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We Dig Dirt: Archeology at Tell 'al Umayri

What Can Adventists Learn from Jews About the Sabbath

The Holistic Spirituality of Ellen White

Congratulations! Now What? Q&A with Mt. Ellis Academy's Principal
Through the Lens of Faith

VOLUME 39 ISSUE 1 ■ WINTER 2011



contents

Editorials

- 2** A Time to Mourn | BY BONNIE DWYER
3 Memo to Elder Wilson | BY CHARLES SCRIVEN

Feedback

- 5** Letters | BAKER, OSBORN, WILLEY, EUN, CARR, ROTH, WILL, BULL, GUY

Biblical Studies: Sabbath

- 11** The Sabbath and God's People | BY GERALD WHEELER
15 What Can Adventists Learn from the Jews about the Sabbath? | BY JACQUES B. DOUKHAN
21 My Celtic Sabbath Journey with Esther, Lady MacBeth, and St. Brigid | BY BONNIE DWYER
31 Negotiating Sabbath Observance in the Local Church | BY JOHN BRUNT

Archeology

- 37** We Dig Dirt: *Archeology at Tell 'al Umayri* | BY JOHN MCDOWELL

Spiritual Journeys

- 43** The Holistic Spirituality of Ellen White | BY HARRI KUHALAMPI
52 The Art of Intervention: *Finding Health in Faith* | BY HEATHER LANGLEY
56 Through the Lens of Faith | BY MARTIN DOBLMEIER
62 Capturing Spiritual Moments—Digitally | BY RAJMUND DABROWSKI

Adventist Education

- 66** Time to Act: *Strong Convictions Expressed at a National Summit on Adventist Education* | BY GILBERT M. VALENTINE
77 Congratulations! Now What? Q & A with Mt. Ellis Academy's Principal Darren Wilkins | BY JARED WRIGHT

Poetry

- cover** She Presents a Paper on the Theory of Everything | BY MIKE MENNARD



A Time to Mourn | BY BONNIE DWYER

Jesus Wept. The image of Christ with down-turned eyes on the cover of the current Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly seems eerily appropriate for the sorrows that have marked the middle of January. The world still weeps for Haiti a year after the earthquake, as well as for those whose homes have been flooded by swollen rivers in Australia or been swept away by mudslides in Brazil. In America we weep for the victims of the Arizona shooting.

And there is sorrow in Adventism as we mourn the loss of former General Conference President Neal C. Wilson, theologian Graham Maxwell, and estranged member Holly Drum (more about her later), among others.

The son of missionary parents, Neal C. Wilson served his church his entire life including the years of his presidency of the General Conference 1979–1990. During his administration he oversaw the 1980 adoption of the church's Fundamental Beliefs, the creation of Adventist World Radio and Global Mission and the relocation of the denomination's world headquarters from Takoma Park, Maryland, to its current location in Silver Spring. He is survived by his loving wife Eleanor, daughter Shirley, and son Ted—the current General Conference president.

Author, teacher, and theologian Graham Maxwell's legacy is a generation of students who came to understand the character of God as being the central point of Scripture. He spoke of God's love in such compelling fashion it brought overflowing crowds to his weekly Sabbath School classes in addition to the courses he taught first at Pacific Union College and then at Loma Linda University. The son of (Uncle) Arthur Maxwell, Graham is survived by his sister Deidre and daughter Audrey.

According to *The Kinship Connection*, Holly Drum, a Kinship member from the Walla Walla Chapter committed suicide in January. It reported, "While a tragedy like this is

complicated and never has a single cause, members of the Walla Walla Chapter remember Holly talking about how hard it was for her to be disfellowshipped by her home church in Oregon years ago and that she was very interested in finding out if a local church would be open and accepting."

It was further reported that "this tragedy brought the Kinship community together in a way that Holly probably would have appreciated. Her memorial service was held at the Walla Walla University Youth Chapel, and several chapter members commented on how meaningful and healing it was to be able to mourn Holly in an Adventist church.

Holly is survived by her partner Suzi Sullivan and three children.

In the spiritual journey of our community, we pause for reflection at the passing of these family members. Each was controversial in his own way—Wilson for his handling of crises related to church theology and the equality of women, Maxwell for his theology, and Drum for her sexual orientation. Yet they are all part of the Adventist family and so deserving of our love.

To borrow language President Barack Obama used at the Memorial for the Victims of the Arizona Shooting, "If these losses prompt reflection and debate, as they should, let's make sure it's worthy of those we have lost."

President Obama went on to say that what happened in Arizona "should make every one of us strive to be better in our private lives—to be better friends and neighbors, co-workers and parents."

These losses within the Adventist family should help every one of us to be kinder and more generous to each other in our church lives. And let us pray that our spiritual journey together will be strengthened by the love and emotion that flood our hearts at this time. ■



Memo to Elder Wilson | BY CHARLES SCRIVEN

Because my counsel is unbidden, it may never reach you, or if it does, it may seem obtrusive. But we are brothers in the faith, and that makes me bold to offer perspective on two challenges you are embracing.

One is revival and reformation. You pray for it and preach on it. A 2010 Annual Council appeal on this matter came out under your influence. It lifts up Holy Spirit power, puts Christ at the center, and calls us to humility and prayer.

One great pastor who wrote in a time of revival was Jonathan Edwards. Eagerness for God was sweeping across New England, and this seemed exactly the time to pose the question of authenticity: How do you distinguish the mere appearance of piety from genuine renewal? How do you test whether the spirit of Christ, or some other spirit, is actually at work?

I think you would identify with his conclusion. A revival is authentic if it produces love, if it produces what Paul famously referred to as the “fruit of the Spirit.”

When Paul spells this out in Galatians 5, he says not only that the fruit of the Spirit is love but also that it is longsuffering, gentleness and meekness. And all this strikes me, just now, as crucial. One reason is that another of the challenges you are taking on is the doctrine of creation. You want to revise the church’s Fundamental Belief on this matter to say that creation took place some 6,000 years ago, over “seven contiguous, 24-hour days.”

Our conviction that God made heaven and earth is crucial, and this came to me in a newly full-blooded way a few weeks ago. My wife and I were peeking into some art galleries in Manhattan, and one was exhibiting works by Max Ferguson. He creates ultra-realistic paintings of people and their surroundings *inside* of New York City—inside of shops, eateries, apartments and the like. One of them was on an easel instead of a wall, so you could walk around and look at the back of it. As Ferguson told us—we were surprised and pleased to meet him—he puts notes or clippings of quotes and pictures on the reverse side of his paintings. A painting’s reverse side is thus a kind of diary of his thoughts during the several months he spends on it. Just as he was saying this, we were standing behind the painting on the easel, and my eye landed on a note he’d written: *“When you removed God from the equation you removed the sanctity of human life. Once you have accomplished that, you are wiping your feet on the door mat of Auschwitz.”*

I had considered this before, but never the precise image, and never as I was standing beside the person who had done the writing. Atheists would offer counterarguments, of course, but the record of the most powerful atheists—besides Hitler, think of Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot—is utterly vicious, and in scale utterly unprecedented. Dostoyevsky worried that the demise of God would make all things permissible, and the evidence, if not conclusive, is at least alarming. I admit complexity. I know very well that New Atheists pin the

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blame for violence on religion: bad faith, and abuses stemming from it, sadly abound. Nevertheless, if you re-write John 1 to say, "In the beginning was non-sense, and the nonsense was with God, and the nonsense was God," you just do, I think, open doors to devastating consequences.

On this you and I agree. But did creation occur just 6,000 or so years ago over "seven contiguous, 24-hour days"?

Here I wish you yourself would allow for complexity. Neither of us has undergone doctoral study in the natural sciences. We cannot fully comprehend, therefore, the intellectual struggles that lead most believing scientists to focus on the spiritual meaning of Genesis—and to allow that this meaning comes wrapped in mystery. In this light, we are in a poor position, surely, to insist on improvements to the book of Genesis. I love the creation story just the way it stands. Although this is what we currently affirm, I do understand the fears that make us want to insist on more than the Bible insists on. But do those fears justify meddling (not literally, of course, but in practical effect) with Holy Writ?

I know two young Adventist couples who embrace both the life of the church and the work of advanced study. In both cases, one of the spouses has, or will soon have, a doctorate in physics; in both cases the other spouse is earning a doctorate in the study of literary texts.

A few Saturday nights ago I asked one of these young people—his physics doctorate is from Harvard—how he was holding on to his faith. He had studied and worked in faith-unfriendly environments, but had realized, he said, that any ultimate point of view, whether secular or religious, is "essentially unprovable." For him this was an opening for reception of the faith that only God can give.

Although this young scientist's point should not make us indifferent to evidence, it does underscore the relevance of humility, or as we might say, based on Galatians 5, teachableness. The Greek word behind "meekness"—one char-

acteristic of true spirituality—evokes both of these ideas. And doesn't this fact take us right back to your message of revival and reformation?

Some Adventists see mystery where others see only information. For them, faith is too deep for words—too deep, that is, for the words a technical writer might deploy. Saying precisely that creation occurred some 6,000 years ago, over "seven contiguous, 24-hour, days," makes the sublimity of scripture into something as uninspiring as a common manual or handbook. And if we insist on this for creed-like purposes, we exclude, or at least marginalize, brothers and sisters who find such (extra-biblical) language to be a stumbling block.

For importance, nothing outranks human sanctity based on the divine Creator's *gracious regard*. Every committed Adventist shares your passion on this point. But if some are more attuned to mystery than others, your passion for revival has an immediate relevance. True revival, after all, entails meekness, an eagerness to listen and to learn. It entails, too, the long-suffering and gentleness of which Paul spoke. In essence—unless Jonathan Edwards got this wrong—true revival is about love.

When those who want to re-write the church's Fundamental Belief about creation know very well that the proposed language is troubling to many creation-affirming Adventists—and is in any case extra-biblical—the effort seems not to pass the test of true revival.

I don't expect these words to be widely persuasive, or even widely considered. But even though I do not live by optimism, I do live by hope. And I hope, of course, that you will consider them. ■



Charles Scriven chairs Adventist Forum and is President of Kettering College of Medical Arts.



Doctoral Debates: Ellen White, Life's Beginning, and Old Soils

A Not So Silent Ellen White

Ronald Osborn's intriguing piece "True Blood: Race, Science, and Early Adventist Amalgamation" signals a desire for this generation to reinterpret (resuscitate?) Ellen G. White in ways perceived to be meaningful and relevant to the twenty-first century.

I am also a PhD candidate working on a dissertation treating White's relationship to black people.

After compiling some 700 pages on what White actually wrote and said about black people, I find it curious that Osborn based so much of his 15-page spread on what White did not say in response to Uriah Smith's amalgamation defense.

Osborn, aware of White's "courageous statements against slavery," nevertheless reckons 1864 as a pivotal date in White's thinking on black people in which she published four cryptic lines on amalgamation which did not even mention blacks, or any specific racial group, at all. From this it is posited that only in 1891 (or thereabouts) did White realize the full humanity of blacks. This is not mere intellectualizing; Osborn recommends his paradigm of White's racial evolution be taught in Adventist schools.

Osborn's assumptions are best approached by underscoring the foundation of Ellen White's pre-1864 writings on black people, which are of course, mostly in the setting of enslavement. An even casual perusal of the four sections in *Testimonies*, Volume 1, dealing with the Civil War and slavery written in 1862 and 1863 and featured in the *Review and Herald* several years before Smith's amalgamation apologia, reveals White's deep belief in the full humanity of the captive blacks, which is the basis of her explicit indictments of the slavery institution and Confederate secession. Observe one such representative pericope:

There are a few in the ranks of Sabbathkeepers who sympathize with the slaveholder. . . . Some have brought along with them their old political prejudices, which are not in harmony with the principles of the truth. They maintain that the slave is the property of the master, and should not be taken from him. They rank these slaves as cattle and say that it is wronging the owner just as much to deprive him of his slaves as to take away his cattle. I was shown that it mattered not how much the master had paid for human flesh and the souls of men; God gives him no title to human souls, and he has no right to hold them as his property. Christ died for the whole human family, whether white or black. God has made man a free moral agent, whether white or black. The institution of slavery does away with this and permits man to exercise over his fellow man a power which God has never granted him, and which belongs alone to God. The slave master has dared assume the responsibility of God over his slave, and accordingly he will be accountable for the sins, ignorance, and vice of the slave. He will be called to an account for the power which he exercises over the slave. The colored race are God's property. Their Maker alone is their master, and those who have dared chain down the body and the soul of the slave, to keep him in degradation like the brutes, will have their retribution. The wrath of God has slumbered, but it will awake and be poured out without mixture of mercy (358).

It is indisputable that White is undercutting the exact notion of black inhumanity or compromised humanity that Osborn claims she only came to grips with some three decades later. Just as significant are the paragraphs on African Christian heroics that White includes in the same series where the amalgamation statements were featured,

Finally, the "All Ye Are Brethren" vision White alluded to in her March 21, 1891, speech occurred sometime in 1890 amidst a mixed St. Louis congregation that had experienced deplorable racist aggression on the part of the

white constituency that traumatized Ellen White. Of the episode she later wrote, “We had some experiences at St. Louis that I can never think of without a feeling of dread” (Letter 105, 1904). When surveying the available evidence, it becomes clear that the “All Ye Are Brethren” vision was not given to revolutionize White’s racial worldview but to rebuke and admonish the recalcitrant white supremacist church members.

I wholeheartedly concur with Osborn that Ellen White needs to be reapplied and reinterpreted for a new generation and millennium, but this process should rely on verifiable evidence—namely what Ellen White actually said and wrote—not arguments from silence.

BENJAMIN J. BAKER

Washington, D.C.

Ron Osborn Responds

I am grateful to Benjamin Baker for his letter, which reminds us of what is most important in Ellen White’s writings on race: her passionate opposition to slavery and her belief in the full humanity of all persons. I must, though, correct several misstatements in his letter.

Baker writes that I count “1864 as a pivotal date in White’s thinking on black people.” What I actually wrote was “amalgamation theory played no central role in White’s theology or in her later writings.” In the first paragraph of my article I explained why we must wrestle with the amalgamation question: not because amalgamation was “pivotal” for White but because, strangely, it has become pivotal for some Adventists.

Contrary to what Baker suggests, my article was not merely based upon inferences from White’s silence. It is true that White did not directly interpret her own words for us. But where White was silent her community was not. The fact that the pioneers did not find her words on amalgamation “cryptic” or insignificant but spoke clearly and with some frequency about their meaning over the course of many decades is important. For any serious historian, this is evidence that must be carefully weighed, not quietly passed over as it has been by numerous Adventist writers for many years even as they directly interpret and defend the amalgamation passages. That, to my mind, is the real argument from silence. It was a silence I felt compelled to break.

Baker also mischaracterizes my words about White in 1890, suggesting that I see White even at this late period as being unconvinced of “black or African humanity.” But

what I wrote was that she appears to have still been “wrestling with questions of racial equality.” My reading was offered in tentative, not dogmatic, terms, and I made clear that equality, not “humanity,” was the challenge I think White faced.

Uriah Smith himself defended the humanity of “amalgamated” races on the grounds that merely having a single drop of Adam’s blood in one’s veins qualified one as a member of the human race, deserving to be treated with compassion and dignity, and to be elevated to as high a social and political level as possible. Smith was no craven apologist for slavery or racial oppression either.

Baker’s letter lends support to a traditional Adventist view of prophetic inspiration that my article invited readers to rethink. According to this outlook (which I realize may not be Baker’s own), the best way of understanding White on questions of race as well as science is in essentially static and heroic if not infallible terms. My view is that White’s statements on amalgamation are indefensible but that at least potentially her thinking on matters of race grew over time. The moral arc of White’s views on race (to paraphrase Martin Luther King Jr.) may have been long—or at least longer than we had initially hoped—but they bent toward justice. This to me as an Adventist is what matters.

RON OSBORN

Los Angeles, California

Amalgamation and the Spirit of the Times

Ronald Osborn’s article left the impression that Ellen G. White’s reference to the “the base crime of amalgamation” was “understood by Seventh-day Adventists to refer to perverse but somehow scientifically possible sexual unions across diverse species, including humans and other creatures.” Consequently, the amalgamation statement has been “a source of anti-Adventist polemics from the moment they first appeared in print.”

Believing in amalgamation and human degradation was not unique to Mrs. White. Contemporaries sometimes employed it to explain the diversity of humankind discovered by explorers in uncivilized parts of the world. This non-biblical stock-taking of mankind fit nicely with the widely accepted scientific notion of a Great Chain of Being descending from God to angels to man and then on toward animals. Because blacks and non-human primates were located at the bottom of the human hierarchy, they were regarded as “inferiorly organized and poorly endowed

morally” compared to whites. (See Elise Lemire’s “Miscegenation” *Making Race in America*.)

