendered by shared worship produced believers who "spoke the word of God with boldness."¹⁷

It seems to me, then, that the scriptural model is that God wants all who believe in His Son to be united, both because sharing in worship of Him who created and redeemed us ought to outweigh any differences we may have and because it will make us more effective in carrying out the gospel commission to go into all the world and preach the good news of Jesus Christ to all people. However, I propose that the scriptural model *also* shows that when we join in worship—in praising and giving thanks to Him who created the heavens and earth—we become *more* united. We become more of a community. I find it very difficult to maintain a grudge against someone when I'm standing not far from them joined in literally hymning my

⁽¹⁵⁾ And let the sources of light be in the dome of the heavens to illuminate the earth."

All And it was so.

Men ⁽¹⁶⁾ And God made two great lights—the greater luminary—to rule the day and the lesser luminary—to rule the night, also the stars.

⁽¹⁷⁾ And God placed them in the dome of the heavens to illuminate the earth,

⁽¹⁸⁾ to rule over the day and over the night, and to distinguish between light and darkness.

All And God saw that it was good.

⁽¹⁹⁾ And it was evening, and it was morning—the fourth day.

Fifth Day

Men ⁽²⁰⁾ And God said,
Women "Let swarming animal life swarm in the waters, and let the flying things fly across the earth across the face of the dome of the heavens."

Men ⁽²¹⁾ And God created the great sea monsters and all living creatures—the small animal species which swarm in the waters and all the species of winged-birds.

All And God saw that it was good.

Men ⁽²²⁾ And God blessed them saying,
Women "Be fruitful and become numerous, and fill the waters in the sea and let the birds become numerous on the earth."

All ⁽²³⁾ And it was evening, and it was morning—
the fifth day.

Sixth Day

Men ⁽²⁴⁾ And God said,
Women “Let the earth bring forth living creatures
after their kind,
large cattle,
small animals,
and land animals
after their kind.”

All And it was so.

Men ⁽²⁵⁾ And God made the living creatures of the earth
after their kind
and the large cattle
after their kind
and all the small animals of the ground
after their kind.

All And God saw that it was good.

Men ⁽²⁶⁾ And God said,
Women “Let Us make people in Our image
like Us in form,
and let them rule
over the fish of the sea
and over the flying things of the heavens
and over the wild animals
and over all the earth
and over all the small animals
swarming on the earth.”

Men ⁽²⁷⁾ And God created people in His image
in the image of God He created him,
male and female He created them.

⁽²⁸⁾ And God blessed them
and God said to them,
Women “Be fruitful
and become numerous
and fill the earth
and subdue it
and rule over the fish in the sea
and over the flying things of the
heavens
and over all living creatures on the earth.”

Men ⁽²⁹⁾ And God said,

praise of He who died for both of us. And I don't claim this as a special virtue for myself because I am quite good at nursing grudges the rest of the time: the virtue is rather in the act of worship which turns our minds to Christ and which can, at its best, be a truly transcendental experience.

My FOURTH argument is that worship additionally builds a sense of community with Christians in general, partly because it builds a sense of community with the past, with the “great cloud of witnesses” mentioned by the author of Hebrews,¹⁸ which can itself strengthen our bonds as a body of believers. A sense of community with the past helps reinforce our own sense of identity. If we *worship* together with Christians of other denominations—avoiding doctrinal differences—we will be conforming to Christ's express desire that those who believe in Him be united, while a greater sense of community with fellow Christians can allow us to cooperate with them in those areas where it is mutually advantageous.

In addition, adopting and adapting liturgical practices of other Christian communions can have a missiological benefit because of the connections it creates or highlights. Many people raised in the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, or Methodist traditions who attend an Adventist divine service, leave feeling that they have not worshipped because there is no communal prayer or confession, no communal act of worship; their experience has been almost entirely auditory. It is striking that in many Western countries, the churches that are growing are those with overtly sacramental, ceremonial worship styles—embracing the extraordinary Christian liturgical tradition has the potential to build links not only with our past and with fellow believers, but also with secular people.

FIFTH, in light of all we have said—in light of worship's importance in scripture and its potential to enhance the Church spiritually, pastorally, and missiologically—it deserves planning and thought. Furthermore, worship not only ought to be conducted with care and attention; it should also appeal to the senses *and* the mind; and this, in turn,

implies structure, purpose, and beauty. This is why I am calling for a liturgical Adventism. Spontaneity or simplicity may produce a sense of the transcendent, of course, but so do structure, purpose, and beauty; and these are probably more effective in creating a sense of the sacred. This is both the scriptural pattern as well as a sociological observation. Rituals were integral to Old Testament worship; the repetition and communal responses in Revelation's vision of heaven are suggestive of liturgy; the apostle Paul strongly and specifically urged that worship be conducted "in a fitting and orderly way."¹⁹ This was a text used in the introduction to the 1559 *Book of Common Prayer* to explain the common liturgy designed for the newly Protestant Church of England. It was often cited along with Psalm 96:9, "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness," by Archbishop William Laud and the Anglican "Ceremonialists" in the early seventeenth-century, the first English-speaking Protestants to prioritize worship and the inculcation of a sense of the sacred.²⁰ Furthermore, objects of physical beauty, candles, and incense were all part of worship in the Old Testament sanctuary and were envisioned in celestial worship by prophets from Isaiah to John the Revelator.²¹ Since their utilization requires preparation, this highlights the vital importance in worship of beauty, purpose, and planning; however, it additionally points to the desirability of a holistic approach.

I have already suggested that part of worship's scriptural purpose is to achieve wholeness; worship, then, ought to appeal to the whole human being: mind, senses, and spirit, not just one part. In addition to the use of objects and substances that were seen, heard, smelled, and tasted (as in communion), David, Isaiah, the magi, and the apostle Paul worshipped, or call for us to worship, bodily, as well as with thought and voice—as the four creatures and the four-and-twenty elders will do in heaven, falling to their knees before God.²²

The Bible thus propounds a model of worship that is ritual, elaborate, and sensuous rather than one that is mostly cognitive and auditory. When we worship, therefore, we ought to aim at *liturgy* because this implies a degree of order and form, rather than disorder and confusion. This is not to say that there should be no simplicity or spontaneity, only that they must be balanced with, rather than unduly privileged above, beauty, structure, order, and a holistic approach as found in God's

Women

"Behold, I have given you
all the green plants
after their kind which are on
the face of all the earth
and all the fruit trees
after their kind
for you to eat,

⁽³⁰⁾ and for all the animals on the earth
and for all the birds in the heavens
and for all the swarming things on the earth
which have the breath of life—
I have given
all the green leafy plants
for them to eat."

All

And it was so.

Men

⁽³¹⁾ And God saw all that he had made,
and behold—

All

it was VERY good.

And it was evening, and it was morning—
the sixth day.

Nar

⁽¹⁾ And the heavens and the earth were finished,
and all their inhabitants.

Seventh Day

Men

⁽²⁾ And on the seventh day,
God finished His work
which He had done
and ceased on the seventh day
from all His work which He had done.

⁽³⁾ And God blessed the seventh day
and made it holy,
because on it He ceased
from all His work
which God created and had done.

Nar

⁽⁴⁾ These are the origins
of the heavens
and the earth,
when they were created. ■

TRANSLATORS Milton Adams; Randy Croft; Tom Evans;
Don Gibson; Andy McCrary; Andrew McPherson; Larry Witzel;
Douglas R. Clark, Professor

creation. We must not be afraid of rituals for they are part of the Biblical pattern of worship. Human beings have, a need for some type of order and pattern to their existence and, therefore, invariably adopt rituals. Often Seventh-day Adventists boast that we don't have liturgy or ritual as though this were a good thing and as though it were accurate. In fact, it isn't. Liturgy can be created by omission as much as by commission; rituals arise through accidental repetition as much as by purposeful design. Every local Seventh-day Adventist church has its rituals! Our choices, in fact, are not between rituals and no rituals, between liturgy and no liturgy. They are, instead, between meaningless rituals which evoke nothing and rituals which point towards something—which, in the words of a great Christian author, J. R. R. Tolkien, “convey significance.” Our real choice is, in fact, between good liturgy and bad liturgy.

To embrace more overtly liturgical forms of worship rather than privileging simplistic, unstructured worship is in many ways a departure from Adventist praxis. However, it draws on our traditional concerns with (1) wholeness and emphasis on God; (2) the Creator, since He authored designs of beauty, complexity and order; and (3) the significance of the sanctuary—there is a disconnect between our theoretical avowal of the existence of a heavenly sanctuary and a practical reflection of what that might mean, especially in light of what it meant to God's people in ancient times. Becoming liturgical thus can make us more Adventist as well as bring us closer to the Biblical model.

To conclude: my vision of a liturgical Adventism is of a people who endeavor to worship in those ways that will most heighten our sense of God's worth and our unity and sense of community; and who, in consequence, are unafraid to embrace ritual liturgy. In doing so, we will best honor the originator of the sanctuary service and He before whom at the end “those who have [had] victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark [will] sing the song of Moses...and the song of the Lamb, saying: ‘Great and marvelous are your works, O Lord God... righteous and true are your ways... Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy; for all the nations shall come and *worship* before you.’”²³ ■

Notes and References

1. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn, s.v. “worship”, n., 1.1.a: “*weorthscipe*”. Ralph P. Martin, *Worship in the Early Church*, revd edn (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974), 10.
2. The latter is an insight I owe to Ronald Allen and Gordon Borrer, *Worship: Rediscovering the Missing Jewel* (Portland, Oreg.: Multnomah Press, 1982), 18–19.
3. E.g., Eze. 44:19.
4. Matt. 2:10–11.
5. Luke 2:20.
6. Luke 2: 25–38.
7. Rev. 14:7 (emphasis supplied).
8. Rev. 5:6–12; 7:11.
9. Rev. 5:13; 7:9; 15:2.
10. Rev. 15: 3–4; 5:12–13, 7:10–12.
11. Rev. 5:8, 14; 7:11
12. Rev. 7:9.
13. See 2 Chron. chaps. 29–30, 34–35.
14. Jn. 17:11, 20–23.
15. Acts 2: 42–46, 4:32, 34.
16. Acts 2:42, 46, 3:24; cf. 2:47, 3:1, 3:11, 5:12.
17. Acts 2:47, 4:31.
18. Heb. 12:1—this sums up and culminates the extraordinary roll call of the faithful of the past begun at 11:1.
19. 1 Cor. 14:26–40 at v. 40.
20. “Of Ceremonies, why some be abolished and some retained,” *Book of Common Prayer* (1559); *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical* (1604), no. 18; and, e.g., Robert Skinner, *A Sermon Preached before the King at White-Hall* (London: 1634), 20. All are accessible in a modern edition: David Cressy and Lori Anne Ferrell (eds.), *Religion and Society in Early Modern England*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 52, 152, 197. On the Ceremonialists see e.g. Peter Lake, “The Laudian Style: Order, Uniformity and the Pursuit of the Beauty of Holiness in the 1630s,” in Kenneth Fincham (ed.), *The Early Stuart Church, 1603–1642* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), 161–85.
21. Isaiah, see Isa. 6:4, John, see above.
22. Magi, Revelation: see above; David: see e.g. Ps. 29:2, where “worship” is more accurately translated as “make yourselves to lie prostrate” (Allen and Borrer, *Worship*, 127); Isaiah, Isa. 45:23; Paul: see Phi. 2:10, Rom. 14:11.
23. Rev. 15:2–4.

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GOD AS



CREATOR

21st-Century Challenges to God in His Created Cosmos | BY RONALD E. REECE

If one were to pick an intellectual and theological tipping point that best explains the 21st century, the mid-1800s, particularly the 1840s, would be its beginning. Yes, with historical hindsight and the passing of time, the mid-1800s is sizing up to be one of the world's greatest intellectual and theological divides as we move into the 21st century.

Let me explain. Individuals living between 600 BC to the 1840s AD thought more alike religiously, culturally, and socially than individuals living from the 1840s to the 21st century. For example, individuals worshipping "pagan" polytheistic gods in Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon, Darius' Persia, Alexander's Greece, and Caesar's Rome were nearer in thought to Christians who believed in Christ, the Son of God, from 33 AD forward to mid-1800s AD, than the growing numbers of modern individuals after the mid-1800s who progressively consider God absent or irrelevant.

The Apostle Paul illustrates this in the market place in Athens. Paul had to convince the Athenians to exchange their "pagan" gods representing nature for the living "unknown" God who created nature (Acts 17:22–23).¹ Abrahamic faith believers, from the mid-1800s to the 21st century, have the added task of persuading men and women that God exists at all.

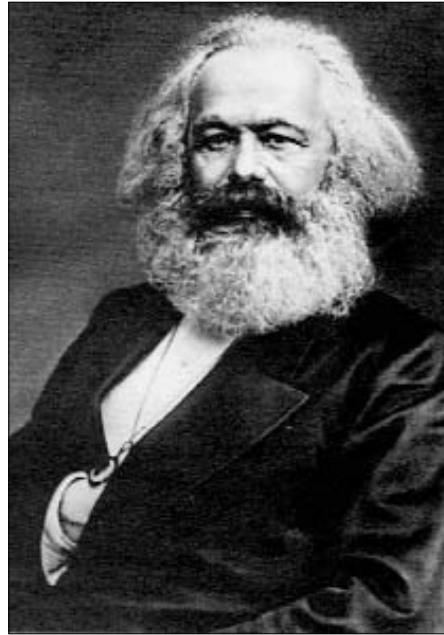
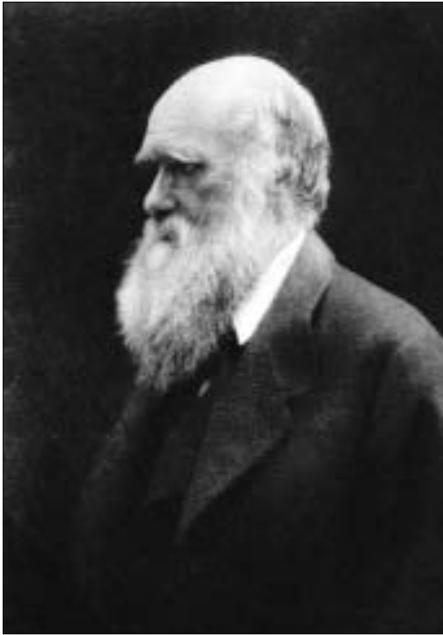
Before the mid-1800s, God was not merely a myth or a good story; God was a fact of life around whom myths and stories were constructed. What differentiated world religions was the character of God and whether God personally interacted with compassion and love with humans or not. What further differentiated world religions was whether God merely existed within nature like the Sun god Amun-Re, the fertility goddess Isis, or Babylon's Marduk; or whether God

created a self-different cosmos from outside the cosmos and was now moment-by-moment upholding and sustaining the cosmos and human life.

Social, religious, and psychological theories that originated in the mid-1800s have challenged God's presence in His created cosmos as in no other time in history. Other 20th century Christian writers agree. James Patrick in his introduction to *A Christian for All Christians* about C. S. Lewis writes:

*"About 1870 it seemed evident that the native empiricism—Hume perfected by Mill, and Bacon fulfilled by Charles Darwin—would occupy the intellectual terrain unopposed. Looking back across the 19th century, C. S. Lewis and his teachers and friends interpreted the change in mind and heart that took place in English thought and culture about 1830 as a great intellectual divide that separated them from the entire classical, medieval, and Renaissance past. Lewis, Charles Williams, and J.R.R. Tolkien believed that there was more distance between themselves and Jane Austen than between Jane Austen and Plato. Thus they inevitably saw themselves as Apostles of tradition...."*²

One could even say that this intellectual divide was percolating in the Renaissance or Enlightenment where humankind was beginning to see itself and nature as the measure of all things. Also, during the Renaissance there was new access to the Bible, God, and righteousness by faith. The Gutenberg printing press put the Old and New Testament, characterized by God's grace in the Exodus and Calvary, into the hands of millions of individual men and women for study and interpretation. The printing press of the Renaissance created an information explosion similar to the Internet in the 21st century.



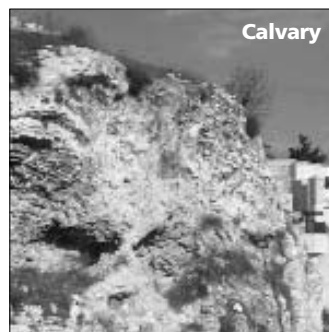
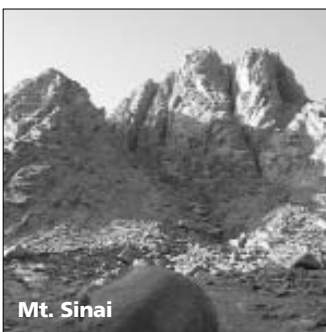
Above, left: to right: Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche.