Such views even found their way into Ellen G. White’s own library, which included *Negro-Mania: An Examination of the Falsely Assumed Equality of the Various Races of Men* (1851), a crude and disjointed scientific anthology... The legendary *Review* editor Uriah Smith was the first to defend Mrs. White’s amalgamation statements as scientifically sound. “Naturalists affirm that the line of demarcation between human and animal races is lost in confusion,” he declared.

Ellen White and Uriah Smith were plainly following the (unsound) science of their time.

I agree with Osborn. It is high time for Adventists to throw amalgamation theories and the hocus-pocus satanic eugenics into the trash bin of pseudoscience, and simply abandon “amalgamation of man and beast” and the surrounding Noah’s curse with a footnote that the Ellen G. White Estate no longer maintains these views after the nineteenth century—the position essentially taken in *The Story of Redemption*.

T. JOE WILLEY

Loma Linda, California

On the Beginning of Life

I read with great interest Mark Carr’s essay “Just What is the Seventh-day Adventist Position on When Life Begins.”

First of all, I am not certain what is really meant by the term “moral status” of the embryo although it is mentioned numerous times throughout the essay. Does it simply refer to the “value” we place upon it, or does it imply the principle of right and wrong?

Carr would like to see more position statements coming from the church on this issue. I am not sure this would be very helpful since any statement such as this is formulated by a small group of people, and it merely represents a consensus among that select group and not necessarily the church at large, especially when there is a wide range of beliefs and opinions on the subject. I am equally uncertain if Adventist medical students really “need clear position statements from their church as they personally work out their own professional practice standards.” In the same vein, I wonder how we would determine what an “authentic” Seventh-day Adventist position is on this or any other subject.

On the question of when life begins, it is obvious to me that one cannot turn to the scriptures for an easy answer because practically any position can be defended with cer-

tain passages as Carr demonstrates. We cannot turn to the Bible for answers to questions the biblical writers didn’t ask. It is greatly puzzling to me, however, as to how Carr is able to make the following statements: “More importantly to the moral status placed on the developing embryo is the implantation in the uterine wall which establishes pregnancy. Indeed, if a line is to be drawn, this is where it should be; life begins at implantation in the women’s uterus.”

From a medical point of view, pregnancy is established when pregnancy hormone (HCG) is elevated above non-pregnant level. Although this normally happens in the uterine lining, there are situations when this occurs outside the uterus. Therefore, to insist that a pregnancy is not established unless it has safely implanted in the uterine wall does not appear to be an acceptable position.

Loma Linda University’s guidance document on embryonic stem cell research contains the same misinformation in asserting that “many contraceptives act by preventing [natural embryos] from implanting in the uterus.” It is certainly true that the human reproductive process is not very efficient and many fertilized ova will ultimately lead to pregnancy failure naturally. However, an assumption that “we cannot and should not expect medical technologies that assist in human reproduction and research to be more efficient than nature itself” is an incorrect one, in that assisted reproductive technology is rapidly advancing to the point that it is becoming more efficient than nature itself. One must look elsewhere for a better reason.

Finally, the SDA Guidelines on Abortion state that “prenatal life is a magnificent gift of God.” Should we also apply this statement in situations where pregnancy occurs as a result of incest or rape? For those who are involved in such a tragedy, it can hardly be seen as a gift, let alone a magnificent one.

I certainly appreciate Dr. Carr’s attempt to formulate an ethical framework in dealing with this highly divisive and controversial issue. The fact that we are engaged in such a dialogue is a positive sign of life.

PAUL EUN, MD

Seattle, Washington

Mark Carr Responds

First let me offer appreciation for your very thoughtful response to my article. It is substantive and free of polemical attack, thank you!

Moral status is a term that is used in ethics/bioethics to

refer, as you put it, to the value placed upon whatever entity we are focusing upon.

Of course, in the tradition of Protestantism you are correct to question the idea of authenticity and consensus. But the effort to identify the broad parameters of both authenticity and consensus should be embraced, in part, because the opposite is much worse.

My point is that for Adventism the target area is not pinpoint small, but neither is it simply anywhere on the wall. There is such a thing as a non-authentic SDA view, even if I would also seek to identify a range of beliefs. As for my students, perhaps I underestimate their desire to know what their church teaches, but after thirteen years here at LLU I'll stand by my assertion.

I certainly grant the point that it is difficult to use scripture in such complex matters, but again, I'll stand by the church's efforts to do so. Just because there are no pointed passages doesn't mean scripture is irrelevant; it simply makes our work more difficult, and this is a task I would rather embrace than avoid.

If it is puzzling to you that I can use implantation as a morally important marker in the development of the embryo, it is doubly puzzling to me that the medical community can't settle on a definition of how and when pregnancy occurs. You use hormonal levels to define when pregnancy occurs. Others do not. As to the point of LLU's guidance document advancing misinformation, I suggest you take that up with LLU's Vice President of Research Affairs. As a theologian and ethicist I largely depend upon the expertise of others in my efforts to understand the biology of pregnancy. And the biology of pregnancy is important (though not determinative) when one takes a personalist perspective, as I do. For personalism the value of—the moral status of—the fetus increases as it develops from conceptus to implanted zygote, in part because the potential that the fetus will survive to term increases dramatically at the point of implantation.

On the other hand, the physicalist perspective attempts to avoid the moving target of medical science by arguing for inviolability at the time of fertilization. The physicalist tries to stand above the fray by placing moral status at a point on the timeline prior to all the fuss over if and when pregnancy occurs. My article tries to point out that the statements that the Adventist church has thus far produced move toward personalism and away from physicalism.

As I hoped to make clear in the article, the personalist

position of the sort that I hold (there is a range of perspective here) does not devalue the conceptus; the fertilized egg holds high moral status from the beginning. But in marginal cases where other values come in conflict with that of the fetus (as for instance, rape or danger to the mother's life) the situation may arise when the value of the fetus is less than inviolable. This is true even if we may hold that "prenatal life is a magnificent gift of God." As for looking to nature for moral standards, you are correct to criticize me. If and when Seventh-day Adventists use Natural Law ethics it certainly would not be because our faith tradition has formally used it in the past. Thanks again for your kindly response.

MARK CARR

Loma Linda, California

Old Soils

Regarding Graham Will's article about volcanic soils, there are many problems associated with old soils including determining if a particular layer is really a soil where plants grew over time in contrast to a rapidly deposited soil-like layer as might occur during a flood. [Researchers say] one person's soil becomes another's geological deposit. And New Zealand buried soils contain much less organic matter than their modern counterparts.

Likewise it is easy to forget how active soils are. The up and down movement of water and of organisms such as insects and earthworms through the soils can easily change the composition of organic matter and clays in a soil and its underlying sediments. Hence, the suggestion that the 2% clay found in 2000 years for the Taupo soil challenges a recent creation because older ash layers below have 80% clay may not be that significant. Water infiltrating down through porous sediments would be expected to transport clay to lower layers. A number of soil scientists point out that in the context of time, it is not so much the quantity of a particular entity at one time that is important, but it is the mean residence time (MRT) that is significant. In other words, you need to take into account how long, on average, something like a clay particle stays in one place.

Graham suggests that "there must have been at least 1000 years between the Taupo eruption and the one before it. That leaves only about 2000 years or less for several lower buried soils." He might be right, but dating of soils is problematic. Carbon-14 that is usually used in dating soils can be moved up or down as particles are moved up or down.

It also needs to be kept in mind that the scientific

literature sometimes reports fairly rapid soil development such as 45, 150, and 230 years. I have noted 30-foot saplings in just 8 years after the Kapoho volcanic flow in Hawaii. Many factors can influence rates of soil development, and moisture seems very important.

Graham further suggests that the soil data “support C14 dating of 50,000 plus years.” However, when you read scientific articles with titles such as “Problems in radiocarbon dating of soils” or “Twenty five years of radiocarbon dating soils: Paradigm of erring and learning,” it is not difficult to surmise that there are conundrums.

The fact remains that a lot of the published carbon-14 dates for New Zealand soils give dates that are older than the few thousand years of the biblical model. An interesting explanation for this within a recent creation context is that before the Genesis Flood the concentration of carbon-14 was very low, giving old dates. Right after the Flood the concentration gradually rose providing a sequence of gradually younger dates followed by the younger carbon-14 dates that reflect historical dates. Another explanation may be the dilution of carbon-14 in lower layers by carbon-12 or -13 originating from “old” carbon-14 weak gases and/or minerals, resulting in older dates. There are many things that we do not yet know about soils and their dates. Presently any firm conclusions are likely premature.

ARIEL A. ROTH
*Emeritus Director
 Geoscience Research Institute
 Loma Linda, California*

Graham Will Responds

In my paper I make a plea for SDA students of faith and science to have regular dialogue. It is good to see Ariel commenting on my paper. In reply I would like to make the following points.

1. Ariel makes the point that some soil look-a-likes may be produced by a flood action, or in other cases some observers may consider them geological deposits. To me the soils and paleosols (buried soils) that I was dealing with in the Rotorua area were true soils. At the site where Photo 1 in my paper was taken, I spent many years of research into the soil profile's capacity to supply adequate nutrition for successive crops of fast growing pine trees. This involved the inspection of many soil pits, the laboratory chemical and physical analysis of soil layers and pot trials growing pine

seedlings. I have no doubts in my mind that I was dealing with a succession of soils developed over a considerable period of time from a succession of volcanic eruptions. There is no evidence at all of any flood in the area.

2. Ariel discusses the movement of clay particles down a soil from layer to layer. That could not have happened in the case of the layers I refer to as having 80% clay. I should have made it clear that these layers are top soils that have developed in material from the last eruption in that area which is well north of Rotorua near Auckland.

3. Mention is made by Ariel of particles moving up or down in soils. The samples taken for carbon-14 dating in the paper by Vucetich and Pullar that I quote were peat, wood or charcoal. These are most unlikely to move.

4. Carbon-14 dating may raise questions—this is not in my field. However, when I look in my own field of Soil Science I see the evidences I raise in my paper—multiple paleosols, high levels of secondary clay, etc. These are topics that I feel should receive further study by our church.

GRAHAM WILL
Rotorua, New Zealand

Responding to Past Letters

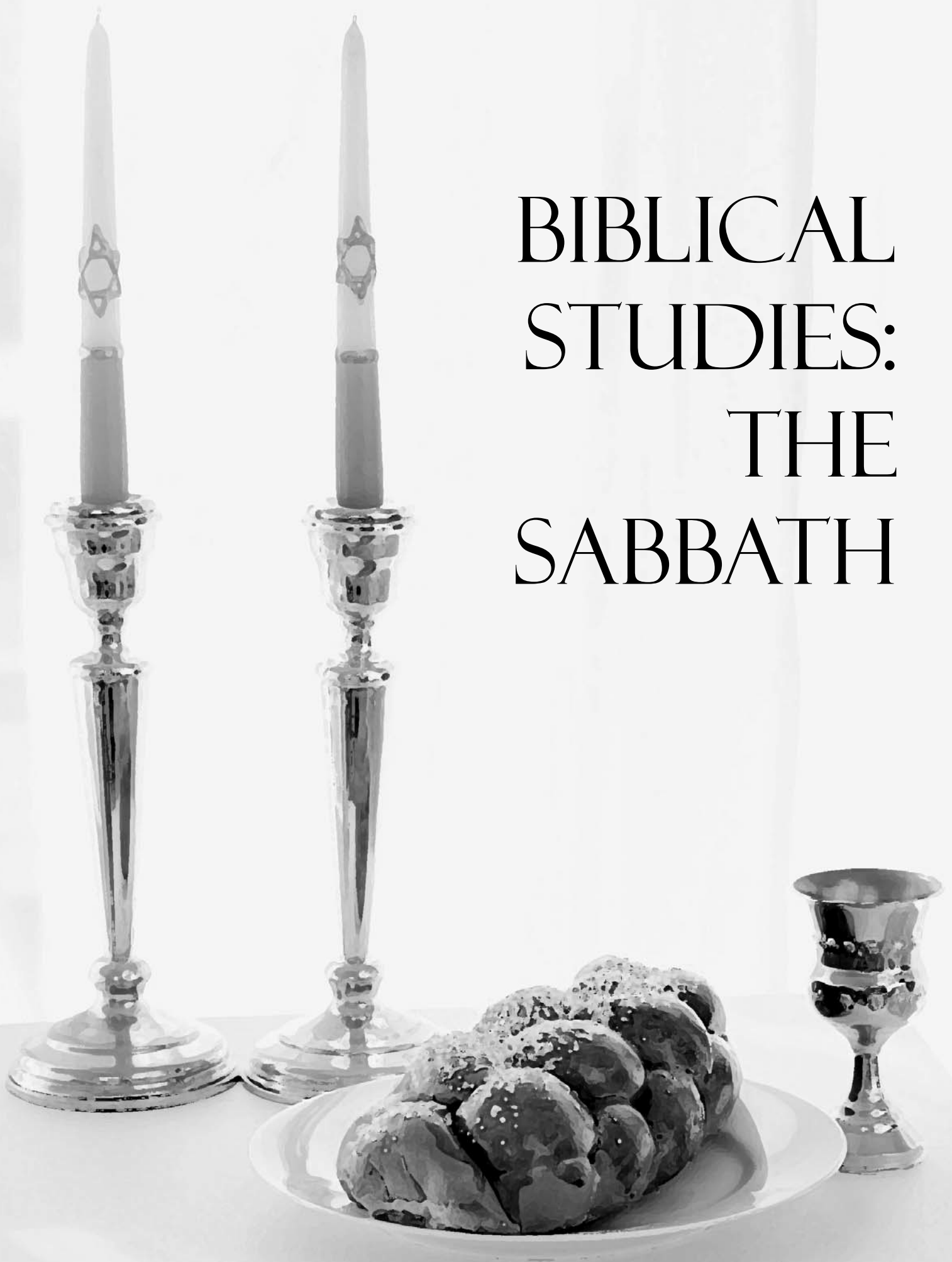
We regret that Dr. McMahon's letter (Fall 2010) seems to miss the point of our article, which was intended to reflect a close reading of the actual Hebrew text of Genesis 1:1–2:4a. Nowhere did we imply, nor do we believe, that the original hearers of

this account of Creation could have conceived of millions or billions of years. Indeed, there is no evidence that they had the mathematical notation or the vocabulary with which to conceptualize such vast periods of time. Instead, our intention was to convey the results of what is sometimes called a “close reading” of the extant Hebrew text, and thus to carry the conversation beyond

Continued on page 76...



BIBLICAL STUDIES: THE SABBATH



The Sabbath and God's People | BY GERALD WHEELER

Many years ago I became interested in tracing the theme of God's people through Scripture. To my surprise, it led to a greater understanding of the Sabbath. The concept of people and nation presented in Scripture would lead many to assume that Jews were by definition descendents of Abraham. But that is not how the Bible depicts God's people.

Consistently Scripture reveals how a group of what are non-Israelites at one point in time are later regarded as Israelites. The Gibeonites, for example, return after the exile as fully "Jews" (Neh. 3:7, 8). Others, while not specifically relabeled as Jews in Scripture, would still have become so. The elites of the conquered city of Jerusalem, for example, would have become the elites of the Davidic monarchy. David's bands of Philistine and other mercenaries would have become assimilated into Israelite society. In time they and their descendants would have regarded themselves as fully Israelites. It was a trend that goes all the way back to the time of Abraham. Abraham was a tribal chieftain who could command an army of retainers comparable to that of many of the kings and rulers of his time (Gen. 14:14).¹ All of his servants and retainers would have considered themselves members of his family even if they were not blood-related to the patriarch.² They all belonged to the household of Abraham.

As I followed this pattern of the growth of God's people through absorbing non-Israelites,³ I noticed another motif that frequently accompanied the theme of peoplehood, par-



Abraham and the Angels, Rembrandt 1630

ticularly during times when that identity faced threats: the Sabbath. Scripture constantly connects the concept of peoplehood with Sabbath.

God created the first human beings and then rested on the Sabbath, establishing a thematic pattern tying peoplehood with Sabbath that I believe continues throughout the rest of the Bible. Not only did the Lord create people in the first place, but the Sabbath also symbolizes, in addition to the original creation, his power to preserve or restore them. People and Sabbath thus become as it were the two sides of a single conceptual coin.