The mid-1800s, particularly 1844, created a spiritual and intellectual divide principally led by the worldviews of Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Nietzsche. Their writings and philosophies now form the foundation of worldviews that infamously challenge God's presence in His created cosmos in the 21st century; namely, (1) at creation; (2) at Mt. Sinai in the Decalogue—where God's universal umbrella of ethics and morality was outlined; and (3) at Calvary—where God's self-sacrificial gift of redemption and love for

Origin of Species, published in 1859. Darwin was not the first to notice descending similarities between the species. Since the beginning of recorded time, interspecies' similarities of eating, drinking, breathing, anatomy, and procreation have been appreciated. However, Darwin, in the flowering of the scientific age, brilliantly connected with greater precision that lower biological life shared similar characteristics as higher biological life. Darwin meticulously recorded many of these in his epic voyage on the HMS Beagle (1831–1836), rightfully becoming the most famous natural biologist of all time—as a bountiful and provocative reading of *The Voyage of The Beagle* and *On The Origins of the Species* would attest.

Today, Darwin's astute observation of biological adaptation over time is essential to our understanding of how species and the environment have adjusted throughout history—microevolution. What still remains elusive is a practical demonstration of a mechanism that progressively evolves energy to atoms to simple inorganic molecules to organic molecules into DNA, RNA, amino acids, and eventually into living cells—macroevolution.³

Darwin proposed that natural selection was the scientific mechanism—*without preordained design by God or any "skyhook"*—to spontaneously coordinate matter into life by chance mutation and time. Put differently, Darwinian Evolution eliminates God from *any* form of life-generating mechanism whether in 7 seconds, 7 days, 7 billion years, young



the world occurred in the God/man Jesus Christ.

Charles Darwin was born on the same day as Abraham Lincoln, February 12, 1809. After dropping out of medical school, Darwin completed his Degree in Theology from Cambridge University. Darwin, a Deist and later an agnostic, wrote his original 230 page "essay" on natural selection in 1844; this was later amplified in his classic book, *On the*

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PHOTO: R. REECE

Left: A small sampling of the 3 billion base pairs of Cytosine (C)-Guanine (G) and Thiamine (T) -Adenosine (A) nucleotides that compose the double helix human DNA. These two dimensional DNA templates are the initial step in forming the three dimensional proteins that give our bodies shape and form. Middle: Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, England, displays the biological sequence of fossils, birds, and animals. Right: Author standing by giant tortoise at the Charles Darwin Research Station, Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz Island, a Galapagos Island.

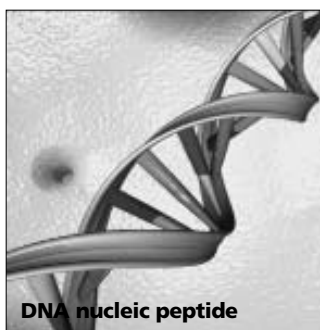
earth or old earth. God influencing the creation of life over 7 billion years would not be Darwinian Evolution but a form of “slow creation,” also known as theistic evolution or biological evolution initiated by God. Atheist turned Evangelical Christian, Francis Collins, now head of National Institute of Health and past head of the NIH Genome Project, would be an example of one who believes in theistic evolution or “BioLogos” articulated in his book, *The Language of God*.

God uniquely influencing creation at specific sequential time periods—for example, 7 days as literarily described in Genesis or over longer sequential time periods as many Biblical scholars see figuratively or allegorically described in Genesis—are put forward to overcome seemingly “irreducible biological complexities” or scientific “gaps” in our biologic systems. This is written about by Phillip Johnson’s *Darwin on Trial* and Michael Behe’s *Darwin’s Black Box*. The point here is theistic evolutionists and sequential creationists are on the *same side* integrating God into the “origin of species” contrary to Darwin’s Evolutionary Theory where God is absent.

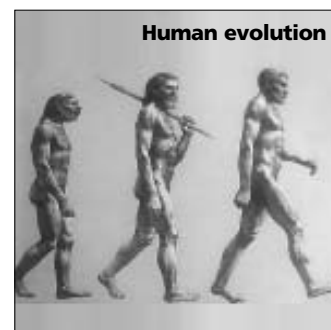
Darwin’s Evolutionary Theory of natural selection—without God’s creative influence at any level—seemed more plausible in the late 1800s when living cells were expounded by Darwin’s bulldog, Thomas Huxley, to be homogeneous bags of “protoplasm” made up of “living protein” and “molecules.” The cell in the 21st century is known to be to be extremely complex, differentiated into numerous

organelles with millions of simultaneous biochemical reactions and interactions.⁴

The DNA nucleic peptide “lettered” chain is longer and more precisely sequenced than any software program we have on earth. However, unlike computer software, whose complex organization of coded information instinctively infers intelligent design and not the spontaneous mutations of Windows XP or Vista into Windows 7; scientists are rebuffed by proponents of Darwinian Evolution for considering intelligent design when analyzing human DNA.



DNA nucleic peptide



Intelligent design resides in the realm of faith or pseudoscience as no one has the DVD of what occurred during major explosions of biodiversity and life; a similar argument could be made against natural selection. Even Jerry Coyne in *Why Evolution is True* admits that “natural selection, over eons, sculpts an animal or plant into something that looks designed.” Coyne, like Darwin, writes of natural selection as being “simple,” “beautiful,” “an architect,” “must build” to

name a string of design adjectives describing something that sounds God influenced to me.

Darwin's Theory of Evolution now forms the worldview of "origins" taught in much of the world's public schools in the 21st century. Darwinian Evolution, by natural selection, should be taught as a scientific hypothesis; however, when science is taught, mystery, wonder, and a cosmic order inferring intelligent design spontaneously takes shape.

The full title of Darwin's book published in 1859 was *The Origin of the Species or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. The Babylonian *Atrabasis Epic* and *Enuma Elish* also assert that man was created to perform the work the gods once had to do. The Babylonian creation myths prevalent during Daniel's era declared that only the fittest will survive; less favored races must struggle for life. The Babylonian creation myths are in full harmony with twentieth-first century Darwin's evolutionary world view reflected in Darwin's writings,



which in its own right has become a world religion where individuals worship themselves and nature.

An extreme expression of social Darwinism was Hitler and his Nazi regime. Hitler, an atheist and advocate of Darwin's Evolutionary Theory, believed that undesirable races, the disabled and infirmed, should be exterminated to preserve the species. Mentally and physically disabled Germans, Russians, and Poles became the precursors to the "final solution" of Jews at Auschwitz, Dachau, and Buchenwald. Hitler based this on the high moral grounds that breeding a superior Aryan race would create a better world.

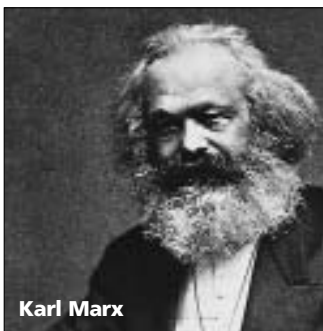
Hitler's ethnic genocide and eugenics found their justification in Darwin's natural selection evolutionary theory. In the words of Richard Weikart's *From Darwin to Hitler*, "evolution became the new arbiter for sexual morality; whatever improved biological quality was morally good, while whatever hindered it was evil." Eduard David similarly penned, "In the realm of sexuality everything is moral

which serves the upward evolution of the species."⁵ Genetic determinism and engineering are a reality in the 21st century from the food we eat to cloning animals. How will we use such genetic power?

As sex, reproduction, and the preservation of the fittest organisms became central to Darwin's evolutionary theory, human moral behavior moved from being under the umbrella of God's moral authority, as creatures made in His image, to human behavior being subservient to sex and motivated and protected by relative ethical and moral actions. Isis, the goddess of sex and fertility, had successfully found her place in the modern world of nationalism, politics, and science.

Man's inhumanity to man and nature, once rejected on religious grounds, now takes free reign because natural selection predicts and promotes such behavior for the betterment of society. The "survival of the fittest" is the breeding ground for gratuitous violence, broken relationships, and lawlessness. The "survival of the fittest" parade and pervade TV, the theatre, entertainment, music and the cinema, the common altars where humanity now worships.

In 1844, Karl Marx wrote *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844) "Estranged Labour."⁶ That work laid the ground work for Marx/Engels' work *Das Capital* published in English in 1867. Karl Marx wanted to dedicate *Das Capital* to Charles Darwin. In contrast to Scripture where the Westminster Confession says that the chief end of man is "to glorify God and to enjoy him forever," the chief purpose of man in *Das Capital* is to produce and consume things, with the byline that private property alienates people. Marx saw man caught in a cycle of "materialism" and "determinism" not freed by an ongoing relationship with God but by a revolution of the masses, a continual class struggle. God and religion were merely "an opiate of the masses."

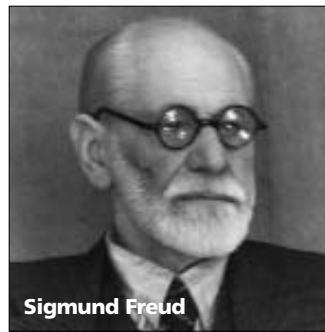


Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844) "Estranged Labour," a treatise on the abuses of Capitalism, later amplified by Engels in *Das Capital*, was co-opted by communist revolutionaries who literally stripped individuals of the new sin—private property—in the name of liberating the masses; this strategy progressively bankrupted entire countries. These totalitarian regimes were guided by an ethical evolution and moral relativism formulated by the new world saviors, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao. These world saviors accomplished their goals by exterminating or starving 60 million people in Russia and 35 million people in China.

The religion of those countries turned on homage to the Communist Party and cult worship of their dictators. One quarter of the world's population still live under Communist rule; and hundreds of million more still live under the godless after-effects or "religious vacuum" communism has imparted to their countries and citizens. Communism with its moral relativism still wields its power from China to Tibet, Cuba, Darfur, North Korea, and the Sudan.

The "abomination of desolation," a term used by the prophet Daniel and Jesus to denote the desecration of God's created cosmos, has never been more defiled and desecrated than after 1844. The names are notorious: Lenin, Stalin, Adolph Hitler, Pol Pot, Idi Amin, Mao, and Saddam Hussein. Tens of millions of people have been killed on their behalf. Marxism is still alive where the individual person is devalued by the control and domination of state religion, multinational corporations, the media, and the state. Marxism is still alive when moral relativism undergirds our social fabric. Frederick Engels eulogized Marx by saying, "Just as Darwin discovered the law of development of organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history."

On October 15, 1844, Frederick Nietzsche was born. Nietzsche created the Overman or "the Superman," further declaring there is no sin and "God is Dead." To Nietzsche, Jesus Christ, as God incarnate, who had come to redeem humanity was a fabricated hoax. Following the serpent's lead in Eden, Nietzsche's Superman would determine good and evil without regard to God, religion, society, or pity for the weak and powerless. Ludwig Feuerbach in 1841 and Sigmund Freud born in 1856 said the same. God was an



invention of the human mind. Paradise could never be regained because paradise was never lost. Feuerbach voiced this in *Philosophie und Christentum*, "Christianity has in fact long vanished not only from reason but from the life of mankind, that it is nothing more than a fixed idea."

Nietzsche, Feuerbach, and Freud could be quoting the King of the North in Daniel 11:36–37. "The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place. He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all." Nietzsche is not the Overman. Nietzsche, synthesized and predicted, in his *Will to Power* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the coming of the Overman who would exert its/their will by collectivism, by encouraging war and conflict; and by ruling through a centralized authoritarian elite. The Overman would be anti-democratic, anti-reason, anti-trade, anti-capitalistic and anti-individualistic.⁷ Nietzsche writes in *Genealogy of Morals*, "Mankind in the mass sacrificed to the prosperity of a single stronger species of man—that would be an advantage."

One century later, 1944, Adolph Hitler would twist and use Nietzsche's social premises to justify Nazism and the Third Reich exterminating 6 million Jews and 40 million non-Jews in WW II. Other totalitarian and fascist regimes since 1844 have taken similar routes. Equally, you and I employ Nietzschean thinking when we choose to live autonomously—morally, physically, or socially—apart from God and His Holy Spirit and when we deny value to every individual person regardless of race, culture, or gender. One could even say Nazism and Communism capitalized on the failure of Christianity to bring a brighter reality to the world coupled to democracy and individual liberty.

Nietzsche is not only a father of the modern world, but a father of our postmodern world where the existence of

God is similarly diminished and the material universe is felt to be all there is. However, the postmodern mind is seeking greater meaning by integrating past philosophical knowledge, religious stories, and metaphysical myths with present day scientific advancement and exploration. The postmodern mind now has the unimaginable research tools of the Internet to explore, edit, and decipher the past and the present, from the subatomic world to galaxies supporting and surrounding our lives. Thanks to Nietzsche, the postmodern world creates both consternation and an unprecedented opportunity to fill the spiritual vacuum created in a deconstructed and fragmented world—perhaps with a self-sacrificial, personal God.

The world openly recognizes the controversial scientific, sociological, philosophical, spiritual, and historical legacy that Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Nietzsche have brought the world since the mid 1800s. The 200th anniversary birth of Darwin is now celebrated worldwide. Darwin's portrait graces Britain's 10 pound note, replacing Charles Dickens in 2005. Darwin's legacy is continued in the 21st century in the popular writings of Stephen Jay Gould, who respects the different but non-overlapping realms or "magisterium" of science and religion written in *Rock of Ages*; to Richard Dawkins who, like Nietzsche, stridently views religion and God as evil. Amazon.com has over 250 current books where Darwin, Marx, and Nietzsche are mentioned together in the body of their texts.

As Seventh-day Adventists, it should not go unnoticed that the first angel's message of Revelation 14 warns against end time worldviews challenging God's presence in creation, "Worship Him who made the heaven made the earth and the sea and springs of waters" (Revelation 14:7). The second angel's message warns of those who follow relative moral and ethical guidelines of the world without reference to God, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her

immorality;" and the third angel's message warns against worshipping the beast and his image instead of worshipping God with the "faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:8, 9).

As Seventh-day Adventists, it should not go unnoticed that Darwin, Marx, and Nietzsche's anti-God worldviews are positioned where God's Sabbath rest, symbolized by the seventh-day Sabbath, is poignantly positioned; namely, (1) at creation—the seventh-day of creation (Genesis 2:2); (2) in the middle of the Decalogue—in the fourth commandment (Exodus 20:8–11); and (3) between Crucifixion Friday and Resurrection Sunday when Jesus rested in the tomb on the seventh-day Sabbath (John 19). Seventh-day Adventists are uniquely positioned in their apocalyptic vision to be relevant in the 21st Century. ■

Notes and References

1. "Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: 'Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.'" (Acts 17:22–23).
2. *A Christian for All Christians: Essays in Honor of C.S. Lewis*, edited by Dr. Andrew Walker and Dr. James Patrick, Regener Gateway, Washington, DC, 1992, 3, 4.
3. A few amino acids being generated in a lighting chamber by Stanley Miller in 1957 does not give an adequate mechanism or explanation for the infinite number of complex molecules needed for the successful evolution of a cell. It has been calculated that the time needed to build a large chain protein by chance mutation with left handed (L-isomer) amino acids with a precise sequencing exceeds the billions of years that the universe has been postulated to exist.
4. The cell has certain enzymatic reactions that require thousands of simultaneous reactions with multiple protein molecules. That means that random natural selection would have had to evolve simultaneously those protein molecules and their corresponding DNA templates. The sum is infinitely greater than the sum of the parts.
5. Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, 130.
6. Marxists.org
7. Stephen Hicks, *Nietzsche and the Nazi*, DVD.



Ron Reece is a fourth-generation Seventh-day Adventist physician. He is finishing a Diploma in Christian Studies at Regent College and has attended Regent's sister college, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford University. This paper is part of a larger unpublished work: *Kryptos: A 21st Century Deciphering of God in His Cosmic Temple*. He thanks Dr. Stephen Brown and Dr. Fred Mathews for editorial suggestions.

Does Adventism Still Need the Geoscience Research Institute?

Conversations with Three Leading Scientists | BY JARED WRIGHT



The Geoscience Research Institute (GRI) sits on the periphery of Loma Linda University's bustling campus in a bright, new, modern building with the Seventh-day Adventist Church logo in gold on its façade. A replica velociraptor skeleton welcomes visitors to the headquarters office and laboratories of this General Conference institution.