When human beings rebelled, God did not abandon them. He still sought a people for himself. After the Flood he called Abram to begin that people anew. Eventually his people went into Egypt, where slavery almost destroyed them. They forgot who they were. The Lord had to instill in them a sense of identity as his people. As he led



them through the wilderness he assured them that he would care for them through the regular gift of manna (Ex. 16:13–36). Their obedience to the manna cycle and their rest on the Sabbath became a test of their acceptance of God as their Lord and they themselves as his people. At Sinai God declared them “a holy nation” (Ex. 19:6). They now existed only because he had delivered them from the bondage and the chaos of slavery (Ex. 20:2; Deut. 5:15). He had created them as a people anew. There he proclaimed the Ten Commandments, including the Sabbath commandment. Once again observance of the Sabbath symbolized their acknowledgment of their peoplehood.

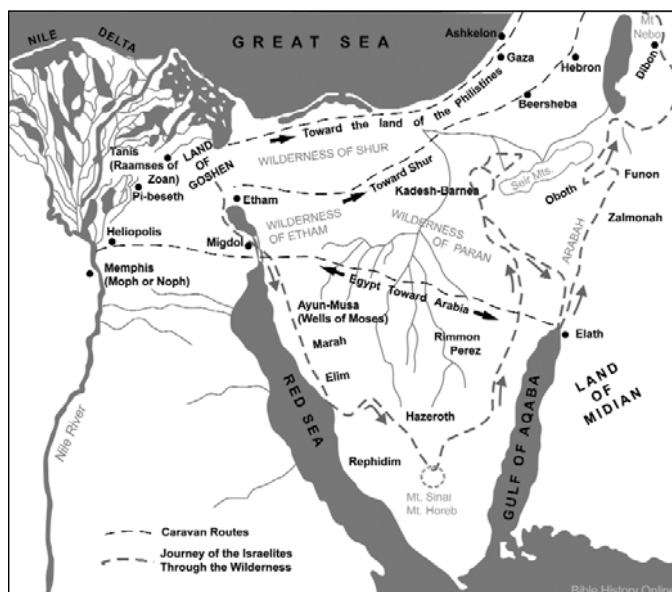
Not only was the Sabbath prominent in the formation of God’s people, it also surfaces in Scripture when they face the threat of destruction, assimilation, or dispersion. For example, 2 Kings 11 tells how Athaliah, the queen mother of Judah’s King Ahaziah and daughter of Ahab and Jezebel of Israel, seized control of Judah after her son’s death. She tried to destroy all members of the royal family. But Ahaziah’s sister, Jehosheba, managed to save Ahaziah’s son, Joash, and hid him in the Temple precincts for six years. In the seventh year (an interesting echo of Creation week) Jehoiada, the high priest, staged a coup to remove the queen from power and place Joash on the throne. The coup took place on the Sabbath (2 Kings 11:5–9). One could dismiss the reference to Sabbath as just an explanation for how Jehoiada could move larger numbers of soldiers around without attracting suspicion, but one must keep in mind biblical literary style. It is very terse and every word counts.⁴ The biblical author would not have mentioned something unless he had a point to make with it. The Bible is literature, and literature encodes much of its messages in allusions as well as imagery.

Furthermore, Scripture rarely mentions on what day something happens. The reference to Sabbath is especially significant when we take into consideration that after the execution of Athaliah, Jehoiada made “a covenant, between

the Lord, the king, and people, that they should be the Lord’s people” (verse 17). By mentioning the Sabbath along with the establishment of a covenant, the biblical author directs our attention back to the Sinai experience.⁵ The people whom Athaliah had almost destroyed through her pagan activities God now reconstitutes and brings back into renewed relationship with him.

Amos 8 reports that materialism and economic abuse had become rampant in the northern kingdom. In their desire for gain they could not wait until the Sabbath had ended to resume their business activities. Scripture contrasts Israel’s covenant with God and with each other symbolized by the Sabbath with the self-destructive practices that were now tearing God’s people apart and bringing them to an end (Amos 8:2).

The book of Isaiah shows how resident aliens and eunuchs, both regarded as outsiders or at least second-class citizens, can through Sabbath observance become part of God’s people (Isa. 56). Sabbath observance also forms part of the prophet’s discussion of true worship (Isa. 58), and true worship consists of a proper relationship with God and with fellow humanity—a sense of identity as his people. Isaiah also declares that God’s people will go into exile because of their national rebellion, but when he restores them with the rest of humanity in a new earth, they will from Sabbath to Sabbath worship the Lord (Isa. 66:23). Then, just before the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon, the prophet Jeremiah also emphasizes the Sabbath (Jer. 17:19–27). Judah



Route of the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt.



Joash crowned King

faced extinction as a nation and even as a people. If they would honor the Sabbath, however, Jerusalem would be inhabited forever (verses 24–26). But they refused to listen to the prophet and went into captivity.

In Ezekiel God sketches the history of his people before announcing that he will restore Israel, bringing them back from exile (Eze. 20). Twice he mentions that the Sabbath was a sign or symbol of his relationship to them as a people (verses 12, 20). Because they profaned the Sabbath and rejected the covenant he had made with them, God had to shatter their national identity by dispersing them among the nations (verses 23, 24). When some did return from Babylonian captivity, the Sabbath again made its appearance in Scripture. As Nehemiah worked to rebuild the identity of religious life in Jerusalem (religion was one of the most important aspects of all ancient self-identity), he found that its inhabitants, in league with the pagan people around them, had turned the Sabbath into just another market day (Neh. 13:15–22). Furthermore, traders from Tyre had apparently, as was their widespread practice, established a mercantile colony in Jerusalem (verse 15).⁶ All this would have drawn the people, especially the elites, into the socioeconomic fabric of the Phoenician world.

The context of the incident is the danger of assimilation that threatens the people of Jerusalem. Non-Israelites were moving into the city and even the sacred Temple precincts themselves (verses 1–9). Many of God's people, including one of the sons of the high

priest, had non-Israelite wives (verses 23–30). The children could not even speak their fathers' language (language is also a vital part of any group's self-awareness). In ancient Mediterranean culture, children during their first few years were raised within the sphere of women,⁷ especially among elites as society became less egalitarian with the rise of urban environments. While boys would be dramatically (and painfully) torn from this comfortable existence at about age eight so as to bring them into the world of men, they would have still been powerfully and permanently shaped by their woman-dominated early years. The children of Yahud's leaders were being culturally and religiously shaped by their non-Yahwistic mothers. As a result, God's people faced the very real danger of vanishing as an identifiable body. To stop the destructive process, Nehemiah stressed the Sabbath as a symbol of their identity as God's people and of their allegiance to him.

By New Testament times God's people had learned the importance of Sabbath to their identity. But whereas they had once ignored it, they now swung to the other extreme. Instead of it being a protection, they had transformed it into a potential danger. The rules and practices that had developed surrounding the Sabbath had become in many ways barriers to the continuing growth of God's people. It is interesting that Jesus repeatedly confronted two aspects of the Judaism of his time that had by then made it more difficult for Jews to interact with Gentiles and thus lead



Returning from exile



Nehemiah, the Queen's cup bearer

them to become part of God's people: Sabbath practices and food regulations.⁸

The close connection in Scripture between the themes of peoplehood and Sabbath makes one wonder if, for example, in the repeated calls by God in the book of Revelation for his people to come out of Babylon, we should hear echoes of the other side of the coin: the power of the Sabbath to restore and preserve his people. It is, I believe, a topic to consider exploring. ■

References

1. Walton, John H., Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove, ILL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 46.
2. This is not universalism. God's plan was for voluntary response to the divine grace revealed through the lives of his human representatives. Individuals and whole peoples could and did reject the offer. Unfortunately, ancient Israel did not fulfill their intended role, and the church inherited it. But God's Old Testament people did numerically expand much more than we have traditionally thought. For a number of years I worked on a long article tracing the theme of peoplehood through Scripture and how Israel incorporated others. It has now vanished into that abyss of forgotten projects.
3. God called His chosen people to represent him and bring all nations to him, a theme dominant in Isaiah and the other prophetic books. The nations would become one in their worship of the true God.

We see a similar parallel in the book of Revelation.

4. See, for example, the classic study by Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).
5. Verse 19 of the parallel account in 2 Chron. 23 mentions the gatekeepers that the high priest stationed to prevent anyone unclean from entering the Temple precincts, an echo of the setting of bounds around Mount Sinai (Ex. 19).
6. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, p. 482.
7. Matthews, Victor H., and Don C. Benjamin, *Social World of Ancient Israel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 27–29; Daniel I. Block, "Marriage and Family in Ancient Israel," in Ken. M. Campbell, ed., *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World* (Downers Grove, ILL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 76, 77.
8. Paul would deal with the social problems created by food and meal issues.

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The Apocalypse of Esdras (Nehemiah); Ethiopia, ca. 1350-1450 / Shoyen Collection

What Can Adventism Learn from the Jews About the Sabbath? | BY JACQUES B. DOUKHAN



Rabbi Howie Stein, left, sits with students and faculty at a weekly Shabbat dinner at Grinnell College.

Why Should Adventists Learn from the Jews about the Sabbath?

A Historical Reason

The anti-Semitic rejection of the seventh-day Sabbath by traditional Christianity played a crucial role in the Jewish-Christian separation (see Samuel Bacchiocchi for the early Christian testimony and Mordechai Arad for the early-rabbinic testimony). The rediscovery of the Sabbath by Christians should, therefore, oblige them to reconnect with the Jews in their quest about the Sab-

bath. Also the Jews have a much longer historical experience of the Sabbath than Seventh-day Adventists. Paradoxically, although the Adventists have now become the most numerous human group keeping the Sabbath, the Sabbath still remains in the world a testimony associated with the Jews. And as a result, the Jewish testimony about the Sabbath sounds much louder in the world than the one by SDAs. Still today when we say "Sabbath," people generally think "Jews." The Sabbath has been defined as "the essence of Judaism" (Abraham Heschel).

A Theological-Philosophical Reason

Unlike Greek/philosophical thinking which reaches truth *directly* through the rational or spiritual process, Hebrew (biblical) thought reaches truth only through the necessary testimony of the other human person. For in Greek thought, the truth is essentially an abstract concept, and one may have access to it by oneself; in Hebrew thought, on the other hand, the truth is essentially related to a historical event or to a historical person; it is essentially an experience. Thus, from biblical Israel to the incarnation of Jesus Christ, humans needed the testimony of other humans to have access to the divine truth (see Claude Tresmontant, *Essay on Hebrew Thought*). Seventh-day Adventists' often-claimed argument that the Sabbath came from God from the event of creation, even before Sinai, to justify their independence from the Jews is therefore suspect. The pious direct reference to God is presumptuous, denying the above biblical principle of human dependence and may in fact disguise the old anti-Semitic prejudice: they do not want to have anything to do with the Jews, precisely the motivation which led the early Christians to reject the Sabbath (see among others Bacchiocchi's dissertation, and more recently Sigve Tonstad's *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day*).

Question: Celebrate Versus Keep?

Once Adventists have come to the truth of the Sabbath whether by themselves through the genius of their spiritual enquiry or through the humble remembering of the Jewish testimony, is there something about the Sabbath that they might have left behind? What is it that SDAs could learn from the Jews which they have not yet learned or not yet so well understood?

We may ask ourselves the question: Why do Adventists come across as "keeping" the Sabbath in contrast to the "celebrating" of the Jews? Indeed for Jews, "the primary aim of Shabbat is to create an atmosphere of pleasure and fulfillment" (Irving Greenberg, *The Jewish Way*, p. 163). This primary mitzvah of the Sabbath is derived by the rabbis from Isa 58:13: "call the Shabbat a delight [*oneg*]." I suppose this Adventist accent on the "keeping" rather than on the "celebrating" is due to the Christian setting of Seventh-day Adventists, who feel the need to defend their position against other Christians: Adventists keep the seventh-day Sabbath while the other Christians have lost it since they

are Sunday keepers. In fact, if you ask a Seventh-day Adventist, "What is Sabbath for you?" He/she will most probably answer, "It is not Sunday." This accent on the "keeping" belongs also to the Adventist's concern to be obedient to God's Law rather than to the tradition of men. The vertical, holy dimension of keeping the commandment is here emphasized at the expense of the human dimension of celebrating and enjoying.

In this paper, I will try to suggest, then, by reference to the Jewish testimony of the Sabbath, a lesson of celebration and enjoyment of the Sabbath which SDAs could learn from the Jews. I will do it around what I have identified as the five main categories of the Jewish celebration/enjoyment of the Sabbath, namely, (1) beauty, (2) food, (3) relationship, (4) grace, (5) hope.

1. Beauty

The experience of the Sabbath is (should be) first of all an aesthetic, sensual experience, something we enjoy aesthetically through all our senses. This involves the visual senses: the beauty of your home and of the house of prayer, the lighting of the candles, the special setting of the table with a nice tablecloth and the finest silver and china, the flowers, dressing in nice clothes, etc. This involves the auditive senses: music and poetry. This



Beauty and candlelight

involves olfactive senses: the fragrance of myrtle or other aromatic herbs we smell as the hors d'oeuvres for our meal. The enjoyment of beauty is the first mitzvah, the first commandment-requirement for the Sabbath. Yet, beauty is not just the first chronological apprehension of the Sabbath experience, the first immediate one; it will also always remain included in all the other categories of enjoyment. For beauty provides the continuous environment for all the rest of the experiences that take place on Sabbath.

The Seventh-day Adventist Application

Making the Sabbath beautiful is consistent with the SDA affirmation of the faith in Creation. How can we proclaim the message of Creation (Rev 14:7) and not make our homes, our church, and our Sabbath worship services beautiful? How can we sing a hymn with no poetry in it or with a miserable musical quality and claim to honor the Sabbath? It seems, indeed, that the aesthetic concern associated with Sabbath is not a priority in SDA thinking, which tends to focus on the correctness of the doctrinal truth of the Sabbath (the right day) rather than on the beauty of its experience. Paradoxically, by missing that experience of beauty, we may miss the essence of the doctrinal truth. In other words, a Sabbath lived in an ugly environment without the sensitivity of the beautiful is inconsistent with the very purpose of the Sabbath which is supposed to revive in our minds and in our bodies the sense of the beauty of Creation.

2. Food: The Taste of Shabbat

The food is the most important ingredient for the sanctification of Shabbat. The ancient rabbis tell us that through eating the Shabbat foods we experience a "taste" of the Garden of Eden. Their unique aroma, their taste, is something that cannot be duplicated.

The enjoyment of food is so important that it is recommended that one eat little on Friday and thus begin the Sabbath with a great appetite and so enjoy the food all the

Savoring the gift of food



more. The mitzvah of enjoying food on Sabbath is also illustrated in this mystical reading of Exodus 16:25: "And Moses said: 'Eat this today; for today is Sabbath.'" The phrase can be read in Hebrew as "eat the day for the day is Sabbath," meaning eat the day itself! The Sabbath is supposed to be so delicious that it can only be experienced by biting into it and savoring its taste. Celebrating Sabbath implies, then, the enjoyment of special breads, drinks, and meals which are particularly associated with the Sabbath. It is, therefore, imperatively forbidden to fast on the Sabbath. Marcion¹ knew this requirement so well that he commanded his disciples to fast on the Sabbath in order to clearly mark his contempt of the Jewish Shabbat.

The Seventh-day Adventist Application

It is interesting to note that the first time the Hebrew verb *ntn* "give" occurs in connection to humans is in the Creation story with regard to the gift of food by the Creator (Gen 1:29). It is also noteworthy that when Daniel, a role model in Adventist tradition, needed to justify his particular vegetarian diet he quoted that very text (Dan 1:12). The Sabbath is also the anniversary of the gift of food. The celebration of Creation on Sabbath makes sense only if you enjoy good food on Sabbath. We need to review, here, our

**Celebrating community:
a school production
of *Fiddler on the Roof*.**



menus in our homes, our school cafeterias, and in the potlucks of our churches. As for the SDA habit of fasting on Sabbath, this is highly problematic. We cannot, on the one hand, praise the Lord for Creation and the gift of food and then fast: this is impolite and an insult to the God of Creation.

3. Relationship

Shabbat is the special moment when we enter into a special relationship with God. The first day of humanity was marked by this human-divine fellowship. "When we experience the holiness of Shabbat, we attain the highest levels of *da'at*, of knowing God. And the highest level of this *da'at*-consciousness that we can achieve is the realization that God is altogether incomprehensible" (Nachman of Breslov, *Likutey Moharan* II, 83). By referring to the notion of *da'at*, the Hebrew concept of "knowledge," the rabbis have in mind a special relationship with God, a relationship of love. The association of the Sabbath with the word *qadasb* ("holy") is significant in that connection: the basic idea is that this day is set apart for a special relationship of love with God. And yet this vertical relationship is accompanied with a horizontal relationship. It is not fun to celebrate alone. Even celebrating with God implies being with people. This is why the Shabbat is the day when we meet

together with the community, and we enjoy the company of friends and the family. Learning, eating, and laughing together is a major activity of Shabbat. I have warm memories of these Friday evenings when we gathered together around the great Shabbat meal and my beautiful mother dressed in her blue Shabbat apron; turbulent brothers and sisters were laughing and discussing passionately while my father was praying and striving to maintain some sense of holiness.

It is also a tradition for married couples to celebrate Shabbat with sexual intercourse. It is a special Shabbat mitzvah to make love on Friday night. Kabbalists teach that on this evening the holy union of the masculine justice of God and the Shechinah, the feminine grace side of God, occurs.

The biblical key texts to read on Sabbath are Proverbs 31:10-31 and the Song of Songs, two texts which promote and exalt conjugal relationship.

The Seventh-day Adventist Application

The Bible supports the paradigm just suggested. It is interesting that the Sabbath section (seventh) in the first Creation story (Gen 2:1-3) parallels the couple's section (seventh) in the second Creation story (Gen 2:18-24). Proverbs 8:30, which marks the seventh section of the reflection on Wisdom in Creation, corresponds to the Sabbath section of the Creation story, emphasizing enjoyment. The words "delight" and "rejoicing" are both repeated twice. The concept is first introduced as a daily experience, an allusion to God's daily responses to His daily creations, "God saw that it was good." The Hebrew word for "good" (*tov*) could be translated "delightful," "enjoyable." Then the words "delight" and "rejoicing" are focusing on the living beings and especially the sons of men. It is noteworthy that the Sabbath commandment is located in the center of the Decalogue, sandwiched between the section dealing with the relationship with God (commandments 1-3) and the section dealing with the relationship with humans (commandments 5-10) and functions as the hinge of the two sections. The Sabbath is itself the only commandment

which explicitly refers to both relationships, with God and with humans (see my article in *Shabbat Shalom*). The quality of the vertical relationship (your religion) depends on the quality of the horizontal relationship; and reversely, you may relate to the human other insofar as you have learned to relate to the divine Other.

It may happen sometimes in our zeal for God that we are so concerned to do God's holy work of the Sabbath that we may neglect to see and enjoy the wonder of God's presence and to even notice and enjoy the human face of each other. We need to learn the value of taking time to *be* with the Other and with each other instead of just *do* holy things together.

4. Grace

Sabbath is the time in touch with eternity, the time when we have time. The time of the Sabbath day is expanded beyond the borders of the normal day. Jews begin this holy time before sunset and end it after sunset. On Sabbath we are required to change the pace, to walk slowly and with smaller steps. It is forbidden to hurry (Shabbat 113ab). On Sabbath we sleep longer, and we stop doing things. For it is the day that reminds us of God doing things for us who did nothing. Sabbath is the day of receiving and enjoying what God has done for us. The 39 categories of work prohibited on Sabbath are modeled on the types of works involved in the building of the Temple (Shabbat 49b), whose construction is itself modeled on Creation. By putting the doing of the week in the perspective of the not doing of the Sabbath, Jewish tradition suggests a specific theology of work: it is not just the day of rest we deserve for our hard work during the week ("Thank God it's Friday!") to refresh us in order to ensure a more efficient work. The Sabbath is the goal, the ultimate purpose of the week. The Hebrew naming of the days reflects this whole philosophy. Weekdays do not have any identity; they only exist in connection to the Sabbath. Sunday is called the first day toward the Sabbath; Monday is called the second day toward the Sabbath, and so forth. Only the Sabbath has a name and exists by itself. The Sabbath is not an appendix, a weekend at the end of the week. This is the most important time of the week, its climax toward which the whole week is oriented. What could we do, what could we give, then, to make the Sabbath, Sabbath? "Nothing!" This is not what we do or what we give, our contribution, that makes the Sabbath; this is what He does, what He gives that

makes the Sabbath Sabbath. This view has been registered in the Jewish liturgy of Sabbath. The Jewish prayer of the *Amidah*, which is recited every day, changes on Sabbath. While the heart of that prayer during the weekdays is made of requests, on the Sabbath the requests have been replaced by praises and an emphasis is put on receiving. Sabbath morning is spent searching, studying, and commenting on the *parasha* of the week. The heart of the morning service is the Torah reading, which involves the whole congregation. On Sabbath afternoon in most Jewish traditions, we study and discuss chapters of the *Pirkey Avot* ("Ethics of the Fathers"). According to Jewish tradition, study is more important than prayer because when we pray we are speaking, while when we study God is speaking and we are receiving. Studying is then lived in Jewish tradition as an enjoyment that is a part of worship. The Talmud refers to learning as the great joy of the Shabbat: "Said Rabbi Gerachya: 'The Shabbat was only given for joy.' Said Rabbi Hagai: 'The Shabbat was only given for learning'" (*Pesiqta Rabbati*).

The Seventh-day Adventist Application

Adventists have not learned the value of receiving and enjoying the gift; they have been educated and programmed to do and to give and make sacrifices for God. On Sabbath Adventists are busy doing and giving. Sabbath is full of holy activities: missionary work, the choir, rehearsals, and all kinds of committees. As long as we do "good" and holy work, we think that this is appropriate on Sabbath. A misunderstanding of Jesus' approach to the Sabbath has even led some Adventists to believe that it is acceptable to do carpentry, repair plumbing, and clean houses on the Sabbath as long as it is doing



Joy and learning

“good” for God. I heard, as a justification for this approach, that this is the “Sabbath of the Gospel” versus the Sabbath of the Jews” (the phrasing already sounds suspect to me). This eagerness to do things for God on Sabbath goes against the lesson of Grace contained in the Sabbath: more important than what you do for God is what God does for you. Anyhow, these busy, holy activities keep us from enjoying the eternal quality of this time and from thinking and studying. For some reason studying (and thinking?) is not a value, or at least not a priority in Adventist tradition, certainly not an enjoyable experience. Even our Sabbath School sessions, the only moments when we are supposed to study and think, barely qualify as studying and thinking experiences. They are often the occasion for a pious bla bla bla poured at each other, full of self-centered testimonies and seasoned with superficial references to the Scriptures. No need to say that this trend goes against Adventist ideals which encourage, on the contrary, serious searching, learning, and thinking into the Word of God (See E.G. White, *Education*, 189).

5. Hope: Shabbat, a Foretaste of the Kingdom

The category of hope contains all the others; it will therefore take us to our conclusion. All the experiences of enjoyment and celebration associated with the Sabbath should take us beyond the present order and point to another order.

Jewish philosopher Hermann Cohen saw in the joy of the Sabbath “the symbol of the joy” that will characterize messianic times (*Religion der Vernunft* 540). The mitzvah of enjoyment of the Sabbath is so important in Jewish tradition that it is given as a condition for the kingdom of God (see “The Bone of the Three Shabbat Meals”).

Jewish tradition teaches that on Shabbat one gets a supplement of soul (*nefesh yeteira*), which could be translated “a supplement of enjoyment,” and gives a sense of the other order. According to a rabbinic tradition, the two times are so close in quality that if Israel would be able to live and enjoy only one Sabbath completely, then the Messiah would come (*Exodus Rabbah* 25:12).

The Seventh-day Adventist Application

Seventh-day Adventists already carry this association of ideas in their name. It is not an accident that the Sabbath plays an important role in SDA eschatology. The associa-

tion of Sabbath which emphasizes the value of enjoyment of Creation with the hope in the new heavens and earth should teach us the lesson of the necessity of that tension. On the one hand, the Sabbath focuses on the value and the beauty of this creation and urges us to receive and enjoy God’s gifts of creation, to love each other and to take care of this creation on earth. On the other hand, the Sabbath obliges us to think and live according to the categories of God and inspires in us a new song from above, which nurtures our dream of the other Kingdom in heaven. The Sabbath should, therefore, be conjugated with two accents. The accent on “keeping” should be heard in harmony with the accent of “celebration.” It is certainly significant that we have two versions of the Sabbath commandment in the Scriptures. One urging to “keep” (Deut. 5), which implies the duty for holiness within the vertical reference to the divine order; and the other urging to “remember” (Exodus 20), which “connotes commemoration of the Sabbath as a day of celebration” (Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy* 1–11, 302) and implies full enjoyment of our humanness as a gift from the Creator (Eccl. 8:15).

According to Jewish tradition, the two versions of the Sabbath were heard simultaneously, so that one could not distinguish the one from the other. For one cannot celebrate Sabbath without keeping it, and one should not keep it without celebrating it. In fact, the two experiences of “keeping” and “commemorating-celebrating” should be lived in close connection to each other. The human existential experience and the holy eschatological hope should walk hand-in-hand and not deny or despise each other. When Seventh-day Adventists will be able to live that tension completely, then the Messiah will come. ■

Editor’s Note

1. According to *Wikipedia*, Marcionism refers to an “early Christian dualist belief system that originated in the teachings of Marcion of Sinope at Rome around the year 144...Marcion believed Jesus Christ was the savior sent by God and Paul of Tarsus was his chief apostle, but he rejected the Hebrew Bible and Yahweh.”

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My Celtic Sabbath Journey with Esther, Lady MacBeth, and St. Brigid | BY BONNIE DWYER



Lady MacBeth by Gabriel Cornelius von Max, 1885

As a journalist, rather than an academic, I often find that significant stories emerge out of comments made as asides or tips from a well-placed source. And thus it was for my journey into Celtic Sabbath-keeping that began from an aside by a character in a novel. Many books and miles later it turned into a significant new appreciation of history and the Sabbath.

The tickets to the Oregon Shakespeare production of *Macbeth* came with a reading recommendation—the novel *Lady Macbeth* by Susan Fraser King.¹ “If you think you know Lady M, think again,” promised the blurb on the front cover. The excellent production of the play that I had just seen heightened my interest. I had to buy the novel.

Written in the first person voice of Gruadh inghean Bodhe mac Cineadh mhic Dubh, who was the wife of Macbeth and Queen of Scots, the pages come alive with historical details in the capable hands of author Fraser King. No, this is not the manipulative Shakespearean character, and yes, there are surprises. For example, the loyalty of Gruadh to seventh-day Sabbath-keeping. That caught my attention.

Here is Lady Macbeth, the narrator of the novel, introducing the members of her household that includes the monk Drostan. “The monk is one of the Celi De, or Culdees, those who allow priests to marry and Sabbath to be celebrated on Saturdays, among other rebellions that delight me. In much else, Rome has nagged the Scottish church to its knees.”

That Sabbath statement stuck with me. Intrigued, I set off on a year-long quest to find out more about medieval Celtic Sabbath-keeping. What could those ancient people teach me about the practice? Esther de Waal had introduced me to the beauty of Celtic Christianity with her book *The Celtic Way of Prayer*, which I read as my fam-

ily traveled through Ireland in 2001.² “Absolute attention is prayer,” she wrote. “Look at anything long enough and something like revelation takes place.” Could there be a revelation about Sabbath by studying the Celts?

Significant other Adventists preceded me in this pilgrimage to the Ireland, Scotland and Great Britain of times past. In 1972, Leslie Hardinge published *The Celtic Church in Britain* in which he sought to identify those beliefs and practices which the Celtic believers professed before they were modified by seventh and eighth-century traditions from continental Europe.³ “The weight of this evidence tends to underline the fact that there existed fundamental and far-reaching differences between the Celtic and Roman Churches,” he says. He describes two of Ireland’s patron saints—Patrick and Columba—as seventh-day Sabbath keepers, citing incidents from the early biographies that were written about the saints.

Bryan W. Ball published *The Seventh-Day Men* in 1994, and a second edition came out at the end of 2009.⁴ This volume details the Sabbatarians and Sabbatarianism in England and Wales, 1600–1800, village by village. He includes the heroic stories of John Traske who founded the first Sabbath-keeping community in England and his wife Dorothy, who ended her days in prison, a martyr for the Sabbath.

In each of these books, reference is made to the Sabbath-keeping in early Irish Christianity. When I mentioned this to an historian friend, he expressed doubt that anyone could verify St. Patrick as a Sabbath-keeper. “Why are Adventists so keen on having the Celts be viewed as Sabbath-keepers,” he asked? Why was he so skeptical, I wondered? Even James Carroll, in *Constantine’s Sword*, talks about Christian seventh-day Sabbath-keeping before Constantine.⁵ With my friend’s comment as a challenge, my Celtic Sabbath journey via books continued with a very active Amazon.com account.

General interest in Celtic Christianity blossomed in the late 1990s. It became somewhat of a cottage industry with Thomas Cahill’s *How the Irish Saved Civilization*, the star best seller. But there were many more books: *The Celtic Way of Prayer*, *Celtic Evangelism*, *Celtic Spirituality*, *Celtic Christianity*, *Celtic psalters*, *The Spirituality of Celtic Saints*, spiritual journey tour books, but none on the Celtic Sabbath. In *Sounds of the Eternal: A Celtic Psalter* by J. Philip Newell, the former warden of Iona Abbey, he notes the similarities between Celtic spirituality and Jewish spirituality, includ-



ing the beautiful illuminations of Scripture in both traditions, but he says nothing in this book about the Celts and the Jews sharing a love for Sabbath.⁶ Why not? If Sabbath-keeping was a significant part of Celtic spirituality, why was it not talked about? Was it simply because the people writing were Sunday keepers who did not want to see this difference?

On, I went, to the histories, the lives of the saints, the monastery rule books. Because Brigid was the Saint that Lady Macbeth continually honored and spoke of in the Fraser King novel, I focused on her. Quickly, I learned that Brigid is the third of Ireland’s patron saints, Patrick and Columba being the others. Brigid lived from 453 to 524. Stories of her childhood emphasize her thoughtfulness of others. She would give her father’s possessions away to beggars, share food with hungry dogs or horses. Some say that she was baptized by St. Patrick and that he recognized what a special child she was. Mostly the stories of her life are miracle stories that seem ripped from the pages of the Bible with Brigid inserted as the heroine.

While Brigid was the abbess of the influential Kildare Monastery—a community that included both men and women—there are even indications that she may have had overlordship for other monasteries across Ireland. The stories from this period are of the princes and kings who came to seek her guidance and of the miracles she performed to save common servants and animals alike. Her community in Kildare was well known for its scriptorium, where beautifully illuminated manuscripts, similar to the *Book of Kells* were produced. Recently, the suggestion has even been made (on *Wikipedia*) that Kildare—not Iona or Kells—was the place where the famous *Book of Kells* was created. That assertion is possible because the exact location for the origin of this treasure is unknown. And the one historical description from that time period of an illustrated Gospel is of one that was produced at Kildare.

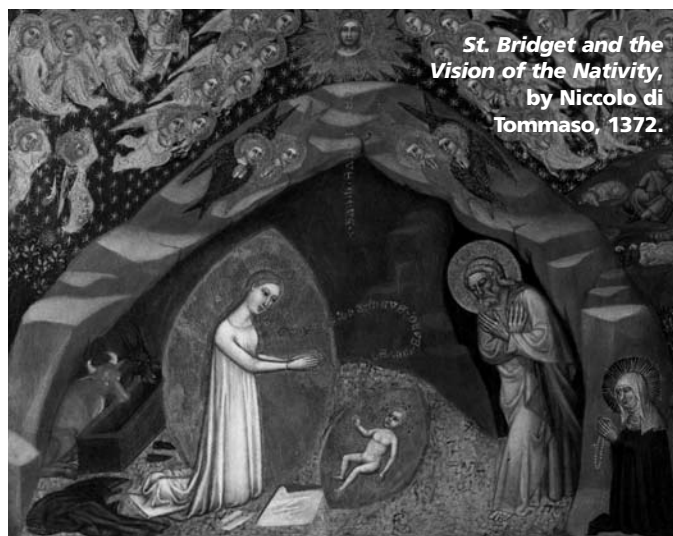
Brigid is always the first woman named as evidence of the equality of women in the Celtic Church, a feature that I found particularly attractive. In addition to her administrative skills in Kildare, there was also her missionary work that has inspired followings of her in Europe, Australia, and America, among Catholics and Protestants alike. A Methodist community in Minnesota probably has the most active web site about her. She is particularly known



Statue at St. Brigid's Catholic Church

for her emphasis on the importance of soul friends. Think of Jonathan and David, Paul and Barnabas, Ruth and Naomi.

One other aspect of Celtic life that Brigid is frequently used to illustrate is timelessness. For the imaginative Celts, fixing a story to a particular point in time was not significant. Therefore, in one



St. Brigid and the Vision of the Nativity, by Niccolo di Tommaso, 1372.

place you may read that St. Patrick died when Brigid was ten. In another you find her traveling to hear St. Patrick preach after she had become the abbess of Ardagh. There are even stories of her being present at the birth of Jesus, there to assist Joseph and Mary. Hers is a story of continuous miracles from her childhood to her death. She is said to have healed the lame, fed the multitudes, turned water into beer. She hung her cloak on a sunbeam.