It was in October 1959 that the General Conference Committee first voted to spend \$13,500 for science research, based on a recommendation from the Department of Education. It also set up a standing committee to administer the project and "to make such recommendations as may be necessary to implement the progressive development of the program," including the names of people to be chosen for graduate study.

R. R. Figuhr, the General Conference president, was elected chairperson of the committee on Oct. 28, 1959, and chaired it until he retired in 1966.¹ Today GRI receives an annual budget of \$1.37 million from the church. There are branch offices in France, Argentina, and Brazil, plus an affiliated office in Korea, all on the campuses of Adventist universities or colleges. The stand-

ing committee that administers its affairs is now chaired by GC Vice President Ted N.C. Wilson. There are twelve members on the committee, and only two are scientists—Leonard Brand and Edwin Karlow. The rest are general conference officials or academic administrators.

What began in 1959 as an authorization to finance graduate study in geology for "two mature, experienced men of proven loyalty" has turned into an organization charged with a mission to "discover and share an understanding of nature and its relationship with the Biblical revelation of the Creator God." As such, GRI often finds itself in the midst of the heated debates at the intersection of faith and science. It is about that intersection and its capacity for creating controversy that I have come to speak with some of Adventism's foremost scientists.

Benjamin Clausen holds a Ph.D. in nuclear physics from the University of Colorado. To assist GRI in its examination of geologic time, he now studies the granite formations in Southern California during the 50 percent of his time that is devoted to research. I ask him how his research corresponds with traditional Adventist understandings. "Does the work that you do in the field bolster the credibility of a literal, seven-day recent creation or does it tend to undermine that?"

"The specific research that I'm doing is looking at the granites here in Southern California—the geochemistry of the granites like Mount San Jacinto and the Santa Ana mountains around Corona. They fit nicely into a plate tectonic model. That requires some time—maybe not necessarily hundreds of millions of years, but it definitely doesn't fit very well into a one-year flood. So what do I do with that?"



Ted N.C. Wilson

Well, I try to fit it into the bigger picture. What's the data from the Bible? What's the data from science? What do I see about design in nature? I'm trying to develop in my own mind models of how one can put the pieces together and take the best of science and the best of our interpretations of Scripture. But I think that's a long way off. I really don't know good ways to fit it all together," he admits.

Clausen also lectures, leads tours, and coordinates GRI field events such as a major trip to Colorado in 2006. "It was for General Conference administrators," he says. "There were about thirty people; and the purpose was to look at the geology, get some hands-on experience, and then ask questions. What are the different interpretations? Why is it that scientists have the standard interpretations that they have? What are the alternatives that other people have suggested, and what are the pros and cons of each one? Which model can best explain the data?"

This year, there was a trip for fifty academy teachers and another one for college professors. I ask Clausen how these study trips further the discussion of faith and science and how the trips impact the Adventist church.

"The science and religion discussion is a lot bigger than geology," he says. "There are all kinds of issues that are important, and what Geoscience seems to focus on most is the geology area." He takes as an example the question of time. "How much time are we comfortable with having life on the earth? Was the earth created a few thousand years ago? What's the evidence that supports that? What's the evidence from geology that does not fit very well with a one-year flood, and how do we deal with it? As we teach origins classes, what do we do with the geology data? Basically we need to get people out in the field looking at the rocks so that they feel like at least they have a rudimentary understanding of the kinds of questions geology answers."

"You are informing them so that they can be conversant in these discussions," I suggest.



Model of a velociraptor in the lobby of the Geoscience Research Institute.

"Conversant as well as able to teach classes in origins. We especially invite those who teach a philosophy of science class at various colleges—Union, PUC, Walla Walla, La Sierra, Southwestern, Southern, Andrews, Candian Union—at the event we had recently in Colorado, we had somebody from every one of the schools."

What about a GRI-designed curriculum integrating science and faith? While Clausen says some specific curriculum on origins science might be interesting, he thinks there would be resistance to that. "Not everyone would want to approach the issue in the same way," he says. "There are texts used in various places—Leonard Brand's book or Harold Coffin's book. We at GRI occasionally teach an origins class, but none of us does it the same way. The closest we've come to that is outlining about 20 general topics related to origins that might be useful to include in such a class. Each of us has our own individual curriculum. We don't have a consensus since we each have different specialties. We emphasize what we know most about."

Clausen was the principal organizer of the 2003 International Faith & Science Conference

**We were
respectful of
and valued
both the
church and
science...and
each other.**



Benjamin Clausen

at Glacier View; as such he moderated one of the most productive conversations the church has had on creation. That creation conversation stretched over eight months in 2003 via e-mail prior to and immediately following the conference. It began with about 35 participants and finished with close to 240, he says. The total number of messages related to

the conference was over 4500, all of which have been archived along with an accompanying website. Today, an interactive website for such an event would be created; in 2003, there was an e-mail list serve. Material posted to all participants included a discussion of conference logistics, agendas and summaries for the 12-member planning committee, notes on past and future conferences, links to science/religion news on the web, meeting abstracts, various pertinent articles, some humor, and numerous group responses. Right before the conference, abstracts for the 50 talks were posted, followed by two requested critiques per abstract. Thus, attendees could get to know the presenters before the meetings and engage them in discussion.

For the comments sent in as e-mail, personal identifying content and occasional aggressive language was edited out, quotes from previous e-mails were minimized, and web links were sometimes added. All e-mail sent in for distribution was posted with no censoring. Several dozen posted comments were based on notes from verbal conversations. And with that setup, the conversation flowed.

“Our e-mail discussion forum may have more lasting effects on Adventist worldview than the Glacier View conference itself will have,” one person suggested. “It is open and free, and it is sustained, so there is time to enjoy an ongoing exchange between persons of contrary opinions. And anonymity provides a blessed liberation from concern for job status that church employees may reasonably have.”

Clausen concurs. At the conclusion of the conference he said, “We did talk. We affirmed a belief in a personal Creator while denying philosophical naturalism. We accepted the church’s fundamental belief on creation and the importance of the Sabbath, but we recognized the problems with current creation/flood models and encouraged the church to deny any specific scientific model of origins. We

affirmed that (1) all Scripture is inspired while recognizing it has been transmitted through human channels and is interpreted by human reason, and (2) nature also reveals God but has been marred by sin and is interpreted by human reason in science. We affirmed the need to humbly study both the Bible and nature. We recognized the need to improve our teaching—to be honest with the data in a faith-affirming way. We were respectful of and valued both the church and science...and each other.”

Valuing science and each other is the part that has sometimes gotten lost in the denomination’s creation debates. And debates there have been, both inside and outside of GRI—for the entire 50 years that GRI has existed.

GRI and its Critics

GRI has been accused by some people of only conducting research that will buttress traditional Adventist teachings—the emergence of life within the last 10,000 years and a global flood, in particular—and failing to address evidences to the contrary. Indeed, one of GRI’s charter members, P. Edgar Hare, left the Institute because, as he described it, he was asked to tailor his findings to corroborate the testimony of Ellen White on creation. Frequently, Hare and colleague Richard Ritland found on their desks Ellen White statements left by Frank Marsh (the third member of GRI’s original triune staff) with which their findings were supposed to be harmonized.

“I left partly for that reason,” Hare recounted in an article published in *Spectrum* magazine, “and also because it seemed the purpose of the Institute was to reinterpret results already published rather than to do original research, which was what I was most interested in.”²

Of the individuals who have closely observed GRI over the years, Brian S. Bull, professor of pathology and human anatomy at Loma Linda University’s School of Medicine, shares the concerns of those who worry that GRI allows doctrine to dictate the direction of its research. As I am about to find out, he also questions whether GRI has been successful in fulfilling its original purpose for the church. Bull’s office in the research wing of the LLU Medical Center is across the street from the GRI building. It is furnished with a long desk—more a table—lined with several comfortable chairs that cater to conversation. Bull begins our visit by recounting his interactions with GRI.

“In 1963, I was in Washington, DC, where Peter Hare

(also known as P. Edgar Hare) and I taught a Sabbath School class together at Sligo Church. Peter had been the first scientist hired by GRI after its founding. They supported him for part of his doctoral work at Cal Tech on dating methods. He devised a dating method for cross-checking the validity of carbon 14 dates because he—at the time—believed them to probably be in error in the sense that they gave dates well beyond a few thousand years. The method runs up to forty thousand years or so. Back then it didn't go quite as far because the techniques were different."

Hare had just transferred from GRI to the Carnegie Institute Geophysical Laboratory in Washington D.C. and was getting his lab set up and doing experiments there. "The reason he left GRI," Bull says, "was because his method gave dates that were considerably in excess of the few thousand years that he and others had expected if carbon 14 was in error. That was problematic as far as GRI was concerned; and it is my understanding that they suggested that he would probably be happier working somewhere else. So he moved to the Carnegie Institute Geophysical Laboratory and was in the process of becoming internationally known. The methodology that he did develop has proven highly useful worldwide in the dating of organic remains," Bull said.

Hare was affiliated with the church up until the time he died from Parkinson's. He served as head elder at Sligo Church for a time and was on the board of elders until he retired.

Bull also recalls going on several of the field trips organized by GRI. These were trips that were typically held for newly-elected members of the General Conference to acquaint them with the situation in terms of geological evidence. GRI has specialized in evidence coming from geology and paleontology—the earth sciences, and these field trips are one of the main thrusts of the GRI.



**Professor
Brian S. Bull**

However, Bull also contends that "originally the concept for GRI, as I understand it, was that it would develop a scientific model that would be explanatory and work to solve the problem that science teachers in our colleges and universities have presenting scientific evidence for a short chronology for life."

Seismic Shifts in Adventist Creationism

Bull talks me through the changes in Adventist thought on creation via the scientists who were involved. "When I graduated from college in 1957," he says, "at least as far as Walla Walla College was concerned, the standard Adventist position was that the whole of the earth, life on earth, and the whole of the universe came into existence during creation week, which was less than 10,000 years ago. Nobody was really hung up on six. They certainly didn't believe that it was longer than ten." Contrast that, he suggests with the idea that came out of the faith and science meetings held between 2002 and 2004, when it became obvious that at least a significant segment of our theologians at Andrews and at Southern are of the opinion that the material substance of the earth may well be billions of years old, but that the biosphere—life—is only ten thousand years old or less.

"Now that's a dramatic change. That came about largely, I think, because of the work of Bob Brown. He was one of the directors of the GRI who was and is convinced that the radiometric dating methods other than carbon 14 are compelling and hence that the material substance of the earth is quite old. He didn't believe that the carbon 14 was reliable, but he did accept that the other dating methods relying on radiometric techniques probably were reliable and therefore the material substance of the earth was probably a great deal older than a few thousand years."

As I listen to Bull describe this dramatic movement in Adventist thinking (even Ariel Roth, a former director of GRI and a noted conservative does not seem to challenge an age of

**Some authors
would give
credit to
Adventists for
the entire
creation
science field
and its recent
offspring,
Intelligent
Design**



George McCready Price

the earth in the millions—maybe billions of years³), it seems as though conceding the earth’s excessive antiquity might do mischief to a traditional understanding of the Bible. I ask whether conceding an old age of the earth changes anything in terms of Adventist understandings of Scripture and theology.

“The explanation that I understood the theologians were supporting,” Bull begins, “was the idea that Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 are, in fact, two separate and distinct ideas—Genesis 1:1 talks about the primordial creation and Genesis 1:2 talks about the history of the creation of life, and the reshaping of the material substance of the earth to make it suitable for life. Presumably, the radiometric chronometers were ticking away from the primordial creation...so is that theologically a problem? Well, it (the Gap Theory) has been suggested many times down through the last 400 years under various guises. This particular formulation of it may be uniquely Adventist, I don’t know. Scientifically, it’s very difficult to see how the rocks can be old if the fossils they contain are young. I’ve never had it explained to me as to how that would work except in such general terms as: The flood mixed everything up and the young life forms got incorporated into the old rocks. That doesn’t work scientifically because the fossils are often composed of the very same minerals as the rock in which they are embedded. The previously living material of the fossil has been replaced by the material of the rock.”

Of course, if one is going to discuss the history of Adventist thought on creation, one has to start before GRI and Bob Brown. Bull says, “Now as you probably are aware, some observers would give credit to Adventists for the entire Creation Science enterprise and its recent offspring, Intelligent Design. George McCready Price, in particular, is given credit because of his books on the geologic column.”

Price wrote a whole series of books in which he handled the geologic evidence well. Bull says, “The statements that he made were true, but they were misleading. Price said that you can find any layer in the geologic column sitting on any other layer, which is true, because you can have a series of missing layers. He also said that in some cases, the layers are upside down. But if he had been compulsively complete, he would have said that when you do find the

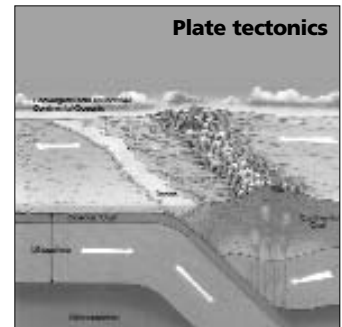
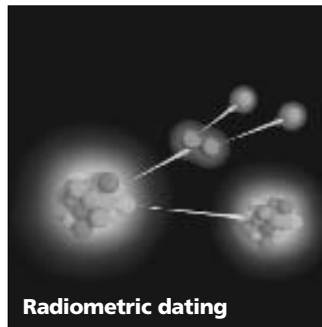
layers that are upside down, the expected sequence is still there—in reverse, and that when the layers are upside down that typically, the layers are right side up underneath. The standard explanation, and probably the correct one is that the layers have been tipped over in a fold.”

With his clear writing, Price convinced many people that the geologic column was nonsense and didn’t have to be taken into consideration and that is where the Creation Science movement picked it up with Morris’ book *The Genesis Flood* in 1961. Well, that was the traditional Adventist position up until Harold Clark started writing, Bull says, at which point Clark said, no, the geologic column is real, it was just laid down over a short period of time. And so Clark, in the mid 40s, brought the Adventist denomination from the Price era into accepting the geologic column as a real phenomenon, but not accepting the time implications.

“I’m sure you know about the theory of ecological zonation, that the geological column reflects not time but the location relative to sea level where each creature lived prior to the flood,” Bull adds. “I thought until recently that that was unique with [Clark]. But it turns out if you go back to McCready Price’s books, that he suggested exactly the same thing. He says that for all he could tell, Cambrian animals were living simultaneously with Silurian, Devonian, Jurassic creatures that were simultaneously in existence and elsewhere; and he goes on to say that there is no reason that dinosaurs could not have co-existed with large mammals. That is, of course, the theory of ecological zonation.”

Adventism’s Awkward Situation Today

Clark brought the Adventist denomination into the somewhat awkward position of accepting the geologic column as real but not accepting its time implications which is where Adventism is today, Bull says. “Ecological zonation is no longer taught, to my knowledge, at any of our colleges and universities, but the geologic column is accepted as a real entity. When we as Adventists talk about the



geologic column, since Geoscience hasn't come up with any alternative method of expressing it, we always use the standard ages of multiple millions of years for Eocene and Miocene and Pliocene and so forth."

Bull continues, "We have been now for 50+ years in this very awkward situation in which it's unclear what our teachers are expected to teach. [GRI has not] come forth with a model that can be explored scientifically of how to get the entire geologic column into six thousand years. Such a model would infer experiments that could be used to disprove it or raise it to the level of a reasonable explanation. We still await such a formulation that could be discussed as a legitimate scientific proposal. I would be very interested in seeing such a model, and I keep hoping [for one] when I go on GRI trips. I've traveled on probably six GRI trips over the fifty years that Geoscience has existed."

Bull's suggestion that the GRI could (and should) create a testable model that incorporates both a short chronology and the evidences of the geologic column seems unrealistic, and I want to push the issue further. "Given what you know and given what the scientific literature suggests," I ask, "is such a model plausible to expect?" Bull's answer confirms my skepticism:

"I would say that absent some major new discovery in the way geology [works]—radiometric dating, tectonic plate movements and all that—absent that, I think it's going to be very difficult to come up with such a model."

Were a model were to be proposed, Bull suggests that those who maintain an interest in this field would immediately set to testing it—to see if the model has legs? Could it explain things that were hitherto unexplained? Could it gather data from a wide variety of sources and make sense out of them? Would it explain the apparent order in the geologic column and the agreement among the ages given by the wide variety of age-dating methods now available.

GRI and Adventist Science Curriculum

Another criticism I have heard people level against GRI is that it has failed to provide a curriculum for teaching science in Adventist classrooms. So, without a geologic model to use in science experiments and without a curriculum to offer Adventist education, GRI is essentially a multi-million dollar failure. I ask Bull to comment on that assessment.

"I would have thought that that was what the denomination expected of GRI and that's why they were funding it. Otherwise, it's not clear to me why they would put this



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kind of money into an organization and hire scientists to do scientific work, if they didn't think a scientifically viable short chronology hypothesis would be forthcoming," Bull states flatly.

As our conversation nears its end, I invite Bull's comments on what has become, in recent months, one of the most intense discussions at the intersection of faith and science—the teaching of evolutionary biology in Adventist colleges and universities. The discussion has become hostile to such an extent that calls for resignations—even firings—have come from some vocal partisans. I ask about the appropriateness of teaching evolution in the pursuit of truth, particularly in Adventist higher education.

"The question of the teaching of evolution is a very difficult one to discuss coherently until you know exactly what is meant by evolution," he replies. "Because different people mean different things by evolution, this is a discussion that isn't going to turn out to be very fruitful, I fear, for anybody. As an example of this Bull notes that, 'virtually all college-trained Adventists believe in a Creator God and that living things change (at least minimally) over time as the result of natural selection working on genetic mutations, They are, therefore', Bull notes wryly, 'theistic micro-evolutionists.'" When probed as to his own understanding of the role of "evolution" Bull responds, "I just don't see enough power in natural selection working on random mutations to produce the myriad life-forms that now exist. That said, I'm perfectly happy to stay in a state of anticipatory suspense awaiting further evidence from science, from theology or from both."

He goes on, 'Are these legitimate questions to investigate in an academic environment?' the answer is, 'Of course.' The problem is how do you separate scientific questions from theological ones? A question such as 'How old is the earth, and how long have life forms inhabited the earth?' is a straightforward scientific question and deserves a scientific answer. The question, 'Could God have created everything miraculously in seven days?' is a theological question—a question about a miracle, about God working outside of normal scientific laws. And the answer to that is, 'Of course He could.' For anyone who believes in God, they would believe Him to be more than capable of doing this. This would be trivial for an all-powerful God.

"So is it legitimate to investigate both kinds of questions at an Adventist university? The answer is 'yes.' But the theo-



Jim Gibson, director of the GeoScience Research Institute

logical questions need to be investigated in theology courses or philosophy courses—or a philosophy of science course."

Bull concludes, "The scientific question, 'How old is the earth, and how long have life forms inhabited it?' is a straightforward biological question or one of physics, depending on whether you're going to use genetics or radiometric dating methods to answer it. That is a question that deserves to be explored by scientific methods in science courses—physics biology, chemistry etc."

My conversation with Brian Bull has brought clarity on some of the criticisms from outside of this church-funded organization. To better understand how the organization views its mission and critical activities, I sit down with L. James Gibson, a biologist who is the director of GRI.

Director's Objectives

Gibson's office is spacious; its walls lined with bookshelves and filing cabinets. From the time Gibson served as a secondary teacher before he began his doctoral work at LLU, he has had a keen interest in issues of faith and science. He has spent 25 years with GRI, fifteen of them as director. I begin our conversation by asking about the objectives for GRI that have marked his tenure as director. He surprises me by talking not about advancing science, but about advancing faith:

"One of the things that I think we should emphasize is to model for the membership a life of faith and an attitude of faith, mixed with a recognition that faith is not based on demonstration. Faith goes beyond knowledge. Many of our members, myself included, have struggled with this idea," he says. "How can I have faith in something for which the evidence is not compelling? The biblical evidence seems quite clear. The physical evidence certainly is mixed."

Having grown up in an Adventist culture that emphasized that Adventists always have the answers, he

It's not a matter of choosing one view that answers our questions and one view that leaves us with questions. It's a matter of choosing which questions to be left with because there are always unanswered questions, no matter what view you have.

says, it's a challenge to one's view to ask, "What if I don't have all the answers? Can I still have faith?" And after thinking about that for a while, you recognize that that's what faith is. What I had before wasn't even faith. I had arguments. It takes a little thinking to say, "Well, you know, even if I can't win the debate, I can still believe."

Given such an emphasis on fostering faith, I am curious to know how GRI nurtures faith in an increasingly skeptical culture. In response, Gibson notes what has been one of GRI's key outreach tools nearly since the institute's founding: field trips.

"We give [field] seminars at various places around the world; and at those seminars, we try to bring people knowledge—the facts of the interface between science and faith," he says. We present [the facts] saying, "We don't have answers to all these questions, but we have chosen a life of faith. In fact, we've even looked at other views of how to interpret this evidence; and we don't find any of them that leave us without questions."

It's not a matter of choosing one view that answers our questions and one view that leaves us with questions. It's a matter of choosing which questions to be left with because there're always unanswered questions, no matter what view you have, he suggests. And that's taken some growing, some adjustment, from the previous view of thinking we have all the answers, to thinking we don't have to have all the answers, but we do have to make some choices.

Given that there are instances in which scripture and science seem to offer different views on origins, I ask Gibson which one in his opinion must take precedence when the two seemingly disagree.

Gibson offers a measured response.

"That's an individual choice, isn't it?" he says. "Different people come to different views. My own, well, there is a feedback between the physical data and the biblical data. For example, when I first started at GRI, I was going to give a lecture on speciation. I

remembered the Bible said something about 'reproducing after their kinds.' So, to have it documented, I looked for the text. Only there wasn't any text that says animals reproduce after their kinds. It wasn't there! That was interesting to me; something that I knew without question turned out to be completely questionable at best. I concluded what the text is saying is not that species don't change, it's really talking about what I would call polyphyly. From the very beginning there were many lineages. It's clearly opposed to the idea of monophyly—a single ancestor, which is the pervading theme in the evolutionary community. In other words, it's not one evolutionary tree or even five evolutionary trees. That would not be compatible with Scripture. There's an implication of more lineages than that. I see GRI as attempting to develop a view of the world based on a biblical viewpoint."

What we would like to do is to understand what the data are and then try to assess them from within a worldview based on our understanding of special revelation. What we do not want to do is to claim that the data support our faith position when they do not do so. Data that are problematic can be identified as problematic without needing to invent an explanation for them.

Interpreting Scripture

Some Biblical scholars, both within Adventism and outside, say that the creation narrative in Genesis 1 is best understood as poetry, but not, strictly speaking, as history in the modern sense and certainly not as a scientific text, as we understand science today, I suggest.⁴ Gibson disagrees strongly.

"I don't find that helpful. Not even slightly. Genesis 1 and 2 are not poetry, but they do contain at least one poetic portion: Genesis 2:23. You see, it's not just about Genesis 1. The idea of creation and salvation—the whole message of Scripture as I see it is about salvation. The whole message of the Gospel is that we started out better than we are now. And

that Christ had to come and remedy some situation that we got ourselves into.”

This is the reverse of the evolutionary view of life, he points out. With the secular evolutionary view of human history, you don’t have a time in which people were better *then* than they are *now*. Inherent in that whole system is that we’re getting better as we go along. “That doesn’t mean that every generation is better than the one before it, but it does, I think, imply that if you could go into tens of thousands of years—intervals—that you would find progress and advancement in understanding and probably in morphological skill,” he says. The ability to cope with the environment and our moral standards are improving, he notes, if we started out with our common ape-like ancestor. “Surely at that time there was no morality. Somewhere along the line, perhaps, we gained morality. I’ve seen several attempts to try to draw the biblical story of salvation into an evolutionary scene; and all of them are so forced and unsatisfactory.”

Again, I am surprised, this time by Gibson’s eagerness to venture deep into theological territory—generally not the realm of a biological scientist. However, I am reminded that theological concerns have always played a key role in the Institute’s mission and functions.

Their current mission statement, in its entirety, reads:

“The Geoscience Research Institute is sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church with a mission to discover and share an understanding of nature and its relationship with the Biblical revelation of the Creation God.

“We seek to discover:

*through original research
through study of the scientific and Biblical literature
through interaction and discussion with other scholars.*

“We seek to share:

*through our website, publications and lectures
through field conferences and seminars
through regular contact with Seventh-day Adventist educators and students.*

“The Institute is committed to serving the Seventh-day Adventist Church in its commission of preaching the gospel and bringing to all the truth of salvation in Jesus Christ.”

Given the centrality of theological issues to GRI’s existence, I begin to ask about the three International

Faith & Science Conferences from 2002 to 2004, in which GRI played a major role.

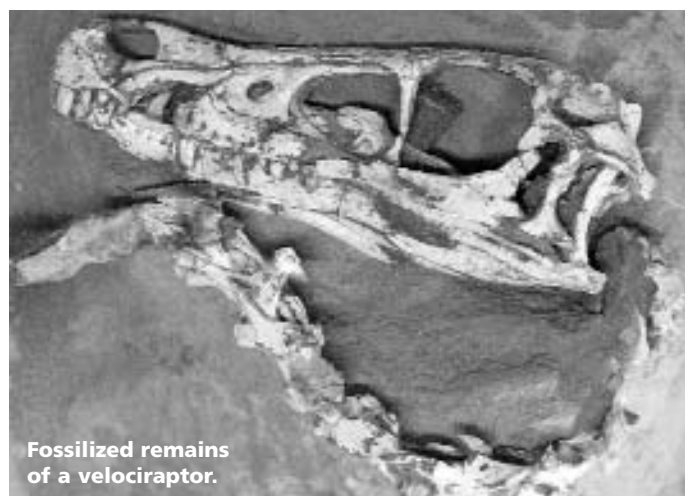
“Yeah, well that was a one-time thing,” Gibson interjects, quickly adding, “We just completed in August a meeting in Colorado Springs. It was called the Conference on Teaching Origins, and we had about forty or fifty there. Among them, we had some theologians, but there were more scientists and even some people from education departments. Alden Thompson, for example was there, Bob Johnston, retired from Andrews Seminary, New Testament scholar, and a couple of others. But there was an interface of science and theology there at that conference. That’s the second time we’ve had one of those under a similar format.”

From 1960–2000, the biblical faith and science council met with BRISCO (Biblical Research Institute Science Council) almost every year. “But that was mostly scientists. We had theologians, also, but not as many as we wanted,” he admitted.

He suggests that partly because of that imbalance, the General Conference has re-established the faith and science council. It met in Loma Linda in April and included all the Biblical Research Institute people and all the Geoscience Research Institute people, “plus some other people that we appointed,” he adds. The BRI and GRI are both services of the General Conference. Gibson suggests that “the faith and science council is probably the most effective means for getting us actually together regularly and (conversing) more thoroughly.”

Teaching Evolution

Having now examined the GRI mission statement, I see that creating a science curriculum is not on their agenda;



Fossilized remains of a velociraptor.

DR. STEVE SWEETMAN

however, I am curious to know where GRI stands on the controversy involving evolution classes in Adventist schools. On this point, Gibson does not volunteer much information.

"I'm aware of it. I'm not intimately involved in it."

"Does GRI have a stake in this game?"

"GRI has an *interest* in it, but GRI is not in an administrative position to run the colleges."

"So would you make recommendations to the GC?"

"If we are asked, we will comment. Our terms of reference involve consultation, but they don't give us responsibility for what goes on in the schools," he says.

What he does volunteer is his experience teaching classes on components of evolution and biogeography. "I want my students to understand what the evolutionary theory is; I want them to understand the nature of the problems. But I want them to know that I believe in what the church teaches and what I believe the Bible teaches. And that is that there was a six-day creation and that humans were specially created in a separate act of creation. And despite genetic similarities and what appears to scientists as strong evidence for common ancestry—it's there, but I believe there must be another explanation. I don't have the explanation. It's an act of choice. It's not something I'm driven to because I don't have a choice, but I believe that's what the Bible teaches. I believe that's what the life of Jesus Christ was about, and I cannot conceive of being a Christian—a follower of Jesus Christ—and at the same time denying his teaching and the implications of his teaching and the teaching of his closest followers—their teachings refer to Genesis throughout. It's the underlying foundation."

As to the age of the earth, he says, "There's nothing that I know of in the Bible that places any significance on a specific age of the world. But I think some people want to say it's got to be six thousand years. Maybe it is. I don't have any reason to oppose six thousand years, but,

personally, I don't really see why it matters exactly [how] old it is. The thing that matters is not the number of years in the age of the earth. The thing that matters is processes and the significance of those processes for the story of Jesus."

Research at GRI

For as much as GRI is a research organization, it is not well known for publishing in peer-reviewed journals. I ask Gibson about this.

He responded that he is not publishing in peer-reviewed journals and suggests that I talk to other staff members, such as Ben Clausen, who are. But he does volunteer a comment on the difficulties of holding creationist views and publishing. "The more we say about our creationist beliefs, the more difficult it is, potentially, to get things published. So that does help keep us careful. But we cannot allow that to determine our witness. We can at least be reminded that we need to be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

As we wrap up our conversation, I ask how being a scientist and grappling with some of the seeming discrepancies between faith and science has impacted his personal spirituality and faith life.

"Well, it's caused me to recognize consciously that there're some questions that are just beyond my reach. I don't even know that I could *in principle* have access to the answers to some of these questions. I believe in a world in which the supernatural is present and active. But that very activity is not accessible to me."

He adds, "I said before, 'No matter what view you have, there're questions you can't answer.' What are your explanatory resources for questions that are not answered? If you were an atheist, say, your only explanatory resources are the laws of nature. That's it. If you can't explain it with the laws of nature, you're never gonna have an explanation. The origin of life, in my opinion, is one such issue. I think the origin of life cannot be explained by natural law, and to me it rules out atheism."

The thing that matters is not the number of years in the age of the earth. The thing that matters is processes and the significance of those processes for the story of Jesus.

If you go into a providential evolution kind of thing—a theistic evolution—then you have these questions about God and His character, humans and their nature, the effects of sin on causing death and the curses of nature...none of those have an explanation. They don't fit. What are your explanatory resources? You can hardly go to the Bible. You have an insoluble problem."

Gibson continues, "Now, if you're a person who believes in a six day creation and a separate creation of humans in a better state than he is now, and [that] flood is a divine judgment, you have unanswered questions. But what are your explanatory resources? Well, they're basically omnipotent. And to me that's much more satisfying. Inherent in your system is unlimited resources. In other words, [you have] the system itself. So to say, 'Well, God's omnipotent, and if I don't have the answer, I already know that His ways are beyond my knowledge, except as He reveals them.' I can accept that situation. It's consistent with the structure of my view. But I don't see other systems as having that."

I follow up by asking, "What you have done in science—has it bolstered your faith in God or diminished at all your faith in God?"

Gibson pauses thoughtfully before replying, "I would

say it has had some influence in shaping my faith in God. I think my faith in God does not come from science. It's almost independent of science. My faith in God comes from answered prayer, from providence... I've seen some—trivial to other people looking in, but to myself and my own experience—things that are amazing providence...I think...many people can say there's gotta be something to explain my experience. Surely God is active somewhere."

"And science may not have those answers," I suggest.

"Oh, science in this context is irrelevant! Science is operated on the presupposition that there is no supernatural effect. Scientists will tell you... "science does not say there is no God"—and that's true. They do say there is no God that makes any difference. You can only appeal to material causes—that's a common expression. And that means no supernatural, no spiritual. So science, by its very structure, is incapable of addressing those questions."

I have spent longer than I intended talking with Gibson, though I have enjoyed the dialogue. I came here wondering how the church should best approach the interface between faith and science. Are questions of origins best addressed by scientists or theologians or both? After all the money invested and the questions that remain unanswered, does Adventism still need the Geoscience Research Institute?

I remember Jim Gibson's words: "It's a matter of choosing which answers to be left with because there're always unanswered questions, no matter what view you have."