While the historians of today may guard against conjecture and making things up, the writers of the lives of the saints felt no such compulsion. They borrowed freely, depending on their audience and the purpose of their story. It brings the details of their writings into question and makes it difficult to pin down facts.

The things unknown about Medieval Ireland are significant. Irish historian Daibhi O Croinin calls the fifth century all but lost.⁷ For example, he says that he would like to be able to state categorically where and when the *Book of Kells* was written and painted, and by whom, but cannot:

In fact, for all that we have come to know about early medieval Ireland, there is still the uncomfortable realization that few of our earlier doubts have been replaced with certainties. The body of evidence about early Ireland is extraordinarily large, but matching the individual pieces to make up a coherent picture is frustratingly difficult. Since historians do not like to admit what they do not know, this unpalatable state of affairs creates obvious difficulties for anyone who would write a history of the period. The urge to fill up the blank spaces by resort to conjecture is an occupational hazard with historians of all periods, but medievalists need to be especially on their guard against it.



St. Brigid's Cathedral in Kildare

Ahem, point taken. My wish to add seventh-day Sabbath-keeping to the life of St. Brigid may be strictly that—my wish.

Hagiography

Hagiography thus becomes a specific subject with which the Irish historian must come to terms. In her introduction to sources in "Early Christian Ireland," Kathleen Hughes writes:

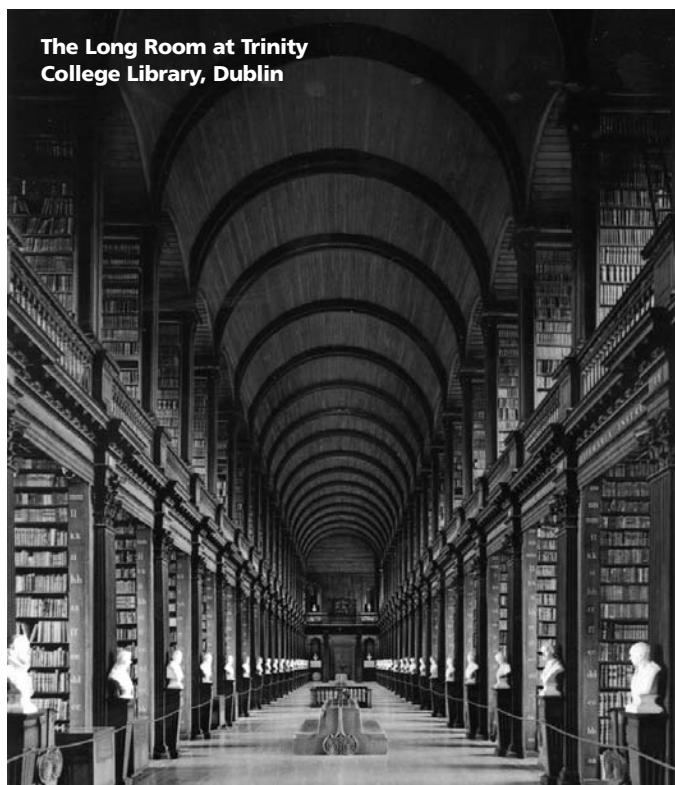
Hagiography is not history. The author is not concerned to establish a correct chronology. He is not interested in assembling and examining evidence and coming to a conclusion which takes all the evidence into account. He is rather writing the panegyric of a saint, stressing in particular his holy way of life and the supernatural phenomena which attended it. Sometimes the aim is didactic, sometimes more crudely financial. What he praises will depend on his audience and on the society for which he is writing. Hagiography will thus give reliable contemporary evidence about the aspirations and culture of a people.⁸

Hughes also notes that hagiographers were often influenced by secular storytellers, using exaggeration to excite laughter and borrowing pagan hero's attributes for the saint. "Given such conventions, it is the incidental information in the Lives, which is likely to be of most value....information about institutions, agriculture, social practices and the indirect evidence which reveals to us what it was the audience liked to hear."

Would those indirect references include comments about Sabbath-keeping? It is from the hagiography that Hardinge's assertions about St. Patrick are made. So, how should we treat his finding? The writers of the saints' lives shaped their evidence to fit their audience. Do we do the same? Does our desire to find Sabbath-keepers across time trump whatever else we find?

Time Controversies

Was the seventh-day Sabbath an issue in the Celtic Church? Digging into the historical sources, one does find discussion of a major church controversy over time,



**The Long Room at Trinity
College Library, Dublin**

but it had nothing to do with Sabbath. It concerned the correct date to celebrate Easter. Adventist authors Hardinge and Ball write extensively about the Easter controversy. And it is easy to read more about it in the Celtic documents that have been translated and compiled for general readership. The question that it raised in my mind was why there is not a similar detailed discussion of the correct day for Sabbath?

Hardinge suggests that the change from seventh-day Sabbath-keeping to Sunday happened gradually over time. For a period both were celebrated, but as the people of Ireland looked to Rome for leadership, Sunday became the chief day of worship. And perhaps he is right. But it is hard to know for sure. There is confusion about the days that is internal to the discussion. Consider this poem from the *Carmina Gadelica I*:

*"The poem of the Lord's Day, O bright God.
Truth under the strength of Christ always."*

*On the Lord's Day, Mary was born,
Mother of Christ of golden yellow hair,
On the Lord's Day Christ was born
As an honor to man . . .*

*The Lord's Day, the seventh day,
God ordained to take rest,
To keep the life everlasting,
Without taking use of ox or man,
Or of creature as Mary desired,
Without spinning thread of silk or of satin,
Without sowing, without harrowing, without reaping,
Without rowing, without games, without fishing,
Without going to the hunting hill,
Without trimming arrows on the Lord's Day,
Without cleaning byre, without threshing corn,
Without kiln, without mill on the Lord's Day.
Whosoever would keep the Lord's Day,
Even would it be to him and lasting,
From setting of sun on Saturday
Till rising of sun on Monday.*

(Carmichael, 1:150)⁹

On the fourth weekend of Easter this year, my husband and I made a pilgrimage to the land of the Celts. We visited the *Book of Kells* at Trinity College, Dublin,

went to Brigid's cathedral in Kildare, worshiped at four Irish cathedrals and the Dublin SDA Church. Would we be able to find evidence of Medieval seventh-day Sabbath worship during our brief seven-day trip?

No, is the simple answer. It was a rainy Saturday afternoon when we went to Kildare. Very rainy. When we walked into the cathedral there was only a docent present. No other tourists were around. And no, she had never heard of seventh-day Sabbath-keeping there.

The story that she had to tell was about the present congregation of 20 people who are charged with the upkeep of this beautiful Norman-era structure, operated by the Church of Ireland. There is also a Catholic congregation across town. The docent said that when the Catholics were renovating their church, the Church of Ireland con-

gregation shared their cathedral. And this was when just 100 miles to the north the Catholics and Protestants were shooting at each other. On Easter there continues a joint day of prayer where a progressive service is held in both churches.

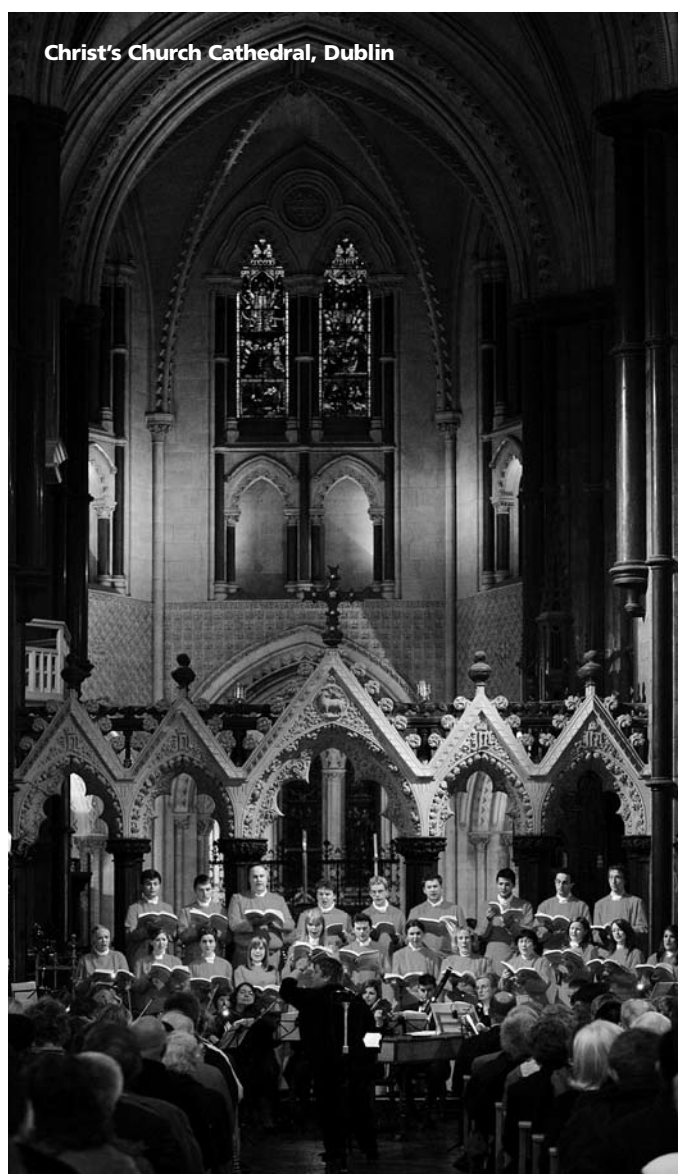
Perhaps the most memorable thing about the Kildare Cathedral to me was the fact that the gargoyles on the outside of the Church held books in their hands, as did the Saints in the stained glass windows. The importance of books to early Celtic Christianity is not to be denied.

And truth be told, this is the sort of “evidence” that I had hoped to find about Sabbath-keeping: overt love of the day that overflowed into the art, the poetry and prayers of the people. Celtic Christianity is marked by imagination, love of nature and a vibrant spirituality. Surely, if the Celts were Sabbath keepers it would be evident in those places.

The singular mentions of Sabbath-keeping tucked into the hagiography of a Saint's life, or other documents here and there that had prompted my quest were intriguing. I dreamed of more. I dreamed of Sabbath celebrations filled with the joy of Celtic music, infused with the rich spirituality of Celtic prayer, abbey life shaped by Sabbath-keeping.

Given my quest for knowledge of Sabbath-keeping, attending church services was my method for achieving spiritual insight while in Dublin. So we sought out every possible religious service. We began with Friday Evensong at Christ's Church, a Church of Ireland cathedral. The cathedral appeared empty when we walked in and took our seats ten minutes before the appointed hour. A few other tourists joined us before a small choir walked down the aisle singing. Glorious music filled the vaulted ceiling and empty spaces. Sabbath had begun.

In the morning we went to the Seventh-day Adven-



Christ's Church Cathedral, Dublin

tist Church. The vibrant international congregation was, that day, launching a second church across town, given the growing number of people in attendance. A visiting pastor from Brazil by way of Germany preached on the Gospel of John—a fitting text I thought, since I had just learned about the Celtic love of John while touring the Book of Kells exhibit earlier in the week (*Book of Kells, St. John, opposite page, left*). A young African woman led us in song, accompanied by an elderly white woman at the piano and a young teenage boy sitting at her side playing the flute. Our songs had none of the measured beauty of a cathedral choir, but there was much joy as we sang “There Shall be Showers of Blessings.” And when we walked out of the service, showers there were. The rain was coming down in buckets.

That was the afternoon we drove to Kildare to visit Brigid’s Cathedral. We also visited Brigid’s well, and by then the rain had tapered off. We got out and walked through the small park area surrounding the well. There were ribbons in the tree and other small personal items tied to the branches. Brigid’s life still speaks to the Irish.

On Sunday morning we went to the Pro Cathedral for the Catholic Mass, complete with a wonderful boys choir and priests swinging incense burners. The church was full. We learned that 2009–10 was the year of evangelism in the Catholic Church.

For Sunday Evensong we went to St. Patrick’s Cathedral, which is also a Church of Ireland congregation. In addition to choir music and readings, there was an urgent plea for money to help maintain the magnificent cathedral and its grounds which serve as a major park in the center of Dublin.

On Monday, we took a bus to Glendalough, home of St. Kevin, and a popular site for spiritual retreats. It was the first of May, Beltane, an Irish holiday. There were many visitors to this national historic site on a lake. As we walked the trail to see the cave where the hermit Kevin had lived, we heard singing at the lake below. We turned to watch a baptism by full immersion taking place.

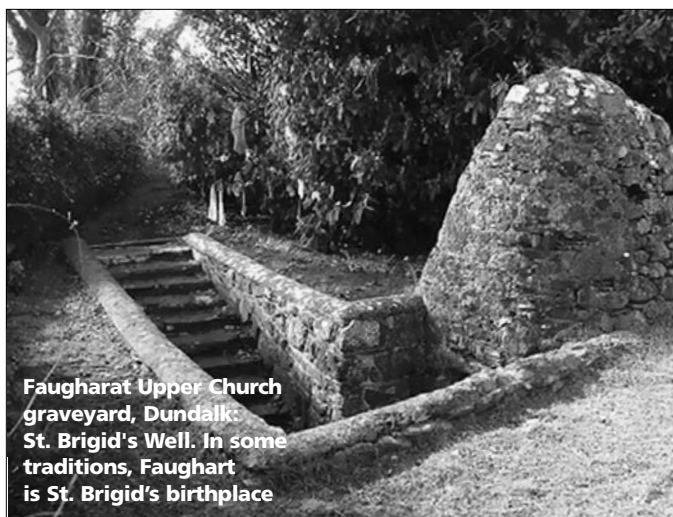
The docent at Glendalough did recommend excellent material on Medieval Irish history. But, alas, I did not find anything on Sabbath-keeping in those books, either. The one reference to sabbatarianism that I found in the books on Celtic spirituality came in a slim volume by the former warden of Iona, J. Philip Newell:¹⁰

The Celtic tradition, unlike the Calvinism that suppressed it in many parts of the Celtic world, is not sabbatarian in its perspective,” he wrote. “The emphasis is not on set apart times of rest, or so-called ‘holy’ days and ‘holy’ places that are distinct from every day and every place. Rather it encourages a type of restful awareness in everything that we do. It is about holding a stillness of perspective in the midst of busyness.

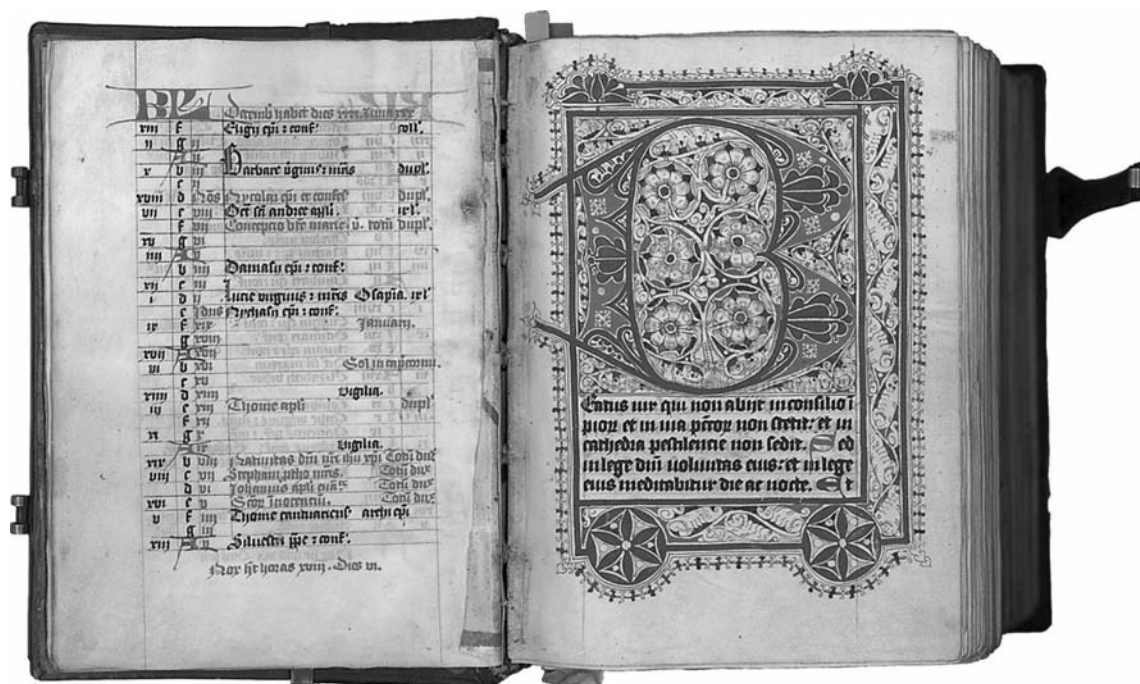
He shares a prayer as an example of how the whole of the Celtic day is committed to God:

*Bless to me, O God,
Each thing mine eye sees;
Bless to me, O God,
Each sound mine ear hears;
Bless to me, O God,
Each odour that goes to my nostrils;
Bless to me, O God,
Each taste that goes to my lips;
Each note that goes to my song,
Each ray that guides my way,
Each thing that I pursue,
Each lure that tempts my will,
The zeal that seeks my living soul,
The Three that seek my heart,
The zeal that seeks my living soul,
The Three that seek my heart.*

While my voyage to the Emerald Isle did not result in new evidence for Celtic Sabbath-keeping, what I found in my travels and through books about Celtic Christianity was inspiring. I found people who embraced the God of



**Faughar Upper Church
graveyard, Dundalk:
St. Brigid's Well. In some
traditions, Faughart
is St. Brigid's birthplace**



A 15-century breviary "of Bridgettine use" from Belgium, The Shoyen Collection

tucked away in Russia that held onto Sabbath. So when she got to America, I thought for sure there would be at least a paragraph on Seventh-day Adventists. But she did not go there. She chose, instead, to feature the work of the former president of Harvard and his thoughts on Sabbath- (Sunday-) keeping. No mention was made

creation, and who sought His presence in daily prayers. They loved words and cherished the Biblical writer John because of the way he connected words with the divine. They cherished, copied, and celebrated books, specifically the Bible. Their monasteries were the scriptoriums where the Gospel was not only copied but illustrated with detailed artistic renderings. Their spiritual art became one of the wonders of the ancient world. They were the light in the midst of the Dark Ages.