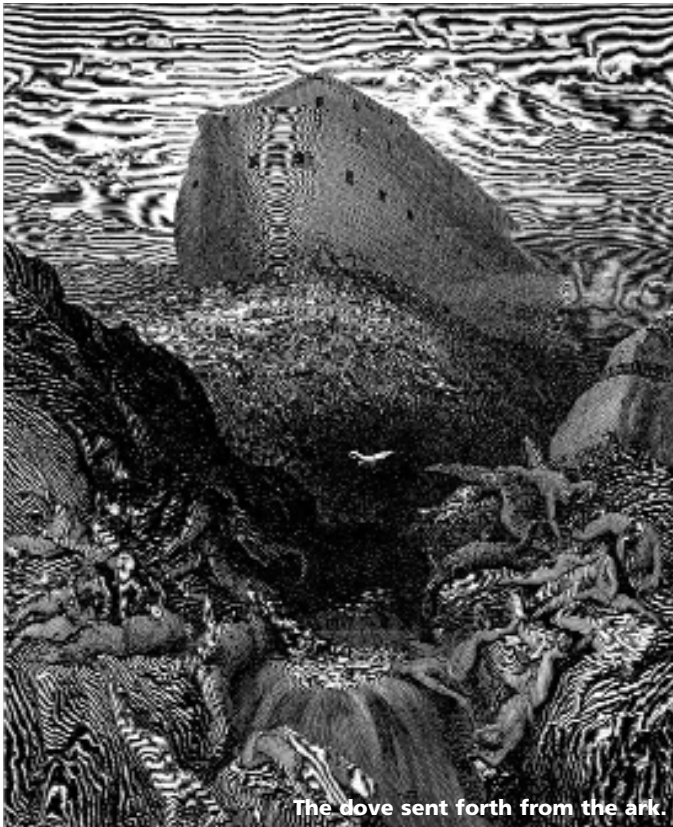
His words follow me out the door of the Institute as midday sunlight hits me squarely in the eyes. ■

Jared Wright is a graduate theology student at La Sierra University and the online film reviews editor for Spectrummagazine.org

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GUSTAVE DORE



The dove sent forth from the ark.

BATTLE FOR THE SOUL OF



ADVENTISM

Creation, Evolution, and Adventist Higher Education

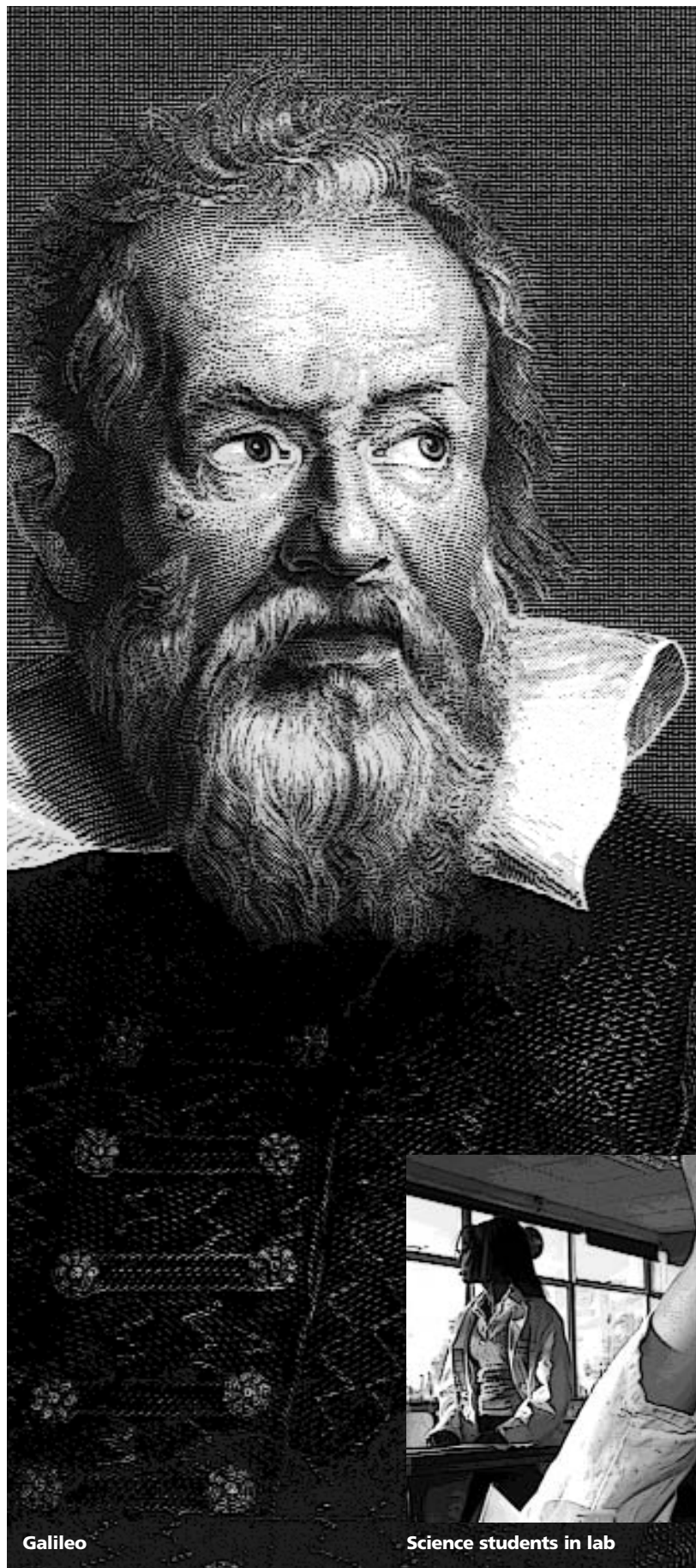
| BY BRYAN NESS

"God is the foundation of everything. All true science is in harmony with His works; all true education leads to obedience to His government. Science opens new wonders to our view; she soars high, and explores new depths; but she brings nothing from her research that conflicts with divine revelation. Ignorance may seek to support false views of God by appeals to science, but the book of nature and the written word shed light upon each other." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 115.

A long-accepted Adventist belief is that, if properly understood, science will be in harmony with scripture. This view is not new. It was expressed openly as far back as when Galileo was being challenged about his heretical beliefs concerning the nature of the universe. The controversy boiled down to a clear disagreement between physical reality, as defined by the astronomical observations of Galileo, and the contemporary interpretation of divine revelation by the Catholic Church. The initial outcome led not to a harmonization of scripture and science, but rather, scripture trumped science.

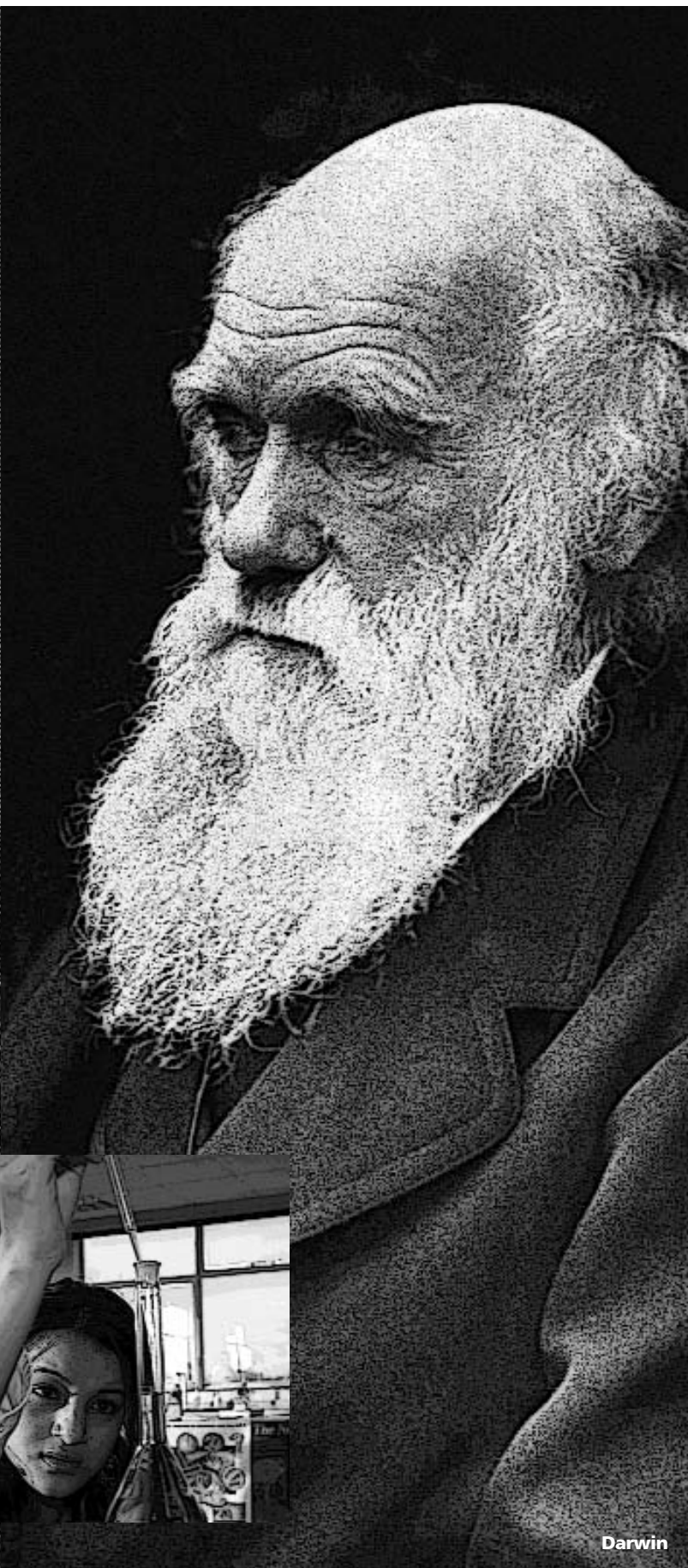
During Galileo's lifetime the battle lines were drawn with mortal consequences; and the church was adamantly opposed to any kind of compromise. Since the time of Galileo, evidence that he was right is incontrovertible; and the church has found it acceptable to "reinterpret" scripture to restore a harmony between the two. What brought about this change? A cynical observer might say that the church simply compromised. What would have been the result if the church had never shifted its dogmatic stand?

In so many ways, the current controversy taking place in Adventist higher education is akin to the issues facing the church in Galileo's day. In another sense, it is different. Going into the classroom, the Adventist biologist enters with the same belief that science and scripture should be in



Galileo

Science students in lab



Darwin

harmony. Galileo decided that scripture was for moral teaching while science was for learning about nature. This was his way of dealing with the apparent controversy between science and scripture. Because the Adventist professor hopes to retain a harmony between scripture and science, this simple option is not available.

What if science and scripture don't harmonize?

The side of this issue rarely seen by outsiders is the struggle faced by individual SDA scientists. A vast amount of scientific evidence supports many aspects of evolutionary theory; and although many non-scientists in the church believe there is ample scientific evidence to completely refute evolution, such overwhelming evidence simply does not exist. This is not to say that evolutionists have it all worked out either. There are even a handful of atheists and agnostics who are strident critics of Darwinism. With intelligent, well educated individuals on both sides of the debate, what is a Bible-believing, SDA scientist to do when teaching about this topic in biology classes?

It should be noted that science has extremely good experimental data to support the process of natural selection and that even the most conservative creationist typically has no problem accepting evolution (often called micro-evolution) at this level. On the other hand, science has absolutely no workable model for the completely naturalistic origin of the first life. Although evolutionists deride creationists for believing in a creator God, they have not developed a naturalistic model that even remotely approaches feasibility. Thus, the belief that God is the creator of life provides the best explanation for the origin of life on earth.

The difficulties lie more with the middle ground between the origin of life and the process of natural selection that is clearly in operation today. Scripture and nature are most difficult to harmonize when investigating such areas as the age of the earth, the age of life on earth, the fossil record, and the diversity of life on earth. Science has developed some compelling theories to explain observations from these areas; and, although there is contrary evidence, it is often minimal at best and is open to alternate interpretations.

For example, the age of the earth has been estimated at about 4.6 billion years; and this age is corroborated by multiple independent methods. The accepted age of fossils is also well supported by multiple independent

POETRY

Joshua Stood Still

Bryan Ness

Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. —Joshua 10:12–13



When Joshua made the sun stand still
what proof was needed to support
the longer length of day made light
for killing? Warriors that day

were proof enough—as stabbing,
slashing, bleeding each expired
in his own way—of what? The sun
indeed appeared to hover long

and long the incorrect opinion held
its power over church and state
until presumptuous Galileo moved
the sun and spun the earth.

Time is still at center stage,
though relative to space we now
know every change in space
has gravity enough to spare.

methods. If these scientific “facts” are actually true, then there is a clear conflict between science and scripture, at least as currently interpreted. There are three general ways to deal with this kind of conflict:

- 1) Consider our current interpretation of scripture to be correct and the scientific conclusions, even though they might seem correct, as incorrect.
- 2) Consider the scientific conclusion correct, prompting a push to reinterpret the scriptural account to make the two harmonize.
- 3) Consider that science and scripture are both potentially in need of revision, prompting further study and possible modification of both.

Throughout Jewish and Christian history, there has been a long-standing disagreement on exactly how the Genesis account should be interpreted, whether literal or allegorical.¹ In spite of this, there has been consistent agreement that God is the creator, regardless of the details of how he accomplished it.

It has been traditional in SDA theology to accord the six days of creation literal, 24-hour day status. This literal interpretation has been strictly guarded, being considered the key to our doctrine of the Seventh-day Sabbath. Judging by the fact that many Jews who consider the creation days allegorical maintain Sabbath observance, such an argument might seem unnecessary. Sabbath observance is clearly rooted in the Decalogue; and, although reference is made to the days of creation in the fourth commandment, the seventh day can just as well be considered symbolic. What need is there for a literal seven day creation week if God ordains that the story be told as it is in Genesis and uses that story to tie in the Sabbath to his creative work. I would surely hope that if the days of creation do turn out to be indeterminate lengths of time, my faith in God’s Word would be strong enough that I would still see the Sabbath just as binding.

Science will never be able to bring any data to bear on the question of whether or not the creation week comprised literal days or not; and the Scriptures can always be interpreted in a variety of ways. At this point, SDA theological tradition has clearly supported a literal creation week; and although we also claim to believe in “progressive truth,”² it has been difficult to apply this principle to issues like this one. This, then, leaves the

SDA scientist with the first approach which assumes Scripture takes precedence as the only “acceptable” approach to harmonizing nature and revelation.

Limiting SDA scientists in this way may seem like the best policy, if the goal is maintaining doctrinal purity. In practice, this leaves any questioning of the official church position³ a private matter. In other words, SDA scientists (and presumably anyone else in the church) are free to disagree with the church position as long as they do not openly advocate such a position. This has been more or less acceptable to most SDA scientists but, as can be seen by recent events at La Sierra University, maybe not to all. Of course, there are those who are opposed to even allowing SDA scientists to differ with the church position privately. It is hoped that such views would not prevail, as purging those who don’t “think” the right thoughts is eerily reminiscent of Catholic Church policy before and during the Reformation.

Leaving these issues aside, it should also be noted that some individuals who are highly critical of SDA higher education believe that the teaching of evolution has no place in our schools. Similarly, a number of individuals believe that only enough should be taught about evolution so that our students can thoroughly refute evolutionary theory. The problem with this latter opinion is that it assumes such a thorough refutation is possible. Even if it were possible, it would take a very intimate understanding of evolutionary theory to make such a refutation convincing to well-educated scientists and other intellectuals.

Why evolution needs to be taught in SDA universities and colleges

Even assuming that creation and evolution are entirely incompatible, there is still a very compelling argument for teaching evolutionary theory and teaching it well. I will limit my discussion to the three reasons I find most compelling:

- 1) The field of biology is so intimately intertwined with evolutionary principles that it is almost impossible to teach it without a thorough understanding of evolution.
- 2) Almost all professional and graduate programs beyond the Bachelor of Science level require scoring well on standardized tests which assume a thorough understanding of evolution.

- 3) If SDA scientists ever hope to contribute to a meaningful defense of creationism, we must have a way to adequately prepare the next generation of SDA scientists.

“Nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution.”³ Although creationists may disagree with this statement, it is assumed to be true by most biologists. Consequently, to be a well educated biologist, a graduate with a BS degree in biology must understand evolution. It can be argued logically that a biologist whose area of expertise is biochemistry has no real need to understand evolution, but this conclusion is not the consensus of the biological sciences “establishment.” Simply not agreeing with the consensus opinion is not an option if our graduates are to maintain any kind of legitimacy.

The pervasiveness of evolution is so complete that it is impossible to adopt a textbook that does not integrate evolutionary principles into every chapter. Ignoring the primary evolutionary content is certainly possible, but because it is incorporated into chapters on essentially every other aspect of biology, it cannot be entirely avoided. Adopting a biology textbook written from a creationist perspective is possible, but the overall quality of such textbooks is less and would also potentially cause problems for students who need to be able to transfer their academic credits to other schools.

Almost no biology student will consider the BS degree to be a terminal degree. Most biology majors (and other science majors) in SDA universities and colleges are either pre-medical or pre-dental. In both cases, students must take a standardized test as a part of their application process. These tests are designed to measure overall scientific knowledge and critical thinking skills; and evolutionary concepts are an integral part of the required knowledge base. Because science majors with degrees other than biology typically take just a one-year sequence of freshman or foundational biology, evolution must be included in the basic biology course. Without teaching students about evolution, they would be poorly prepared for the standardized tests they are required to take.

A smaller number of biology majors will choose to continue their education in a non-medical graduate program of some kind. Almost all graduate programs in biology and related fields require broad competency in biology including a thorough understanding of evolution. The depth of understanding expected is enough that most SDA colleges

and universities provide additional upper division coursework in evolution.

It is a common misconception by outsiders that graduates from religiously-based institutions have a poorer understanding of evolution than students who graduate from secular institutions. In the case of our graduates at PUC, all seniors take a Major Field Achievement Test (MFAT); and our students as a group routinely score above the 85th percentile. One of the subscores of the MFAT measures proficiency in evolution and ecology; and our students again score consistently high. This is in spite of the fact that in both our Foundations of Biology and our upper division Philosophy of Origins classes, we spend considerable time introducing students to evidence that is both contrary to evolutionary theory and in support of creationism.

Lastly, if we as a church ever hope to continue making progress in creationist studies, we need to provide the most thorough and comprehensive training in evolution possible. A simple faith approach where the current Biblical interpretation is accepted regardless of lack of scientific evidence is acceptable to many SDA members but is inadequate for more highly educated members, especially those trained as scientists. The need to develop a more sophisticated defense of creationism is keenly felt among such individuals. It will be our future generations of SDA scientists who will carry on the tradition of trying to harmonize nature and revelation.

The dangers of evolutionary studies

Is there a danger in studying evolution? Studying anything that contains elements that are contrary to a person's religious beliefs is always fraught with danger. A part of becoming a mature believer is learning how to confront contrary belief systems. In the case of evolution, if a student plans to pursue a career in science or some related field which requires a deep understanding of science, a confrontation between faith and science is inevitable. The advantage of having that confrontation take place in an SDA college or university is that the science educators are there to provide support in the process.

If evolution were not taught in SDA higher education, then not only would we be putting our students at an intellectual disadvantage compared to students receiving a public education, but we would also be abdicating our role as mentors. Ideally, the professor should provide the best edu-

cation in evolutionary theory while also providing material supportive of a creationist model for origins. At its most basic level, this would be a straight-forward educational interaction; but it's even better when the professor has the opportunity to model how they have learned to reconcile science and revelation.

In my classroom and in personal interactions with students, I am very open about the strengths and weaknesses of both creation and evolution. I show students how strong a position that creationists have for believing that God is the creator of all life. Evolutionists currently have no tenable theory for the origin of life by purely naturalistic processes so this is the easiest point to make. More difficult, is finding scientific evidence that supports a recent creation; and I am honest about this too, pointing out that creationist scientists are continuing to search for evidence in this area. I point out how difficult the fossil record is for creationists (also making clear the difficulties also faced by evolutionists) and again remind them that more needs to be learned in this area as well.

Probably the most important thing I do when teaching about evolution is to clarify the underlying philosophical assumptions of what are essentially two different world views. Evolutionists view the universe and all of life as the product of undirected, natural processes. Even though there is no feasible model for the origin of life from such a system, they continue to assume it is true, exercising faith in science that it will eventually discover the secret to life's origins. Creationists, on the other hand, invoke a supernatural cause for the origin of life and exercise faith in divine revelation that someday we will understand how to harmonize this with scientific evidence.

Both systems are faith based at some level, and both systems also use scientific evidence. Recognizing this reminds my students that when scientists claim they rely solely on objective scientific evidence, which in the modern world is often considered superior, underlying their system is a philosophical commitment to scientific materialism or naturalism. Thus, even though evolutionary scientists often claim to be intellectually superior to creationists, creationists have no reason to accept this claim. A well-educated, well-trained scientist can be a creationist without apology. ■

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Notes and References

1. Lewis, Jack P. 1989. "The days of creation: an historic survey of interpretation." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 32(4): 433–455.

2. "The great principle so nobly advocated by Robinson and Roger Williams, that truth is progressive, that Christians should stand ready to accept all the light which may shine from God's holy word, was lost sight of by their descendants. The Protestant churches of America—and those of Europe as well—so highly favored in receiving the blessings of the Reformation, failed to press forward in the path of reform. Though a few faithful men arose, from time to time, to proclaim new truth and expose long-cherished error, the majority, like the Jews in Christ's day or the papists in the time of Luther, were content to believe as their fathers had believed and to live as they had lived. Therefore religion again degenerated into formalism; and errors and superstitions which would have been cast aside had the church continued to walk in the light of God's word, were retained and cherished. Thus the spirit inspired by the Reformation gradually died out, until there was almost as great need of reform in the Protestant churches as in the Roman Church in the time of Luther. There was the same worldliness and spiritual stupor, a similar reverence for the opinions of men, and substitution of human theories for the teachings of God's word." (Great Controversy, pp. 297–298.) This concept has often been assumed to refer to new light from the Bible, but should it be limited in this way? E. G. White often referred to God's second book as being nature. Maybe we need to be open to new light coming from God's second book too.

3. A strict reading of the official church position as stated in the 28 Fundamental Beliefs document does not specify that the days of creation must be literal days. Fundamental belief number 6 reads: "God is Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity. In six days the Lord made 'the heaven and the earth' and all living things upon the earth, and rested on the seventh day of that first week. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His completed creative work. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was 'very good,' declaring the glory of God. (Gen. 1; 2; Ex. 20:8–11; Ps. 19:1–6; 33:6, 9; 104; Heb. 11:3.)" (Source:

<http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html>). The words "days" and "week" are used but not strictly defined. Attempts have been made to get the wording changed so that the days are stated to be literal 24-hour periods, but such rewording was rejected at the 2004 GC Session.

4. This commonly used quote of those who defend the importance of evolution is taken from a paper by this title written by Theodosius Dobzhansky in *The American Biology Teacher*, March 1973 (35:125–129). The paper can be read online at <http://people.delphiforums.com/lordorman/light.htm>.

POETRY

Reductio ad Absurdum

Bryan Ness

A Benedictine monk a thousand years ago,
alone, reciting texts—strings of words
as mantras warding off the demons of
the night—and passing beads between
his fingers as he cants the virgin's praises,
little knows the use his cell will have
in hands that later hold a tiny glass
to view the honeycombed bark
of cork oak, invoking recognition of
identical and sparsely furnished cells.

Though dead, the cork recounts
a time when cloistered cytoplasm pulsed
with molecules, with rosaries composed
of histone-shrouded DNA caressed by clouds
of fingered proteins, a secret language
spoken silently beneath the range of sight
with letters made of sugars, phosphates, nitrogen,
all bound by lipid walls and protein furnishings.

The manuscript has only now been studied enough
to see the words in all their clarity,
and still the lexicon is incomplete, a mystery
unfolding and yet still deeper after each attempt.
The quietly swaying talmudic scholar knows
this kind of truth, and Buddha laughs
at such naïveté, that life could be confined
in letters on a page or stored for easy reference
as 1s and 0s in silicon.



The European Battle for the Soul of Adventism | BY TIM PUKO

One of Jona Thorudottir's lingering memories from her graduation from Newbold College in July was her class photo. Each department had its own photo, and, after their ceremony, graduates gathered with their program faculty for a picture on the lawn that surrounds the old Tudor mansion that is the center of the English campus. Thorudottir came for hers alone. Thorudottir, 23, originally from Reykjavik, Iceland, was one of just three students in Newbold's final humanities program graduating class and the only one who made it to the ceremony. The humanities department graduation photo shows Thorudottir as the only student surrounded by three faculty members.

Thorudottir spent much of her career at Newbold in small classes, sometimes with as few as one other student. Halfway through her three-year program, college officials sent her a letter saying that this was it. She could continue to graduation, but no other students would be admitted for humanities; and the program would be discontinued. Humanities had once been known as the flavor of Newbold's distinctive identity. The program was unique in the wide world of Adventist higher education. It featured a traditional mix of English literature and history taught mainly by English professors on the school's English countryside campus. Faculty had hoped it would be the perfect program for a thinking Adventist confronting the post-modern world; but the students just weren't coming anymore.

"It's a pretty small campus to begin with so I wasn't sure if that was sort of normal for any of the courses... I guess [the discontinuation] is something that didn't surprise me, but I didn't see it coming," said Thorudottir, now the office manager, receptionist, and newsletter editor for the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Iceland Con-



Jona Thorudottir (center), the last graduate of the humanities department at Newbold College in England.

ference...By third year you know the people so well, you're almost wishing there was someone else. It would be nicer to have a bigger variety....We had two non-English women, and that made the whole class. Things would always go in a very similar sort of way. It was nice, but it would have been nice to hear from different types of students with different backgrounds and different opinions. That was the only fault I could find with the whole class."

For a college board startled into action by Newbold's

it had dropped below 300 students. Newbold sits about an hour from London on some of the most expensive land in one of the world's richest countries; but it's one of the smallest institutions in one of the Adventist Church's smallest, poorest divisions. The college needs students to pay its bills, but it hasn't been getting them. Already staggering from years of dwindling enrollment before 2006, the college enrollment plummeted again between 2007 and 2009. The student population dropped by a third to at least a 15-year low of 229 stu-

dents. The church body that oversees Newbold, the Trans-European Division, had to give extra money, almost £2 million, to cover the school's operating deficits, according to Bertil A. Wiklander, Trans-European Division president.

It became clear that the school needed drastic changes. Its top official, Principal David S. Penner, resigned; and a new program called Diversity Studies was scrapped before it had been in place for a full term. Among the cutbacks, the college board wanted to eliminate two of seven humanities professors. The humanities degree program, despite its iconic position, was brought to an end. Newbold's independent British accreditors had repeatedly lauded the traditional British degree for its rigor, its unique inclusion of religion, and the excellence of its professors. In its stead, college faculty with a newly-hired course director are creating a media arts degree. Its Website advertises "practical, hands-on training" in topics including animation, film production, digital media, and radio. Newbold ended a program for which it had an honored faculty in favor of a



struggling enrollment, that fault was enough. Cuts would have to be made, and some of the smaller programs at Newbold could not survive.

Off and on for almost two decades, the college had struggled to maintain a healthy enrollment, and by 2007

media program for which it had no studio nor equipment.

"[The cutbacks] mean, I suppose, people have got less opportunity to teach in the areas where they're really well qualified. It means people have to spread a bit," Newbold Vice Principal Michael Pearson said discussing how the

humanities program had been shrunk and then restructured. "That is an occasion of sadness. But if you look at the stark figures, there was no incentive. People in this country are just not studying history.... It was a painful, a very painful process. It was a hard realization that we couldn't do what we'd been doing."

Newbold isn't going through that process alone. Many smaller Adventist schools in North America are fighting for survival—often against each other—as they struggle to entice students to Adventist colleges. The situation is similar in Europe where the three division colleges—Newbold, Friedensau Adventist University in Germany, and Saleve Adventist University in France—are facing the same overarching challenges. The deck in Europe is already stacked against them: private schools in Western Europe are rare because state-run universities are free or cheap for citizens. That makes it tough to convince students to pay a premium to attend a small, private, religious college that may not be recognized by government accreditors or prospective employers. The three division colleges are already competing with seventeen other Adventist colleges and junior colleges run by the unions. For these three universities, the onset of the global recession and continued post 9/11 immigration crackdowns have heightened the problems; tightening pipelines that once brought crucial international students.

Friedensau and Saleve are both smaller than Newbold, and, with such small student bodies, all are vulnerable to the type of year-to-year student turnover that bigger universities like Andrews or Loma Linda can more easily absorb. Friedensau had fewer than 150 students last year—at least a fifteen-year low. In recent history, Saleve has had even fewer students, but both schools have minimized this issue by relying heavily on subsidies from their division, the Euro-Africa Division. The question now is how long the divisions can keep footing the bill.

Some officials worry that the situation may soon become untenable. Schools are already suffering through the global economic crisis. Ongoing changes to European government education regulations could send costs skyrocketing. Leadership changes at the Euro-Africa Division may lead to a re-evaluation of the money that the division spends on its universities. All three schools increasingly have had to contend with the growing lower-level Adventist colleges around Europe and the loss of international students who were once a reliable resource. All of this only

puts more of a burden on the division's coffers.

"This is suicide because none of these schools can develop a strong program with strong faculty and all survive.... It is a real problem for the future. According to me, it couldn't go like this for a long time," said Claude Villeneuve, who retired in 2007 after 32 years at Saleve including an eight-year tenure as president. "The concept of Europe does not work for the church, at least for the schools. Everyone can't keep his own school and continue to function like this."

The past year was especially tumultuous at Saleve because of leadership turmoil. The president and business manager left the school after having an extramarital affair together, said Bruno Vertallier, the division president and university board chair. On campus, the resignations were officially announced only as a "private problem," French teacher Pierre de Luca said. The chairman of the French department resigned due to illness. Then, in April, theology professor Enrique Treyer died. These events all came at a critical time for the school; and poor choices by new leaders could kill the university, de Luca said. Pressure is building on staff there.

"We have to deal with it. In every sermon, in every school, even in the street or car or everywhere, we feel the pressure. We cannot ignore it.... I don't think it's about financial problems. It's about leading the campus, the faculty, and that's all," de Luca said, later adding that he avoided learning any more about the president's resignation. "The less I know, the less I think about it, the better I feel. So I didn't dig.... Everybody is waiting for news and so on, but I am not on a quest for information."

Saleve, located in eastern France only about 6 miles across the border from Geneva, Switzerland, had about 150 students each of the last two years; this is on the high end of its average enrollment range. It teaches theology and French language with a €3 million annual budget. About half of that comes from the division, a ratio that regularly dwarfs Newbold's but has always been lower than Friedensau's. Just as at the other two schools, Saleve's staff has long known the stress of working for a low-budget church college.

As at the other two schools, Saleve's faculty has felt that stress while trying to make major changes to the curriculum. Government regulators had them drop French history and literature, considered unnecessary for the foreigners who fill its French language classes, to optional status.



Jean-Claude Verrecchia

They switched to a language program specialized in environment and politics and are in the process of creating an international diplomacy program, Vertallier and de Luca said. The changes have been hard on faculty members who have had to write all the new curriculum while teaching full-time, de Luca added.

Changes in government regulations have hit Saleve hard. The famously secular French have been reluctant to approve any degrees from a religious college, Villeneuve said. Unable to earn degree-granting powers from national regulators, Saleve must rely on international agreements with Newbold and Friedensau to underwrite most of its degrees. That means Saleve can't really train anyone for careers other than pastor in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But the Franco-Belgian Union Conference isn't growing, and that means it isn't hiring, said Odette Ferreira, a Saleve alumnae who is now director of Adventist Colleges Abroad, based in Silver Spring, Maryland. The teachers union has also reached a new agreement for wage increases at private schools nationwide. That could increase labor costs by 30 to 40 percent, said Verrecchia, president from 1997 through 2004. Vertallier, who would only respond to questions through e-mail, believes that the increase will never be that severe. If he is wrong and the division gets new financial leaders who don't like the situation, it could be a deathblow for Saleve, Verrecchia said.

Saleve once had a virtual monopoly on all Adventist college students from romance-language countries, said Roberto Badenas, the division's director of education and family ministries. But the division has not been able to preserve this. Unions have become possessive of their prospective pastoral students and have moved to keep them at the union colleges.

"The pastors in Spain say they don't need to learn French. The unions don't want to send their pastors to other unions when they have the resources in their own; they don't see it useful," Badenas said. "We are European, we do

things together, but the other movement is, we are around for so many centuries, we have our own history, we do our own thing... They don't have this problem in the Trans-European Division; it's normal to do everything in English. But in my division, we have so many important languages... so they say 'How can I surrender my language?'"

The division has tried to counteract this by creating stronger programs. Officials highlight as an example a successful youth ministries program which is run in conjunction with Newbold and Friedensau. But the problem is widespread, Ferreira said. The U.S. Adventist students who once flocked to Saleve—often referred to by its location, Collonges—now frequently opt for cheaper options in South America or programs in Spain and Italy. The program at Italian Adventist College Villa Aurora rose from virtually nothing to become the jewel of Adventist study-abroad programs, she added.

"I love Collonges. It's home for me. I'm very upset about the decline that's happening there," Ferreira said. "The students themselves, they are the ones who saw the potential of [Villa Aurora]. They said they would like to stay there the whole year, experience all of the art—nothing could compare to that... [Villa Aurora] has really known how to attract the customers, and they do. Our students love it there."