How disappointing not to find anything more than passing reference to their Sabbath-keeping. It is the same disappointment that I feel when I read contemporary books about the Sabbath and find no mention of Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath-keeping. *The Sabbath World: Glimpses of a Different Order of Time* by Judith Shulevitz was the latest disappointment.¹¹ I read it just before my trip to Ireland. The major media attention that it garnered had me stopping at Borders on my way home from work. I couldn't wait for Amazon to ship. Her thoughtful discussion of Sabbath and Sabbath-keepers had one glaring omission—Seventh-day Adventists. Samuel Bacchiocchi is mentioned once. There is also a sentence that acknowledged that Adventists have Saturday work issues, but that was it.

As Shulevitz moved through her historical look at Sabbath-keeping from Moses on Sinai to present-day America, I was intrigued by her description of small Jewish sects

of an entire denomination being birthed in the United States over the issue of Sabbath-keeping.

So, even when there is significant Sabbath-keeping, that fact can get lost. Thus, my appreciation for Sigve Tonstad and his book *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day*.¹² The word *Lost* in the title helped me reflect on the adventure of thinking, reading, traveling, and researching that I had been doing with the Celtic Sabbath. Between the Celts and Tonstad I now was wondering: How does Sabbath get lost—not only historically, but culturally, and personally? Why does the Sabbath get lost in spite of, or perhaps because of the safeguards that we place around it? What gets lost with it?

One important thing that seems to get lost in the Christian/Jewish consideration of the Sabbath is the ability to have an in-depth conversation about it. Sabbath and Sunday keepers both know the significance of their day of worship and see no reason to look for common ground. Tonstad writes, "As the Church increasingly embraces Sunday, the Sabbath sinks into oblivion almost unnoticed."

How do we lose Sabbath? What about the laws and rituals that have grown up around the Sabbath—to preserve it, of course? It is striking that those rules can be the source of losing Sabbath. In her *New York Times* review of Shulevitz's book on the Sabbath, Rebecca Newberger Goldstein writes about being a strict Sabbath keeper and

the maniacal activity that was required of her as a working mother to get everything prepared for Sabbath on Friday afternoon.¹³ She also describes marking books with hairpins since as a conservative Jew she could not write on the Sabbath, and other challenges: "When I remember the Sabbath day," she says, "it is with an abiding sense of relief that I no longer observe it."

This losing the Sabbath in the thicket of well-intentioned rituals is something with which Adventists can identify. People who have grown up in the church can tick off lists of things they were not allowed to do as a child on Sabbath—swim or play sports of any kind.

And yet, amidst the rituals, I think that the Sabbath has done for Adventists what it has done for the Jewish people—kept us together. I love that Jewish saying: We don't keep the Sabbath, the Sabbath keeps us.

Because of my fascination with the word "lost," I read Tonstad's chapter on the lost meaning of Sabbath first, even though it comes in the last half of the book. Enchanted with that chapter, I began at the beginning and marveled at how he built his case that the meaning of Sabbath centers on God's character. Thinking about whether or not God is arbitrary in his request for people to remember the Sabbath day brought me to another element of Sabbath that I think has gotten lost.

And that is God's voice. God created Sabbath as a time to be with his newly-made family of beings. To me, the fourth commandment is like a save-the-date announcement—"Remember the seventh Day, I'll be there, we'll visit and talk and share."

My Sabbath quest in Ireland grows out of a long-held love and fascination for the Sabbath. Books about Sabbath, as well as stories of Sabbath keepers capture my attention: St. Patrick, St. Columba, and Lady MacBeth, most recently. And in the past, the Eskimo Prophet Mannilaq who kept the seventh-day was another. In these stories, St. Patrick and Mannilaq tell their followers that the seventh day is the day that they talked to God. It was not rituals or worship services that made the day significant. It was talking with God.

Thinking of them, while reading Tonstad, I came to the conclusion that the tragedy of losing the Sabbath day is that we lose the opportunity to hear God's voice. He wants to speak to us, to share good times like friends do. It is lovely to honor the day that Christ rose from

the dead, but God says that He plans to show up on the seventh day.

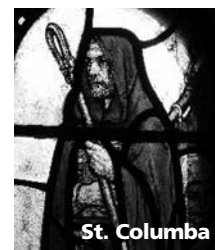
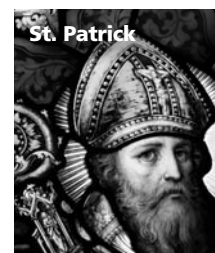
Rather than losing Sabbath, what we need to lose is ourselves. "When you live in God, your day begins when you lose yourself long enough for God to find you, and when God finds you, to lose yourself again in praise," said Barbara Brown Taylor in her latest book, *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith*.¹⁴

Taylor is one of the significant voices in contemporary spiritual literature to have found the Sabbath, a discovery she first described in her book *Leaving Church*. In *Altar in the World*, she goes beyond the discovery of rest that Sabbath brings and talks about it as a commandment from God and recommends finding a community with which to celebrate.

Much of the discussion of Sabbath in contemporary literature, however, focuses on rest. In our 24/7 culture of frenetic activity, I guess that is understandable. Rest is a significant benefit that comes from Sabbath. But, Lauren Winner in her little book *Mudhouse Sabbath* pointed out the flaw in the reasoning of thinking about Sabbath only as rest.¹⁵ She terms it the fallacy of the direct object. "Whom is contemporary Sabbath designed to honor? Whom does it benefit?" she asks after describing magazine recommendations for a leisurely day of rest taking a bubble bath, and reading. She answers her question saying, "Why the bubble-bath taker herself, of course! The Bible suggests something different. In observing the Sabbath, one is both giving a gift to God and imitating Him."

Winner is right. And I would add that unless we listen as well as rest, we will lose the most important aspect of the Sabbath—worship of the Creator God of the Universe.

My Celtic spiritual journey did not turn out as I thought it might. I did not find ironclad proof that St. Patrick, St. Columba or St. Brigid ever kept the Sabbath. But I did find a people who loved God, and followed His leading. A praying people who practiced the presence of God in everything they did from the time they awoke in the morning through milking cows and churning butter





to the end of the day. A people who cherished the Bible, copying it and carrying it with them everywhere. And they affected how I think of Sabbath.

Abraham Joshua Heschel writes about the Sabbath as a cathedral in time.¹⁶ I've come to think of it as a Monastery in Time, a weekly chance to practice the presence of God. To listen for his voice. As such, Sabbath becomes the heart of our spirituality, and provides us with a devotional practice to share with the many in the world who are seeking greater spirituality today. ■

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Negotiating Sabbath Observance in the Local Church

BY JOHN BRUNT

Background

In my former life as an academician I wrote a small book on the Sabbath titled *A Day for Healing*. That was almost thirty years ago. In it I argue that Jesus purposefully took the initiative to heal on Sabbath in order to teach about the Sabbath. Whereas the rabbis allowed healing on Sabbath only when life was in danger, those Jesus chose to heal on Sabbath had chronic infirmities that were as far from this standard as you could get. Jesus healed a crippled man who had been waiting beside a pool for thirty-eight years (John 5), a woman who had been stooped over for eighteen years (Luke 13), and an adult man who had been born blind (John 9), for example. Jesus also did this in public, certainly knowing that it would cause controversy. When He healed the man with the withered hand in the synagogue (Mark 3:1–6), Jesus called him into the center. Jesus was acting publically and purposefully.

By this action Jesus challenged the Sabbath rules of the day. Indeed he went further and challenged the whole system of Sabbath observance by keeping rules. His action, however, not only made a negative statement about rules, it also made a positive statement about the true purpose of the Sabbath: to experience the healing/salvation that Jesus brought in His ministry. I summarize it this way:

Jesus Christ and salvation stand at the heart of the Sabbath. As the Sabbath begins we see ourselves as the captives whom Christ has freed. We are the spiritually blind whose eyes Jesus opens as we focus on the Light of the world. The Sabbath healing stories relate to our own stories. They describe our experience with Christ. And through these Gospel stories we see that our experience of salvation in Christ is linked with the Sabbath. We also see our neighbor in a new way. He or she also is a fellow captive in need of healing and salvation.

JARED WRIGHT



I go on to suggest that this should make a difference in our Sabbath observance. Rather than keeping Sabbath through a checklist of rules, we should focus on a relational mind-set that plans for Sabbath in a positive way, and fills the day with activities of rest, worship, and service that let us and those around us experience the healing and re-creation that Jesus intends for us and our neighbors on Sabbath.

I am no longer an academician, however. I am a pastor now. The issue of Sabbath observance is not only a theoretical question. Our pastoral team has to struggle with how we help people experience Sabbath in a positive, non-legalistic way within a very active community where many people, with different approaches to Sabbath, are often together, interacting with each other over Sabbath hours. So this is my question: Does the kind of approach I argued for as an academician actually work in a real live church setting? In an attempt to answer this question I have limited myself to the one church I know best, the



JARED WRIGHT

Azure Hills Church in Grand Terrace, CA, and have interviewed both associate pastors and lay leaders. First, a description of the church.

The Azure Hills Church

The Azure Hills Church has a little over 2,000 members with a weekly average attendance of about 1,400 divided in two identical services. Members are typically younger than those of a normal Adventist congregation. The church is filled with families who have young children. This year we have 168 four- to nine-year-olds in our Adventurer club and a smaller Pathfinder club of about 60. We also have a youth group of about 70 and a large young adult group of about 200 university students and young professionals, mostly single. All these groups are active and have many weekend programs that bring people together on Sabbath.

The church also has a good bit of diversity. Although the conference classifies the church as “Anglo,” it is very multi-cultural. It has large Spanish and Portuguese language Sabbath School classes, and large groups of Indonesian, Filipino, East Indian, Asian, and Middle Eastern members. It also has a diversity of views from very conservative to relatively liberal. The worship is multi-generational with all the different age groups worshipping

together and participating in leadership. The worship service is made up mostly of congregational singing with a children’s story and sermon.

Sabbath Activities at Azure Hills

What kinds of activities produce the need for negotiating Sabbath observance, and how are these handled? One of the biggest events of the year for our congregation is an annual spring weekend outing our Adventurers and Pathfinders take to a beach campground. The Adventurers have to have at least one parent along; the Pathfinders do not. The total group this year was about 350. The camp is on a cliff overlooking the ocean with walkways down to a beautiful beach.

Our leaders work very hard to plan interactive worship experiences for the children Friday night, Sabbath morning, and around sundown time Sabbath evening. The activities are creative and biblically oriented. No one says that the families have to come, but virtually everyone does, and they seem to enjoy it. This still leaves a few hours between Sabbath lunch and the evening activities for individual choices.

During this time some parents feel comfortable with their children going down to the beach, and some do not. Of those who go to the beach, some feel comfortable swimming and some do not. The Adventurer leaders and



parents have worked out an agreement that parents will be responsible for determining what their children do on Sabbath afternoon. They have no list of rules, but they do ask that no one disturb the Sabbath observance of others with, for example, loud radios. The agreement includes an understanding that families who don't go to the beach won't criticize those who do, and kids who do go to the beach won't rub it in to those who don't. Parents try to take responsibility for communicating this standard of acceptance and tolerance to their children. On the whole it seems to work quite well. There has been very little controversy.

The same is true in our Pathfinder club. The leaders say they try to let the more conservative parents be the benchmark, so as not to offend. For example, they saw no problem with letting parents reimburse them for the food on Sabbath, but some parents objected quite strongly, so now they tell people to wait until after sundown to reimburse them. Before directing our club they were associate directors for the Pathfinder Club in an ethnic congregation and admitted that Sabbath observance was quite different there. There was a fairly long list of rules. But in our congregation they have found little controversy over activities for the kids, even though they do some fairly strenuous activities on Sabbath, such as a ten-mile hike. They also work hard to plan interactive worship activities for the kids

throughout their Sabbath time together.

Our young adult group has a host of smaller interest groups within it. There is an off-road vehicle club, a surfing club, a hiking club, and several community service groups. Almost all of them take weekend outings. Our young adult pastor doesn't go with each group, but she does talk to them about Sabbath when they go. She does not lay down any rules but urges them to do two things: Be intentional about making Sabbath special, so it isn't just like the other days of the week, and make it about God.

On a hot day this summer, one of the activities for the whole young adult group was a potluck at a private home followed by an afternoon of fellowship in their large swimming pool. She told me that she had more significant, spiritual conversations with young adults in that setting than she had in any of their other activities.

Our youth group is also very active on Sabbath. The youth pastor tries to make Sabbath something the kids will look forward to. On Friday nights our youth room becomes a café where kids come eat, study the Bible together and visit.

All of the groups in the church perform a significant amount of service on Sabbath. Adventurers, Pathfinders, youth, and young adults all visit rest homes and hospitals and gather on Sabbath afternoon to fill care packages for

the poor. The youth and young adults also have a program called "Kids Rock" where they work with the poorest kids in San Bernardino. They begin with Bible study, singing, and interactive games, and end with very active outdoor games that are related to the Bible texts they have learned.

Our Prime Time Club, which is for the AARP age group, has a weekly food bank that passes out boxes of food every Sabbath to members who are in need (they serve 30–50 per week). (We also have a community food bank that serves about 200 families of non-members, but it operates on Thursdays.)

A unique feature of the congregation's Sabbath activity is that there are very few Friday night or Sabbath afternoon meetings. With so many children in the church, Sabbath activities outside of the morning Sabbath School and worship service time are only attended if they are interactive and include something for the children to do. Other Adventist churches in our vicinity have many Sabbath afternoon programs, seminars and concerts that draw good crowds. When we have any kind of traditional meeting or concert in the church on Sabbath afternoon, it is virtually empty.

One fairly new Sabbath activity in the church has been a series of Sabbath afternoon "spiritual mini-retreats" where members are invited to spend an afternoon of quiet reflection and meditation. Child activities are provided so the parents can concentrate on the meditation. Our average turnout has been 15–30. It has been interesting to see the enthusiasm of the children. They have been given a Bible text and a camcorder and are set loose (with some supervision, of course) to make a video. One Sabbath they took so long that the group was about to adjourn when they returned with their video, but they made their parents stay and watch it. It was worth watching.

In summary, the congregation is very active and interacts frequently on Sabbath. This activity takes place without a set of rules, with very little controversy, and with a lot of satisfaction that people are enjoying and gaining something they consider spiritually healing on Sabbath. Therefore, the answer to my initial question: *Does the kind of approach I argued for as an academician actually work in a real live church setting?* is "Yes."

Perhaps the biggest criticism of corporate Sabbath observance at Azure Hills might be that it is very active and not very contemplative. That would even be true of the worship service. For example, there is little time in

worship that is not filled with either talking (children's story and sermon) or singing. The congregation sings even as the offering is being taken. The reason for this is the strong emphasis on children. Most four to nine-year-olds are not very meditative.

Why Does it Work?

Here are a few observations as to why a diverse congregation seems to be able to negotiate Sabbath observance with little controversy.