Villa Aurora is only one of several union-level schools that have found a niche. Blessed with a campus of centuries-old villas that were once the summer homes for a branch of a dynastic noble family, Villa Aurora takes advantage of its historic spot in Florence. They developed courses on art history and fashion and take students on trips to historic and cultural spots around town. Further north, Bogenhofen Seminary in Austria has developed a cultural brand much like Southern Adventist University in the United States. While some have felt the division schools have trended liberal, Bogenhofen has stepped in to appeal to conservative families. Once seen as relatively insignificant around the continent, it has become a prominent counterweight to Friedensau, said Rolf J. Pöhler, president of the North German Union Conference from 2002 to 2004. But even those schools have had stagnant enrollment this decade according to the General Conference's Annual Statistical Reports. The Polish Senior College of Theology and Humanities in the Trans-European Division is the only one to make massive gains, doubling its enrollment between 2003 and 2007. It had more than 2,000 stu-

dents in 2007, less than a fifth of which were Adventist. Besides the Polish college, the rest of the schools are all still limited to a couple hundred students or fewer; and all are fighting to sustain themselves.

For the Euro-Africa Division, that leaves lingering tension because of the special division-level status of Saleve and Friedensau. Their subsidies evoke resentment at some of the union conferences, especially because Saleve also includes primary and secondary schools that benefit from the subsidies, Verrecchia said. "That was a big tension, and it is still a tension because in the division committee, you have the union presidents coming from all over Europe. Most of the time they had to close their primary

and secondary schools because they were not rich enough; they could not afford it. And they got absolutely nothing from the division. And they are saying to Collonges, 'C'mon, you guys are getting a lot of money for your primary and second school. Why not us in Madrid? Or us in Italy?'" he added, going on to note that the division could get a new treasurer at next year's General Conference session. "I am not sure at all that the new treasurer would be ready to spend 50 percent of his budget from the EUD at those two institutions. We could have very serious changes at Collonges and Friedensau as well... You can understand, some union presidents feel they need that money for evangelism and blah blah blah,



instead of putting money for kindergarten or high school.”

Friedensau has fared better thus far because of an opposite set of circumstances, boosted by a rare, highly-valued government accreditation. The school received state accreditation in 1990 giving it the power to award government-sanctioned degrees—rare for a European Adventist university, according to Roland Nickel, the university chancellor. The school already received large subsidies from the church because of old East German laws that limited how the church could use its money. When church officials restructured their hierarchy after Germany’s reunification, the accreditation convinced division officials to put their weight behind the school instead of closing it.

They added to the annual investment, beginning a two-decade process of renovating the Friedensau campus with the goal of making it the premier Adventist university in Europe, several school officials stated.

“Without the division, we cannot do anything,” Nickel said. Friedensau gets the largest annual subsidy as compared to Newbold and Saleve. About 60 percent of a €5 million operating budget comes from the division. This includes some money from members and the union that simply passes through division coffers, Nickel said. On top of that, Nickel’s predecessor started a separate fund eighteen years ago to raise more money from church members, the government, church unions, conferences, and the division while other funds were for capital projects at the school. For example, a new library opened in May 2008 for which almost seventy percent of the money came from the division, said Verrecchia, who has also worked on Adventist accreditation teams visiting Friedensau. Friedensau and division officials would not confirm that figure. While Newbold’s decades-old buildings have often been left with minimal upkeep, Friedensau and its division overseers have made a concerted effort to modernize their university’s campus, in part, to make it appealing to the modern student.

“That time is coming to an end; they’ve built up the campus,” said Pöhler, who has been teaching theology at Friedensau since 1992. “We have the advantage that the Euro-Africa Division so far has been very supportive of the school and its potential. They also support Collonges, but Friedensau has more of a potential as a university that Collonges doesn’t have. And Newbold has to struggle more financially because the Trans-European Division cannot support them financially....Of course, we don’t want to depend on that. We want to become more self-sufficient...because it’s always a risk if you depend too much on income from the outside.”

Though Friedensau officials may want to become more self-sufficient, the current trends are working in the opposite direction. The university had steady growth with enrollment of 220 students as recently as 2003–04. Then a decline began. With 150 students enrolled last year, there were really only about 100 regularly on campus, often too few to hold the school’s two daily worship services, theology lecturer Stefan Höschele reported. Many classes had fewer than ten students, Pöhler said. Students may have been turned off by the university’s early efforts to meet



Newbold teaching staff

changing European regulations which required more years of study for some degrees, he added. Further, as German becomes a less relevant international language, a German school appears less useful and less appealing to international students, officials said.

Friedensau is confronting that issue directly with new English degree programs which are part of a set of new programs being launched as the university attempts to double its enrollment. Starting last year, students could study for theology and social science degrees completely in English. The university had about twenty students in its English programs last term; and officials expect to add another ten or so this year, Nickel and Pöhler said. In addition to drawing more international students, it could help draw more from Saleve. Friedensau is underwriting some of Saleve's degrees, and French students in those joint programs are more likely to know English than German as a second language, he added.

The academic development at Friedensau hasn't been as prioritized as its campus development, its critics assert; but the school has spent the past decade trying to become more than a seminary for pastoral care and counseling, lecturer Andreas Bochmann said. Stagnant church growth in the region means the church doesn't need many more pastors; the growth areas are other fields of study, Pöhler said. Friedensau's Christian social work program has had more students than its theology program every year since 2001. This year, the school is adding music therapy and nursing, the latter in partnership with Waldfriede Hospital about an hour away in Berlin. "This should have taken place ten years ago," Pöhler said. "The ideas are very old. For some reason, the plans were laid off in between, for whatever reason." Officials want to offer doctorates in theology and social work though they could take another five years to establish, Nickel said. They're also considering a university community for retirees and a short program for young Adventists interested in a one-year missionary or social work experience, Pöhler said.

Friedensau and division officials are not intentionally trying to compete with Newbold despite the English programs and other overlapping programs and plans, officials said. Newbold added doctorate programs in 2005 and created a new, one-year program for younger, gap-year students the following year. Many Newbold undergraduates, especially from the United States, have often complained that they would like to stay but can complete nursing

degrees only back at their U.S. colleges. Wiklander, who is also chair of Newbold's board, said that he has no problem with Friedensau's plans. He added that he understands why the university would want to diversify beyond German. While the schools may not intend to compete, it can become unavoidable because they are run by separate divisions that divide Europe, said Bochmann, who spent 2008–09 in his first year under a joint appointment with Newbold and Friedensau.

"[Friedensau and Newbold] are both competing for being the European institution. The funny thing, if you look at it all over Europe, these are about the smallest institutions we have as far as student numbers," Bochmann added, going on to say later that Friedensau officials were not happy when he first presented the idea of a joint appointment to them. "But the underlying fear that I perceive, and this is a very personal and subjective perception, the underlying fear is that if you lose your academic leadership, you might eventually lose the whole college, the whole institution.... In the long run, we will not be able to afford colleges or universities in every country of the church. So you need to have a high-profile type of leadership, otherwise you run the risk of your school being closed down.... But this is the fear that lurks in the background and makes people very ambitious.... If you're not successful as a school, the division is not going to fund it."

Friedensau ends up competing, too, with Bogenhofen, the German-speaking, Austrian-Swiss Senior College in neighboring Austria, officials said. The two schools do mostly the same things but are divided by philosophy, Badenas said. Bogenhofen's appeal to conservatives has broadened its popularity internationally while Friedensau is "more interesting to intellectual and liberal students," Badenas added. Merging the two is an idea that gets informally bandied about on campus, Höschele said; but the cultural divide and the Austrian and Swiss unions' dependency on Bogenhofen make it virtually impossible, according to Friedensau and division officials.

"It is just my sense that the struggle for the soul of Adventism is being played out in Adventist education," said Helen Pearson, long-time public relations chief and editor of the alumni magazine at Newbold who struggles with some of the same tensions from the liberal-conservative divide. "The humanities department was an expression of the more open-minded and more liberal approach at the college from a theological perspective.... Newbold's [slo-



Helen Pearson

gan] ‘a mind-opening experience,’ [is the] essence at Newbold. If you ask students, especially Americans, what their memories are, that’s what they remember. People who came with no faith or had lost their faith because their faith had been inculcated in a more conservative context found it again because they were

supported and encouraged from that sort of perspective. There is evidence, when you talk to students, that theology students have a choice between more conservative and a more open-minded theology. And Newbold represents the latter; some of them come for that reason.”

Some segments of the Newbold community have long felt this idea was unappreciated by more conservative segments of the Trans-European Division. That, in turn, led to it being under-promoted by the college. There is a clash of cultures in the widespread Trans-European Division which stretches from the North Atlantic through the Middle East, as far south as the Sudan and as far east as Pakistan. The people in Eastern Europe and the Middle East generally don’t value an education designed to help students understand the post-modern world because their societies are conservative, said David Trim, a former Newbold history professor who said he left by mutual agreement as the college cut staff.

“English and history don’t train church workers,” he said. “There doesn’t seem to be any awareness among the church leadership...that the church needs an attentive and engaged church laity as much as pastors which, to a certain extent, I feel we did provide.”

Division officials had no ill-will for humanities but did want Newbold’s programs to be better aligned with the division’s mission now that the division is increasing its funding, Wiklander said. This decision and the restructuring of humanities were purely pragmatic, a reaction to the program’s dwindling enrollment, he said. “If you could enroll students who would love to come and study humanities at Newbold, we would open up the gates; we would love for that to happen,” he said. “I’m a humanities man

myself...I see that it is important and valuable; but we have a lot of young people in the TED; and many of them are not theorists... We have many people who could find jobs with simpler education; and we would like to serve them.” That means more vocational programs like the media program and an attempt similar to Friedensau’s to create short programs for young Adventists interested in a religious experience. Newbold should be looking beyond its theology department for ways to produce more church workers and help people better understand what it means to be Adventist, Wiklander added.

To pursue their goals in the recent years, division officials have emphasized the school’s theology department—giving it evermore support as its growth quickened, officials said. The department had just fifty-eight students in 1997, said theology lecturer Laurence Turner, head of the department that year and interim department head in 2008. Last year, it had the equivalent of 125 full-time students. It shot from about a third of the school’s enrollment to two-thirds, said Daniel Duda, a former Newbold theology professor who is now director of education for the Trans-European Division. For years, the theology staff struggled shorthanded; but increased division support has ended, Turner said. Division officials have worked to solidify Newbold’s position as the senior college for all the unions; limiting the number of students Newbold might lose to the union colleges. And the department has been empowered to add staff members such as Verrecchia and Bochmann while other departments have had to cut.

The drastically different fates of the two programs have left their faculties with differing perspectives on the issues that preceded and followed the downfall of humanities.

While some in humanities felt surprised and let down by the restructuring, others in theology felt humanities could have followed them to fight for and market themselves. While there is optimism among those who remain working for the new media program, some in theology are skeptical about the idea.



Laurence Turner

"Things happened in theology because we made them happen. We took the initiative. We weren't sitting around waiting for the rest of the church to say 'We'd like this,'" Turner said. "It became clear that [humanities] was dwindling; we couldn't justify it. What would we do to replace it? But deciding what to do seemed to take forever and a day... While it took them that length of time, from our point of view... it seemed a bit like discussing the finer points of the Sabbath School class while the Titanic had already hit the iceberg. Then, the end result was to have a course in diversity studies. And the rest of us... thought, 'Diversity studies? What on Earth is that?'" The program drew only three students; and college officials decided to drop it six weeks into its first term, added Turner, who served on the college's academic board at the time. "The cry then goes out, what are we going to do? And the answer is film and media which starts in the autumn. Some people are convinced this is going to be much more successful. Well, it couldn't be much less successful than diversity studies. But certainly, in Great Britain, departments of media studies have been closing rather than opening over the past decade. Departments of media studies got a reputation of becoming Mickey Mouse departments... Within my heart, I do hope it will be a success, but it's a statement of faith more than anything else."

What faculty members from both departments and Wiklander all agreed was that Newbold's internal marketing and recruitment has been a major shortcoming for the college. Verrecchia called it "a mess and a complete disaster." New Principal Jane Sabes and the longtime director of academic affairs John Baildam had a kinder analysis, saying the past recruitment effort hadn't been systematic or thorough.



Jane Sabes

Working with only a skeleton staff, the college's recruitment team had to let the academic departments fend for themselves, Baildam said. This was easier for Newbold's theologians who go out preaching in churches every Saturday, de facto marketing for their department. That opportunity didn't exist in the lives

of other faculty members. The college had no grand vision or strategy to market humanities' unique position as a program to help students understand faith in a post-modern context. And there were problems on the micro-level, too. Just last year, twenty successful applicants never received their acceptance letters; and the college lost most of those students though they had been expecting them, Verrecchia said. Baildam declined to comment on Verrecchia's claim except to say "a few things fell between the cracks" last summer. This summer, the theology department had to make its own brochures for the big youth conference in Germany after it couldn't get any marketing help from the communications department, theology faculty said. College administration had not made bolstering enrollment their top priority under former principal Penner; but the board has made it their top priority now, Wiklander stated.

"We did fail. I think we have to consider the fact that we did fail in doing the work we needed to do with enrollment in the past two years... It's probably the explanation of why we have this problem," he admitted. "Newbold has so many advantages, so many good things that we could really sell if we got out there and talked to the young people. We need to do that all the time; and in the past couple years, probably haven't done that. I'm not criticizing anyone; but I'm seeing that work done now much more effectively."

The work started with a demand from the board to almost double the school's enrollment over the summer. Through graduation and routine attrition, Newbold was left with only about 100 students committed for this autumn, Wiklander said. Getting to 230 would have been ideal; but the board decided 190 would be a realistic target for now, he added. Though, even if Newbold reached an enrollment of 230, that would still not be enough to balance the budget, Wiklander said. Newbold really needs the equivalent of 280 full-time students for that; and people at the school and around the division are skeptical about whether those numbers can happen soon enough for salvation.

Despite that skepticism, this summer the school had some of its most successful recruitment in years under the guidance of the new principal, Sabes, Wiklander said. The school met its goal of 190 with about 195 students, she said. The day before Sabes' comment, Baildam said that enrollment was still in the 180s and was waiting to confirm a final number after classes began.

Sabes was hired in August 2008 bringing more than thirty years of professional experience to Newbold with a diverse career that included managing the 1,700-employee Wyoming Department of Health according to her thirteen-page resume. She spent the last ten years at Andrews as a political science professor; but most of her professional career was in health-related positions outside of the Adventist system. Newbold's principal search committee started with eighty-five names which became a short list of about a dozen candidates. Only three or four people contacted from that list were interested in the job, Wiklander said. Sabes was such an outsider that she had never been to Newbold's campus before she arrived for her interview. However, that fact appealed to college board members, Wiklander said. They even chose her because of that and because of her diverse career—hoping she could bring a fresh perspective to the small, sometimes insular Newbold campus, Wiklander said.

One of her first actions was to survey about 250 youth in the Newbold community to find out what types of programs they wanted. That's how the media idea surfaced. The responders, "without exception," suggested media, she said. They also requested accounting and auditing; and the college is planning to grow the business module it offers in conjunction with the University of Wales Lampeter, Baildam said. The Department of Management, Arts, and Social Studies—which houses the remainder of the old humanities, business, and behavioral sciences departments—plans to add a community and international development program by 2011; another result of the youth survey. Sabes wants to continue periodic market testing to determine how the college should update its offerings.

The division is committed to keeping Newbold as a multi-faceted school, Wiklander said. Newbold also has business, behavioral sciences, and English-as-a-second-language programs; however, all have had enrollment declines since 2002. (The school did improve its summer enrollment increasing to about 100 this year, Baildam said.) But there is no proposal to reduce Newbold to a seminary and an English-language school as some fear. In fact, no decisions have been made regarding Newbold or a long-term strategy to keep the school viable. All of that is up to Sabes, Wiklander said.

"I wish I could say we could give them as much time as was needed, but, of course, we are not a rich division,"

Wiklander said. "We feel a strong responsibility for how we handle our finances, our resources, so that means there are limits, of course, to what we can afford to do. We hope now that the efforts made in increasing the enrollment will take care of the challenges we've faced in the past two years...I don't think we have a long-term strategy; but we need a balanced budget, and we need to see we are making improvements compared to last year... We want to keep Newbold; and we will do everything we can to help it flourish and grow. It is something where we have made no decision."