1. Preaching and Teaching. There is a theological mind-set that is non-legalistic in the church that has probably been influenced by ten years of preaching by Morrie Venden on righteousness by faith in the 90s, followed by Calvin Thomsen and me with a somewhat different but also grace-oriented approach. Also Alger Keough, the executive pastor, has taught the largest Sabbath School class in the church for over a decade with a strongly grace-oriented approach.

2. An Ethos of Appreciation For Diversity. Our children's pastor suggests that one of the reasons there is so little controversy is a long history of developing an ethos of freedom and acceptance within the congregation. She notes that even those who are quite conservative seem to have bought into a culture of openness to diversity.

Our youth pastor offers some observations about how this has happened. He sees a very large buy-in on the part of members for the concept of diversity. People of all generations are pleased with the multi-generational nature of the congregation, and people of various ethnic and cultural groups are pleased with the multi-cultural nature of the congregation. Because they buy in to the overall vision, they are all willing to give up some of their own preferences to make the broader vision possible. For example, the older folks would prefer more hymns in our worship, the young adults would prefer more praise songs, but all are willing to live with the blend that we have because they like the inclusiveness. Since the various groups feel included and not neglected, they are willing to give up their own little deal for the sake of the big deal they buy into.

3. An Appreciation for Sabbath. When I first started teaching, students expressed a lot of hostility to what they considered an oppressive Sabbath atmosphere when they were growing up. The generation in our church seems to be

quite free of this. They think of Sabbath positively and look forward to it. The youth pastor observes that when he hears people object to something that is proposed for Sabbath, the typical response is not to cite a rule but to say, "If we did that, Sabbath wouldn't be special."

4. Work and Planning. The leaders of the various groups put in an incredible amount of work and planning to make Sabbath special and enjoyable for the groups they serve. Pro-active planning goes a long way toward eliminating the need for rule setting. If people are doing well-planned enjoyable activities they don't need rules about what not to do.

5. Self Selection. Perhaps part of the reason for the lack of controversy may be the self selection that takes place in an area where there are many Adventist churches from which to choose. Within ten miles of our church there are 38 other Adventist churches. A survey showed that most people choose to come to Azure Hills because they like the warm, informal family feeling. So people who might otherwise complain simply choose another church.

6. Size. The situation could play out differently in a small church where a few critical people might have more influence on the overall direction of corporate Sabbath observance.

7. Multi-cultural Marriages. When I first presented this paper at a meeting of the Adventist Society for Religious Studies in Atlanta, one of our members, Kendra Haloviak Valentine, who teaches religion at La Sierra University, suggested that perhaps the large number of multi-racial and multi-cultural marriages in the church might contribute to the way the church works together so well. Since so many of our families have diversity of some kind in their family, they may be used to negotiation and compromise.

Some Final Suggestions

(These suggestions were made for the original audience: college, university, and seminary religion teachers.)

Professors who have been teaching about the meaning of Sabbath in their classes over the last decades have contributed to a different and more positive approach to Sabbath observance in Adventism than what I grew up with. Members of ASRS (Adventist Society for Religious Studies)

have made it possible for a spiritually positive, non-legalistic and non-controversial Sabbath observance to exist.

In addition to sharing the positive meaning of the Sabbath, however, it would be helpful for those who teach both future pastors and future parishioners to focus on some practical issues as well. These might include the following:

1. *Positive Sabbath experiences don't just happen.* They take lots of thought, work and advance planning. Help our young people move from what the Sabbath ought to mean in our experience to how one might vision and plan such experiences for themselves, their family, and those to whom they minister.
2. *People will differ with each other, and they will interact with each other.* Therefore, part of a positive Sabbath experience is negotiating community within diversity. Community also doesn't happen without work. How can we be faithful to our principles, not offend others, and live in community? Maybe role play situations and case studies might help young people think about the messy business of negotiating within community.
3. *Corporate Sabbath observance is affected by age and stages of emotional and spiritual development.* I'm sure the profile of a congregation less focused on children than Azure Hills would look quite different from this one. Having young people think about the intersection of Sabbath and people at different stages of life and development might be useful, especially for future pastors.
4. *Sabbath observance is not only theoretical and individual; it is practical and communal as well.* A holistic approach to Sabbath observance needs to include such considerations. ■

References

1. Brunt, John C. *A Day for Healing: The Meaning of Jesus' Sabbath Miracles* (Washington D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1981).
2. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

John Brunt has been the senior pastor of the Azure Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church in Grand Terrace, California, for eight and a half years. Before that he worked at Walla Walla University for 31 years, the last 12 as Vice President for Academic Administration. He is a graduate of Glendale Academy, La Sierra University, Andrews University, and holds a doctorate in New Testament from Emory University. He has written ten books and many articles. His wife, Ione, is a certified nurse midwife. They have two grown children and three grandsons. This material was first presented at the Adventist Society for Religious Studies in 2010.

ARCHEOLOGY



Fig. 2: Setting up for morning photos
(Picture by Vera Kopecky)

We Dig Dirt: *Archeology at Tell 'al Umayri* | BY JOHN MCDOWELL

We dig dirt. We haul dirt to sifts. We sweep dirt. We move rocks. We measure and draw rocks. With hand picks and trowels we peel away layers of time. We are narrative seekers. We've been coming here every other year since 1984. There is still a lot more to dig (Fig. 1: *View of the Tell*, next page).

Early morning is the best time on the tell—the air, night-cooled, still welcomes. We arrive before sunup and the first, most pressing task is to photograph each dig field before the sun arrives to cast shadows (Fig. 2: *Setting up for morning photos*). I rush to set up camera and tripod, while square supervisors sweep dirt. The purpose here is to document each day's progress. Archaeology works only because of careful and consistent documentation.

The photos are numbered and placed in a database so what happens is remembered as each layer of earth is peeled away. The recovery of architecture and objects requires the removal of earth—a 5 cm layer at a time. Archaeology is the careful science of destruction. The destruction, the moving of stone and dirt is so that we can in fact recover, record, analyze, preserve—make known what has been buried for three thousand years.

Once photos are done, a variety of activities begin. Depending on what stage each square is at—some commence digging and sifting right away—others take elevation levels; some might draw top plans of significant features.

Fig. 4: *So Many Guffas for Olivia Jenson*



The right way to dig is with a steady rhythm of pick and then trowel (Fig. 3: *Learning to Dig*). The dirt is scooped into a guffa. The guffa is then dumped into a sift, a counter is clicked, (Fig. 4: *So Many Guffas*) and then the dirt is sifted; we look for pottery shards, bone, flint and anything that might be made by humans: a seal for example (Fig. 5: *Stamp Seal*). In actual practice, to get the digging done, there are those who will go to all sorts of lengths (Fig. 6: *Anita Burns*). To support the recovery of objects and architecture, a lot of associated data is needed for analysis for understanding to be successful. This includes measurements of various types: soil color



Fig. 3: *Learning to dig*



Fig. 6: *Anita Burns demonstrates her technique*



Fig. 7: *Matt Vincent with his GPS*



Fig. 5: *Stamp Seal*

**We peel away
layers of
time. We are
narrative
seekers.**



Fig. 1: View of the Tell

analysis, GPS data, elevations, and placement measurements. Archaeology is always about paying attention to details (Fig. 7: *Matt Vincent with his GPS*, previous page).

This involves drawing top plans of the square—drawing every rock and feature before peeling away another layer. All the data, along with photo-

graphs, are eventually entered into a large database.

A second breakfast of falafel and schwarma sandwiches arrives at 9:30 (Fig. 8: *Second Breakfast*, page 40).

All gather in the tent and eagerly eat. Kent Bramlett, the chief archaeologist, then performs the ritual slaughter of the watermelon and, following tradi-

tion, we stand on the edge of the tell spitting seeds and seeing who can throw their rind the farthest (Fig. 9: *Aran McDowell enjoying watermelon*, page 40). Some rest and try to sleep. All too soon, Doug Clark, the dig director, hurries us back to the trenches. Soon dirt and rocks are again being removed. Work in the field ends



Fig. 15: Fire place in the house

Sometimes
the ancients
left few and
frustrating
clues. Archae-
ology is the
writing of a
mystery novel
or, as Doug
Clark says,
it's a game of
Clue on
steroids.

around 12:30 pm. Final notes are taken. Tools, equipment, and water bottles are gathered up. Tired and covered with the finest of dig-dirt patina, we head to the buses and back to camp for a quick yet wonderful and blessed shower before lunch at 1:00 pm where finds of the day are announced.

During the morning, usually well

before second breakfast, Doug, Kent, and Romel Gharib (the representative from the Department of Antiquities of Jordan) make the rounds to talk to the field supervisors about what is emerging, what has been found, where to continue digging. There is often discussion about surfaces and walls (Fig. 10: *Making the Rounds*, page 41).

That which is
lost is found.
It is why
we dig dirt.



Fig. 9: Aran McDowell enjoying watermelon



Fig. 8: Second breakfast



Fig. 12: Dr. Clark and Dr. Al-Sa'ad



Fig. 11: Jar rims and pottery on floor of house #4



Fig. 14: Large grinding stone





Fig. 13: Canty Wang at her sift

The details form the bedrock of the narrative we are chasing. Sometimes the ancients left few and often frustrating clues. Archaeology is the writing of a mystery novel or, as Doug says, it's a game of Clue on steroids. While the metaphors are illuminating, what we are really trying to do is piece together the gripping narrative of our human past. For 'Umayri this means, in particular, understanding who the people were who lived here, how they lived, and then recording and preserving what one does find. What is found is most often fragmentary—what was

left behind after the move out of the house, whether by choice or force. This season we worked on uncovering a fourth house of what once was an early Iron 1 village, from around 1200 BC (Fig. 11: *Finds in House*, opposite). Archaeologists are not Indiana Jones treasure seekers. They simply want to know the answers to questions such as: Who lived here and when? How did they live? How did they build, cook, worship, and how did they die? Such are the questions the answers to which build the story layer by layer.

I had the privilege of being present

in a meeting with the new Director General of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, Dr. Ziad Al-Sa'ad (Fig. 12: *Dr. Doug Clark and Dr. Ziad Al-Sa'ad*).



Fig. 10: Making the rounds

Continued on page 80...

SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS



Oak tree on the grounds of Elmshaven

The Holistic Spirituality of Ellen White | BY HARRI KUHALAMPI

WITH PHOTOGRAPHY BY HEATHER LANGLEY

Ellen White's spirituality can primarily be defined by using purely Christian and religious language and imagery, simply because Christianity is both the context and the subject matter of all her writings. Only an analysis of her religious ideas exposes the holistic nature of her spirituality and its multifaceted structure. Among the numerous religious topics about which she wrote, five central themes can be identified. These themes compose a thematic framework of her spiritual thinking, a unified body of interrelated ideas. This means that her favorite Christian topics express the predominantly religious substance of her spirituality. However, the essence of White's spirituality can best be perceived in consequence of a thorough understanding of her overall spiritual thinking.

First, the theme of God's love towards humanity is central for White. It can be seen as the leading motive throughout the sources. The results of the study suggest that she promotes a spirituality which focuses on experiencing the divine love, on exploring its meaning for each person and on applying its consequences individually, which means, for example, receiving forgiveness or becoming totally accepted by God. Ultimately, the concept of God's love includes all that God is and what he does, but also all that a believer is and what he/she does as an object of this love.

Second, according to White, selfishness generally directs each person's will, and on that account she sees no other solution but the submission of one's will to the will of God. But she does not urge a person to silence or crush his/her will because she sees great potential in the human will when under God's rule. God does not force anyone under his leadership and guidance; instead, in White's view, God invites a person voluntarily to submit his/her will to God and his will. No one else can yield a

person's will to be directed by God; paradoxically, by such surrender to God, a person becomes truly free. Submitting one's will to God is a continuous, internal, spiritual process, for which each individual is personally responsible. This spiritual course of action is possible only when a person remains fully aware of God's goodness, grace and love. Consequently, the surrender of one's will to God is one of the focal points in White's spiritual teaching and the starting point of what is to follow in a person's spiritual existence.

Third, as a person surrenders his/her will to God, a constitutional fellowship is established between humanity and divinity on a personal level. White mostly speaks about this fellowship in terms of a union with Christ. Through his incarnation and life as a human being, Christ identified with humanity and made this union possible. In her view, the union is there to be celebrated because of God's graciousness and goodness. It must also to be nurtured, because we as human counterparts cannot permanently hold on to the union with Christ without constantly tending our side of the relationship. White sees the person's union with Christ as an interactive experience which is primarily actualized by personal dialogue and intimate contact.

Fourth, White depicts the relationship between a person and Christ in primarily dynamic and functional terms; she sees the believer as an active participator in fulfilling God's will and purpose in the world. Cooperation is a term she uses frequently as she speaks about the consequences of God's saving acts for an individual Christian. She sees witnessing, ministry, employment, daily activities, and even care for one's over-all wellbeing as integral parts of a person's connectedness with Christ. Spirituality, for her, is a comprehensive concept, connected to the whole being and to all of life. All our experiences, and all the feelings,

Ellen White
did much of her
writing at
Elmshaven,
a house she
purchased and
lived in from
1900 until her
death in 1915.

Elmshaven
became her
office head-
quarters, with
over 14 staff
members
assisting White
in the editing
and publishing
of her works.
These photo-
graphs were
taken on-site.

Writing Room Window



ideas, and relationships we connect to them, have a spiritual significance and value. Because of the all-encompassing involvement throughout one's whole life in the cooperative partnership with God, the transcendent dimension can be present everywhere.

And finally, White uses the term "character" to describe what a person really is, what one's actual identity is, i.e., the core of one's being and its ruling moral qualities and abilities. It is a concept which stands for the essential spiritual quality of a person. When speaking about character, she deals with the inner, deeper human dimension of an individual. Even though her concept of character refers to the same subject matter as spirituality and overlaps with it in meaning, character, as she understands it, is an essential human quality which provides the starting point and motivation for the whole being as well as for all life and action. Without genuine, personal, spiritual development, there would be no character change or any of the growth necessary for individual development and advancement to maturity.

Christian spirituality as presented by White can be defined primarily as holistic on the basis that it concerns all dimensions of humanity. Because these dimensions are combined into one operational entity, a pervasive description goes on beyond the wholeness of being to the way in which spirituality functions in a person's life and personality. By constructing a structure of integrated spirituality which takes into account the holistic view of humanity but also a wide-ranging manner of operations, we are able to obtain a frame of reference for a more comprehensive understanding of White's spirituality.

While it is possible to speak about Ellen White's spiritual ideas in exclusively religious language and to be satisfied with explanations related to typically theological concepts and ideas, there is the problem that such an approach is limited partly to the subject matter of traditional spirituality and partly to the established religious practices used in the search for spiritual wellbeing. Although this study deals with the religious content, there is, however, another way to define and explain spirituality. Academic studies on spirituality offer approaches which are helpful in the exploration of White's spirituality. On the basis of both these approaches and the results of my analysis I will now outline a definition of her spirituality.

White refers to spiritual needs and wants, which in my view are perceived at the level of the human spirit, i.e., the

individual inner realm, and which drive a person to seek for spiritual answers and solutions. In the primary sources of this study, I detected five specific spiritual needs which constitute the reason and precondition for Christian spirituality. In them one can perceive a starting point and a fundamental component for spirituality. The central spiritual needs and wants White records are as follows:

1. Longing or yearning
2. Desolation or helplessness
3. Guilt
4. Anxiety
5. Insecurity

The common human condition caused by sin, i.e., fallenness, creates our inner state of yearning for God and his grace. In addition, one's spiritual needs and wants are a result of unfortunate life experiences. Guilt, for instance, is normally a result of one's own mistakes or shortcomings. However, an inner longing and sense of desolation or insecurity are caused by the lack of appropriate experience offering connectedness, meaning or hope. Therefore, it is this inwardly perceived void and purposelessness which is the starting point as well as the basis for all spiritual exercise and activity. However, it is Ellen White's view that spiritual needs must not be interpreted as consequences of natural causes alone, but also as a result of the influence of the Holy Spirit. Christian spirituality responds to actual human needs and attempts to fulfil them. Hence the human predicament in the midst of grave spiritual questions constitutes the justification for Christian spirituality.

Moreover, Ellen White's spiritual thinking pertains to a view of humanity according to which our being and existence are composed of the following experiential and functional dimensions:

1. Thinking

Christian spirituality occurs in connection with knowledge, concepts, notions, ideas, paradigms, thought patterns, and theories. We thereby refer to abstract, theoretical issues which are rationally perceived and which demand understanding. This aspect concerns what can be known and comprehended, and what makes rational sense to us. More specifically, spirituality is concerned with ethical and doctrinal ideas and views, but it is also sustained, directed and delineated by them. This means that as an

integral part of Christian spirituality there is always a corresponding theology of spirituality with a logical structure which appeals to the human intellect.