Sabes does not feel overwhelmed that the board has left her to do everything; and she has already developed both short and long-term goals. In the short-term, she established an international network of recruiters who work for a "small commission," she said. The recruiters tailor a pitch for their region and only get paid when students enroll. To help, the school's fees have been dropped by about £1,000 for all students from the division and the European Union economic area, Baildam said. Students from the division only pay £3,900. In turn, tuition for students from other parts of the world rose by about £1,000. College officials believe that this move will still allow them to compete for international students while making them more competitive for European students. The college designed ten different pamphlets targeting ten countries explaining how cost-effective Newbold would be for prospective students—even for some European countries where university education is cheap, Sabes said. She is also planning to hire a full-time recruitment officer to coordinate all these activities from campus but has had to wait to save enough money to keep within budget.

Newbold needs to see an increase in students every semester, Sabes said; the school should eventually enroll the equivalent of 400 full-time students every year. To do that, she wants Newbold to initially concentrate on serving the Trans-European Division but later go beyond and outside the Adventist community. One of her most inspiring experiences was an Adventist Accrediting Association visit to Babcock University in Nigeria, where only about a fourth of its 4,700 students are Adventist according to the General Conference's most recent figures from 2007.

"I don't know that I want to replicate [Nigeria], but I think it's an inspiration that we can explore... You know that text, Isaiah 54, when the Lord says extend your tent pegs, grow larger, grow wider, do mightier and greater

things for the Lord. I think we can. Really, the staff we have are exceptional; and I can take no credit for that," Sabes said. "There were so many prophets that God sent to Israel to move them along toward his plan, his ideal; I think I'm just another one sent here. I stand on shoulders of great people who were here before me. So I just happen to be here for this time to say, 'Why don't we think about inviting in people not of our faith community? Why don't we think of these other degree programs we haven't before? Why don't we? Why don't we?' I'm just here to ask questions and listen to the community as we work these things through; and I'll roll up my sleeves and do the work."

The division has given some of its new financial support to specifically help Sabes meet the new recruitment goals. Officials broadened their scholarship program beyond their own theology students and gave away almost £80,000 this summer as part of a new scholarship offering.

Division officials have also established a long-term increase in their contributions to Newbold's £3.5 million budget. Newbold will now receive two percent of all tithes in the division. That should cover twenty-four percent of the college budget, up from twenty percent, Duda said. But whether it will be enough is a major question. The college had similarly large operating deficits in the past before the division began its recent intervention; but those shortfalls were covered with money from a profitable land sale. In terms of proportion of its budget, Newbold is still receiving less than half the support that Saleve and Friedensau receive.

"If Collonges and Friedensau received only twenty percent of their operating budgets from the church, I think they'd be going out of business," Turner said. "There's probably an end to the patience...there has to come an end to the division or whomever bailing us out. Not because of a lack of goodwill, but particularly now that we're facing all kinds of financial [issues], the credit crunch, and what have you, it just can't be done for much longer. There is not much money elsewhere."

The fear expressed by all three universities is that the problems they are experiencing may be inherent to the system they've established making tweaks like these irrelevant. The geopolitical problems like terrorism and recession may just bring an earlier end to a system doomed to fail anyway. At Newbold, for instance, some critics blamed Penner for hitching Newbold's health too closely to its

recruitment of exchange students from the United States. The college cannot benefit from Adventist Colleges Abroad (which sends students only to non-English speaking countries), and international terrorism scared parents and brought tighter immigration restrictions. U.S. enrollment dropped by more than half after the London subway bombings of July 2005. This year, the college could lose 20 to 40 students, many from Africa, because of tightening visa regulations, staff said. But college officials have long known that European students are unlikely to give up their option of state-subsidized university to pay to go to Newbold. Wiklander himself, a Newbold student in 1966, left the college after only six months to return to his native Sweden for free university, he said. Newbold is trying to challenge this issue directly but is only this year beginning altered tuition charges. The Euro-Africa Division has tried to bolster enrollments at Saleve and Friedensau by making them the destination for all the division's post-graduate students, Badenas said. But students are free to choose from schools all over the world; and they do. The pool of potential students in Europe and the affiliated regions is small and may not be enough to support all twenty Adventist universities in the two divisions.

The church has a relatively unstable leadership situation for the colleges during this tumultuous time. Sabes has been in her position for only a year; and, before her ten years at Andrews, never stayed longer than four years in any job—according to her resume. In the fallout from Saleve's scandal, the Euro-Africa Division promoted Ralf Wegener from interim status to become the university's new president. At Friedensau, there is a search committee looking for a new president to begin in 2010 or 2011. In years past, the leaders at the three schools had to work closely together to start the kind of collaborative efforts many believe the colleges need to survive. But if Friedensau installs a new president next year, leadership for the three schools will have completely turned over within two years.

One solution past presidents have tried without success is widespread, cross-divisional consolidation of the three universities. The idea has been publicly discussed for more than a decade but without significant momentum. The division presidents say they support increased collaboration but that having three separate schools teach in three separate languages is the best way to serve Europe, at least for now. "...talking about having one university instead of three existing schools is a little bit simplistic,



not to say ridiculous,” Daniello Barelli, assistant treasurer at the Euro-Africa Division and interim treasurer for several

months this year at Saleve, wrote in an e-mail. The fragmented cultures of Europe mean that opportunities to collaborate or even learn from each other are limited, she continued. What works so well in Poland or Romania is likely inapplicable to Newbold or Saleve. The universities all serve a slightly different purpose; and the system would be too difficult to unwind.

“You must understand that we are in Europe and that we must cope with tradition; but we are working on the process to merge as much as possible,” Vertallier said during two e-mail exchanges. “. . . we agree that we should find new ways to collaborate for the benefit of the church and the training of the students. We encourage the administrations of these schools to approach new paths.”

On their own, the universities developed several joint programs and began sharing faculty. But the worst of the enrollment problems and Newbold’s financial problems surfaced in the years after that happened. The resources are just stretched too thin for the current system to make sense, several critics said. There are twenty colleges and junior colleges in these two divisions alone. The divisions have tried to maintain several schools but have only proven that they can’t fully fund them, Verrecchia said. For comparison, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has only three universities and one college though it has almost as many members and as broad an international following as the Adventist church, Duda noted.

“[The Euro-Africa Division officials] are putting money into buildings, facilities, but they are not ready, and that’s a bad choice. I tried to

change it but . . . they are not ready to invest in human resources,” Verrecchia said. “I would say it’s too expensive for them . . . and the background is very different. I’m ready to say there is a kind of anti-intellectualism in EUD. ‘We just need good pastors. Three or four years of study are all we need. A master’s? A PhD? C’mon. We just need good pastors, why would we need all that?’ In TED, it’s very different . . . human resources are the priority; and that’s the difference. When you see the facilities at Newbold, that’s a disaster—that’s middle-ages. That’s very difficult for the British to understand. The facilities are in bad condition—when students travel and look at Friedensau and Newbold, of course, we are lost.”

When Verrecchia was president at Saleve, the three universities’ leaders were working on a plan called Post-Graduate Adventist Colleges in Europe. It would have allowed the three schools to maintain their campuses—or at least two of them—while expanding their ability to share teachers and programs. They could have limited administrative costs and just one library. The effort fell apart when Newbold switched principals, he said.

“It would be fantastic—that would be our dream. In order to do this, you need to dream and be politically bold. But that’s not the situation.” ■

Tim Puko, a reporter at the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, spent 2004–05 as an Adventist Volunteer at Newbold working in communications and marketing.



In the Eye of the Storm: *An Interview with La Sierra University President Randal Wisbey* | BY BONNIE DWYER

CARRIE ROSEMA / THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE



La Sierra University President Randal Wisbey got a laugh from students cheering for him at his inauguration ceremony.

Spectrum: *You have talked in various places about nurturing the Adventist mind, and the important role that Adventist higher education plays in the life of the church. How has the current controversy over the teaching of creation and evolution affected La Sierra's enrollment? Its faculty and curriculum?*

Wisbey: We believe this to be a very important conversation. The teaching of creation is central to us as Christians and as Adventists. At La Sierra University we deeply affirm the importance of this teaching. All of our biology professors believe in the creator God whose handiwork is on display in the natural world. With Ellen White, they believe that "the book of nature and the written word shed light upon each other. They make us acquainted with God by teaching us something of the laws through which he works" (*Education*, p. 128). They also care deeply for their students as children of God. They are willing to spend considerable time both in and out of class to help students deal with the complexities of biology in a way that builds their faith. It pains me as president, and as a colleague, to know how surprised and puzzled these professors have been by the attacks that have been directed at them.

It is also clear that in many ways this has brought our campus family closer together. It has encouraged us to

have thoughtful conversations about how we can deepen the faith experience of our students. It has allowed us to work with our La Sierra University Church pastoral team in thinking about how we can celebrate the glory of God's creation. It has provided incentive for us to think about new ways in which we can bring these themes into our classrooms. This fall we introduced a new seminar that all first year biology students are required to take that introduces them to the issues of faith and science that they will encounter throughout their studies in biology and their professional careers.

In regards to enrollment, our Biology Department experienced quite a boost as we reached a 20-year high this fall in biology majors. Likewise, our returning student numbers were stronger than last fall, and our freshman class grew by 43 students from the year before. As you might imagine, we are indeed grateful for the blessing of a strong and growing enrollment.

Q: *For those who have not closely followed the discussion, this debate over how biology is taught at LSU began last year when a student invited a physician to make a presentation to students on creation. Debate over that event ended up on the internet and then a web site was created that attacked La Sierra fairly specifically, even taking the university's name as part of the website name.*

Was legal action taken by La Sierra over the use of its name? The website changed its name to Educate Truth.

A: Our General Counsel did write to the individual associated with the website, noting that they did not have permission to use the university's name, and the name of the website was soon changed. As of this time, no legal action has been taken by La Sierra University.

Q: *What has been the response of La Sierra's Board to this discussion?*

A: As you might imagine, the trustees have been very interested and have spent time thinking about this topic. They have also taken the time to become better conversant with the issues. During the May 2009 meeting of the Board, they affirmed the letter that I had written on May 18. They also noted their commitment to take the concerns of our constituents seriously, even as they gave assurance that they would continue to explore the matter in depth. During that meeting, and confirmed in following conversations, the Board of Trustees noted their belief that the Adventist Church must state very clearly that it supports our educational institutions teaching a variety of viewpoints in order that our students will be well prepared as they leave our institutions. They also continue to embrace the opportunity that our faculty has to provide a strong introduction to our church's doctrinal belief in the centrality of creation, knowing that our students' growth in faith is central to our mission as an Adventist university.

Our upcoming meeting of the Board in November will likely see a public response from the trustees.

Q: *What effect do you see this debate having on Adventist thinking? How will this discussion help the church communicate more clearly about Adventist faith to the rest of the world?*

A: At La Sierra we have taken the opportunity to reaffirm our belief in the truth of Creation. We have also learned, through many conversations with academic and church leaders, about the diversity of Adventist opinion on this topic. While some find this diversity threatening, there are others who believe this is truer to the spirit of historic Adventism. As George Knight, in his book, *A Search for Identity*, has written, "In 1861 at the meeting at which the Sabbatarians organized their first state conference, John Loughborough highlighted the problem that early Adventists saw in creeds. According to Loughborough, 'the first step of apostasy is to get up a creed, telling us what we shall believe. The second is to make that creed a test of fellowship. The third is to try members by that creed. The fourth to denounce as heretics those who do not believe that creed. And, fifth, to commence persecution against such.'" (page 22)

And how will this discussion help the church communicate more clearly about Adventist faith to the rest of the world? My fear is that it will not. There has been lit-

tle genuine conversation, and far too much anger, criticism and recrimination. Some of those most critical note that their concern is for the young of the church who they long to protect. However, they forget that the young are paying attention to these angry sentiments and are making up their minds as to whether or not they will find a home in the Adventist Church. As I used to remind my students in youth ministry classes at the SDA Theological Seminary, our young people long for us to "show it with our lives before we say it with our words."

Likewise, I fear that many, if not most, of those who are not members of the Adventist Church and who are aware of this debate find it confusing and distancing.

Q: *When we were talking recently, you described the current controversy as a battle for the soul of Adventism. What did you mean?*

A: Bonnie, my central concern is focused on what we long for our church to be. The Adventist Church has historically embraced a commitment to openly search for truth, to be willing to question every teaching, every view as our church pioneers consistently encouraged us to do. As Ellen White reminds us, "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 an error" (*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 35). This spirit seems to embody the soul of Adventism.

However, today there seems to be a growing fear on the part of some within the church that we are losing the essence of our uniqueness, and thus we feel the need to make certain that all of our doctrinal understandings are set in stone. These few appear to be attempting to make the Adventist tent smaller and smaller, in the belief that if we can just get everyone on the same page we will be safe. In systems theory, we would understand that what some are attempting to do, in order to resist chaos, is to close the system—yet the unintended consequence is one of further creating chaos. Without openness, feedback, and genuine conversation the system dies.





Wisbey

When I spoke of the soul of Adventism I was also thinking about the anger and sneering dismissiveness that has marked so much of the current debate. The lack of civil dialogue that has become so commonplace in America during the past decade seems to be making the same inroads into the church. I have personally been shocked and saddened by the way in which church members have chosen to communicate their concern, and the effect of this corrosive, mono-vocal attack—one in which little thought is given to the twisting of words and the false attribution of motives—is, I fear, doing significant damage to the soul of Adventism.

A friend recently noted that we are being summoned back to an invented past that is not our own. There is little doubt that this is impacting the personality of our Adventist family.

Q: *In your presentation about nurturing the Adventist mind that you gave to Adventist educators in 2008, you closed with a lyrical call to dream. How has this ongoing saga affected your dreams for Adventist education?*

A: I am still captivated by the dream that I shared at the conclusion of my paper. Every day I see it lived out in the lives of the incredibly bright young people who come to us, full of hope and belief. I remain convinced that they must experience an Adventist life in which our community is characterized by grace, a community committed to serving God and our fellow humans; a place where legalism is replaced with freedom, fear with love, cynicism with hope, performance with acceptance, indifference with passion, conformity with conviction, pride with humility, exclusiveness with inclusiveness, and the letter of the law with its spirit.

I can assure you that I am genuinely proud of our La Sierra University family. Every day I experience these kinds of attributes in the lives of our faculty, staff and students—and while we are not perfect, we are continuing to look for ways in which we can open our hearts to God in faith and in gratitude. ■

Randal Wisbey has spent the last 27 years as a pastor, college chaplain, seminary professor of youth ministry, and college administrator. He has served as president of La Sierra University since July 2007.

NOTEWORTHY ■ *Continued from page 16*

What are we allowed to say? In his initial remarks to the attendees, Julius Nam had asked the attendees not to quote anything from the participants without their permission. So right at the end of the conference, I asked about that very point. Terrie Aamodt, Bev Beem, and I were all scheduled to give a report on the conference at the Sunnyside Church in Portland, Oregon, the very next week end. What could we say? The organizers put their heads together, then agreed that we could say anything we wanted to! That was a mark of how healthy and respectful the conversations at the conference had been.



Ellen White



Julius Nam

Later, Numbers came to me personally and said that I could quote anything he said—as long as I made it clear what was humorous and what was serious. Wonderful! Except Numbers is quite capable of deadpan humor, so that could be dangerous license. He himself noted an example where his humor

had been mistaken for seriousness in a public dialogue at the conference.

One more personal exchange with him was intriguing. In his wrap-up comments at the end, Numbers pointed out that he had agreed to participate in the conference under two conditions: no personal attacks and no apologetics. And the conference wonderfully fulfilled those conditions. When he asked me how I liked the conference, I referred to those two conditions and said that they simply reflected the teachings of Jesus as embodied in his second great command: we are to treat others the way we would want to be treated. Strong-minded people expressed real convictions at the conference. But we called one another to account in ways that were appropriate. I think I could even hear a hearty amen from Jesus. ■

Alden Thompson is professor of religion at Walla Walla University, Walla Walla, Washington.

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POETRY



Above

Gen. 1:16,
Creation
of sun and moon,
by Raphael

Design Theory

Bryan Ness

Reality possesses time in shapes
in mathematical precision, yet
attempting to discover how escapes
the conscious mind engaged in close duet
between emotion's chemical romance
and rigid reason's patient certainty,
a dance whose steps are seldom circumstance
and yet to trace effect along its free,
descending path from cause requires a blind-
ness blind to indeterminate design
designed by no one, derelict, maligned,
and yet a universal goal, divine
in execution, harder yet to predefine.

Bryan Ness is a professor of biology at Pacific Union
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