The main concepts in the theology of White's spiritual thinking are the following: the love of God, the surrender of one's will to God, the notion of union with Christ, and cooperation. In addition, her thinking can be described by using such theological attributes as, for example, biblical, Trinitarian, Christ-centred or gospel-oriented. Therefore, a discourse on Christian spirituality is not possible without religious and theological language.

Christian spirituality does not function solely within the realm of religion, even as far as the intellectual elements are concerned. Instead, all concepts, facts and information are part of a whole in which spirituality is the combining element. Hence, spirituality refers to those interpretive, inner processes through which the meaning and significance of all intellectual elements is sought. Spirituality can be defined as a quest with the prospect of establishing the role and function of the intellectual elements as part of the entirety of our lives.



2. Doing

Christian spirituality occurs in conjunction with the various functions, actions, work and practices which we are engaged in. This means that spirituality is experiential and embodied, and for the most part it is sensory too. In White's case, this practical aspect includes, for example, Sabbath-keeping, healthful living, Bible study, prayer, worship, acts of love, enjoying nature and various forms of ministry. In addition to these activities, which can be perceived as religious, she also includes secular activities among those with spiritual significance, for instance, physical labor, recreation or engagement in social interaction. The notion of a demarcation between spiritual and secular activities can hardly be supported from her point of view; instead the continuous, inner, spiritual functions will point towards and clarify the value and significance of ordinary activities for spirituality.

3. Feeling

Christian spirituality occurs in conjunction with characteristic affective elements such as moods, feelings, emotions and relational attitudes. As far as White's spirituality is concerned, the affective features she frequently refers to include peace, joy, trust, hopefulness, gratitude, "rest," sympathy, humility, faithfulness, compassion and love. In her view, feelings may enhance spirituality; by directing one's feelings towards Christ, as she suggests, the relationship with him can grow closer and more meaningful. On the other hand, perceived spirituality may help a person to reach and maintain an emotional balance. She also refers to the spiritual basis of emotional intelligence and skills, in speaking about the character and describing its qualities.

4. Relating

Christian spirituality occurs in conjunction with common relational and social elements. The natural and built-up environment, society, communal association, social contacts and personal relations have a bearing on our spirituality, and conversely, our spirituality has an effect on the way we relate to others as well as on the quality of our relationships. White's writings recurrently touch on relational issues which concern the family, local congregations, institutional or denominational working communities, nature, friendships, marriage and church membership issues.

Elmshaven house



5. Being

Christian spirituality occurs in conjunction with certain ontological and existential ideas, notions and assumptions. These are issues related to life and death, time, place and space, identity and freedom. Spirituality is therefore related to these philosophical issues, but lacking as she was in formal education, White did not directly address them. However, there are allusions to and reflections of major existential and ontological issues in her thinking as she deals with prophetic and eschatological topics, soteriological ideas such as the theme of union with Christ, the human will and its freedom, human nature and the essence of being, to mention just a few.

As all of these five experiential dimensions are included in White's spiritual thinking, we can justifiably speak about a holistic spirituality. Having identified these dimensions, there are still certain other elements included in the framework of spirituality which must also be identified.

As we endeavour to capture the essential features of Ellen White's spiritual thinking, it is necessary to consider the concept of spirit. Even though the realm of the human spirit has not been distinctly defined in White's writings, its presence can still be easily detected. The list of its central features drafted by John Swinton¹ is particularly helpful in the attempt to capture an idea of what the concept of the spirit means, i.e., the inner quest for transformation, meaning, purpose, transcendence, sense of safety and security, connectedness, value, and hope. However, I would argue that it is only the inner level of the human spirit to which the functions mentioned in Swinton's list are related. In addition to his list of the central features, there is also the outer, experiential circle which is the realm of perceived spirituality. Features of this realm are listed above as the experiential dimensions.

Swinton's list provides an important starting point for further considerations. I suggest that a concept of the



human spirit is, indeed, essential for general academic discourse on spirituality. The operational, experiential and external spiritual functions compose the necessary context within which spirituality can occur. Such things as sense of significance, purpose, value, transcendence, belonging, transformation, security or hope are perceived primarily on the level of the spirit, in the internal realm.

The human spirit is also a helpful term in the attempt to understand and define the meaning of one of White's favorite concepts, the character. There are some aspects which she expresses by using the term "character," which are also included in the concept of spirit. She was not happy with formal religion and the observance of external requirements unless they are an expression and a fruit of an inner reality. Hence "character" refers to this inner, spiritual essence, which seems to be the same as that referred to by the concept of the spirit.

The spiritual significance of White's ideas in terms of union with Christ and cooperation can be understood only in reference to the human spirit. Connection with Christ remains only a theological notion unless the connectedness is a reality at the level of the person's individual spirit. The same also applies to cooperation. Cooperation as a collective word for intrinsic religious involvement belongs to the sphere of operational spiritual functions. The engagement of the spirit makes cooperation a truly spiritual activity.

Furthermore, the active spirituality that Ellen White introduces presupposes an interactive link of dialogue between the operational spiritual functions and the inner

realm of the human spirit. This relationship is, for the most part, interpretive in nature, and it is realized in mental functions that are predominantly conscious and only partly subconscious. The subconscious element may include, for example, intuitions and even occasional supernatural visions, which are unintentional or even beyond human control, but which are yet somehow perceived. It can be assumed that there are also internal spiritual influences and movements of which one is unaware, and which one cannot refer to or speak about.

Perceived spirituality is realized by various forms of thinking, i.e., personal, mental activity of which the person is fully aware, or by such relatively continuous activities of mind as, for example, the following hierarchy of mental activities from conscious to more subconscious ones:

1. Awareness
2. Attentiveness
3. Thought
4. Consideration
5. Pondering
6. Observation
7. Reflection
8. Wonder, awe
9. Rumination
10. Imagination
11. Identification with Christ
12. Meditation
13. Contemplation
14. Intuition (spontaneous insight)
15. Ecstasy/mystical experience
16. Supernatural vision

This list attempts to specify the levels of consciousness which are involved in a range of mental activities. In functioning spirituality, a person uses all of these different operations of mind, and there should be involvement on most of these levels on a continuous basis. However, intuition, ecstasy or vision are the kind of activities where the person is mostly a mere recipient, i.e., these are not results of human initiative or activity, and they are beyond conscious human control. A theoretical structure of Ellen White's spirituality can be constructed as all the elements identified above are taken into account. The interconnect-edness of the various elements of White's spirituality can be depicted in the following way:

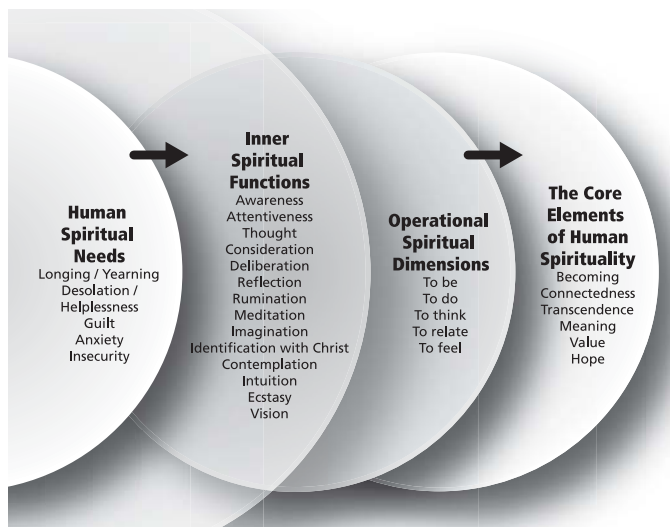
A Theoretical Structure of Ellen White's Holistic Spirituality



The arrows in this graph represent inner processes and mental interconnections in terms of awareness between the different elements composing spirituality as a whole. It is my view that spirituality is comprised of multiple and multi-directional circles of continuous thinking processes or unconscious mental functions moving between the operational dimensions and the human spirit.

The following diagram also includes the spiritual needs and wants which constitute the reason and precondition for an authentic spirituality.

Elements of Ellen White's Holistic Spirituality in Theoretical Sequence



Ultimately, a structure of holistic spirituality has thus emerged on the basis of an analysis of White's writings from her mature years. In addition to the religious content, i.e., the basic themes of her spirituality, White's comprehensive approach to spirituality has here also become an object of evaluation and estimation. While it is the real life in the real world which is the best testing ground for the kind of practical and all-encompassing spirituality that White represents, her spiritual approach as a whole, her view of holistic Christian spirituality, should be placed under further critical scrutiny and study. Her ideas about spirituality should also be brought into a closer interface with other Christian approaches to spirituality for mutual benefit.

The comprehensive structure of spirituality introduced in this study may benefit scholars attempting to understand different spiritualities – not only their theoretical premises and individual features but the full picture of which the particular spiritualities form an integral part. It is my view that a wide-ranging understanding of spirituality, including its connections to essential human activities, will help those who strive for fuller spiritual existence. A thriving spirituality does not rise or fall with one idea or a single practice, but it is the result of a balanced approach to all the essential dimensions which constitute human life. Moreover, I believe that a more analytic understanding of White's whole-life-encompassing spirituality will inspire and enrich those who appreciate her writings as the source of their spiritual guidance and nurture. It seems to me that while dealing with spirituality, there is a common ground where her spiritual ideas can be better understood and, hopefully, even appreciated also by those who are not familiar with her religious thinking.

An intimate fellowship and interaction is at the heart of Ellen White's spirituality. This quality is reflected in the way she views the church as a Christian community consisting of members who are capable of genuine empathy and selfless care for others. For her, spirituality is also a relational matter which is materialized within family and among friends, neighbours and colleagues. On this basis, her favorite term, "character," makes sense only as a communal concept, which means that the inner actuality, i.e., a person's individual spirituality, must become concrete in the way a person participates in the common life and interests of the community. Her focus on the character is balanced by her attention to the action and the practical

elements of Christian life, but also, as I see it, by the actual presence of other elements which compose a Christian spiritual existence and experience. ■

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Harri Kuhalampi received a Th.D. from the University of Helsinki in 2010. He lives in Finland with his wife Erja. He has pastored in Finland, Sweden, and Pakistan, and has taught at the Pakistan Adventist Seminary and College.

More About Harri

Finnish scholar Harri Kuhalampi was featured in several posts on the *Spectrum* website January 10. He wrote an article about holistic spirituality, was interviewed by Rachel Davies, and his dissertation was reviewed by Graeme Sharrock. Links to all of the articles appear below.

<http://www.spectrummagazine.org/article/spirituality/2011/01/10/holistic-spirituality-key-understanding-ellen-white>

<http://www.spectrummagazine.org/review/2011/01/10/finnish-scholar-offers-new-view-ellen-white's-spirituality>

<http://www.spectrummagazine.org/article/interviews/2011/01/10/new-ellen-white-scholar-shares-his-findings>



The Holistic Spirituality of Ellen White

If you would like to order a printed copy of this dissertation, e-mail the author at kuhalampi@luukku.com with your mailing address. The cost: 62 US dollars (48 euros) includes postage and handling. Payment will be made directly to the author's bank account; details will be given when the order is placed.



Writing Room with Ellen's writing chair, left.



The Art of Intervention: *Finding Health*

in Faith | BY HEATHER LANGLEY



2.5-mile Coyote
Creek Trail, on the
grounds of the
Weimar Institute

A blizzard, a stalled car, a lost wallet, and a cop. Talk about divine intervention. Kent Rich is the first to say this seemingly unfortunate sequence of events, among others, helped save his life.

At age 68, Kent Rich has a contagious zest for life. He talks in a friendly, unencumbered manner, pausing every so often to reign in his emotions. "I was coming home

from an art show in Colorado," says Rich. "I had a bad fever, and I was driving in a blizzard. Then my car died under a freeway overpass."

Rich was driving back from a solo art exhibition in Denver, Colorado, to his home in Salt Lake City, Utah. Battling sickness, his car conveniently stalled under the freeway where he was protected from the raging storm. Several minutes later, a policeman arrived.

"When he asked me for my license, I realized I had left my wallet and my planner at a restaurant," says Rich, chuckling. "Also in that planner was a diamond necklace I had bought for my wife." The policeman soon realized Rich was very ill and called for an ambulance. Before long, Rich found himself in a Rock Springs, Wyoming, hospital, where he was held for two weeks and diagnosed with pneumonia.

"My wife got very worried when she hadn't heard from me," says Rich. "But she finally got a call from a man in Colorado who said, 'I've got a wallet and a diamond necklace that I found in a restaurant, and I'll do whatever I can to return them to you.' When does that happen? That was when I realized that God was intervening."

Rich, a retired psychiatric social worker, continued to battle pneumonia over the course of that winter in 1998. He weighed upwards of 350 pounds and struggled with diabetes, breathing problems, and congestive heart failure. He had already experienced one heart attack.

"I was hospitalized seven more times the following year for severe pneumonia," says Rich. "I had to be on oxygen to work."

In 1994, Rich retired from his private practice in psychiatric social work after 35 years of working in the field to pursue his passion for the arts. An accomplished musician, Rich fell naturally into photography and, later, painting. His friends claimed he had a "natural eye" for art, and though he had no formal training, he soon found himself

in gallery shows and museums across the nation, including the Springville Museum of Art, Brigham City Museum, Utah Museum of Fine Art, and the Colorado Telluride Jazz Celebration.

"I take my art very seriously, and I work very hard at it," says Rich. "But I was also under a lot of pressure."

Rich claims he was given a series of divine messages over the course of that year. Weeks later, Rich unknowingly found himself painting a flock of chickens that belonged to his chief nurse at St. Mark's Hospital in Salt Lake City, where he had been hospitalized for a failed angioplasty in 1999. His artery had ruptured during the procedure and had caused dangerous complications.

"[The nurse] recognized me and said, 'You're Kent Rich, aren't you? Do you know how close you were to dying?'" Rich pauses. "She held up her index finger and her thumb, pinched them together. She told me, 'You were this close.'"

"I was a stubborn patient, and I was in denial," says Rich. "But when she told me that, it shook me. No one had ever told me I almost died. You can account for a lot of things, but miracles do happen—that was my first wake-up call."

Rich sought out his old cardiologist Dr. Adgei Mike Pocu, a Seventh-day Adventist who several years prior had



Hand-crafted walking sticks



The Weimar Inn, facing Newstart's campus



Newstart cafeteria and dining facility

recommended that Rich attend the Adventist-run Newstart Program in Weimar, CA. A health retreat designed specifically for patients with diabetes, Newstart would help Rich change his dietary habits and provide him with the necessary physical and spiritual support to get healthy.

"Initially, when Dr. Pocu told me about Newstart, I kicked up all kinds of resistance," says Rich. "I thought I could lose the weight on my own if I made my mind up. I didn't want to go to a so-called 'fat farm.'" Yet Rich's recent series of unfortunate events had changed his perspective. He got back in touch with Dr. Pocu and scheduled an appointment to once again discuss his health.

"During that appointment, Dr. Pocu got right up in my face," recalls Rich. "He asked me, 'Kent, are you going to live, or are you going to die? It's your choice.'"

Dr. Pocu explained to Kent that unless he began to undertake some serious measures, he wasn't going to live much longer. "He told me that if he put me on an operating table, I would die," says Rich. "He told me, 'So you're going to go to Weimar and you're going to [get



Fountain on Newstart campus



Weimar trailhead at Moses Rock

healthy] the hard way.”

Weimar’s Newstart Program is ranked number two in the nation for weight-loss among its patients. During an 18-day retreat in the Sierra Nevada foothills, attendees learn and practice a crucial eight-part health regime of a whole-plant vegan diet, exercise, water and air intake, rest, and temperance. In addition, Newstart provides daily physician’s lectures, vegan cooking classes, and hydrotherapy to its patients. In the fall of 2005, Rich joined its ranks.

Dr. Mike Olrich and Dr. Richard Lukens were two of Rich’s personal Newstart physicians during his time in Weimar. Lukens recalls Rich’s good attitude and amiable demeanor, and his ability to keep with the program when others didn’t. “With many patients, the biggest setback is trying to work around the diet so that they can still eat the foods they like,” says Lukens. “Kent was someone who really kept with [the program].”

With a BMI of 54 and a prescription for nine medications, Rich made respectively significant gains over the course of three weeks. He dropped some weight and two medications and started walking on a regular basis. Yet despite these benefits, Rich still struggled with his health. He learned that along with his diabetes, his kidneys had

begun to fail. He went home with slight improvements, but none big enough to save him.

“At the end of my time there, they found out I was an artist,” says Rich. “They offered me a deal.” That deal turned out to be yet another divine intervention for Rich. Upon learning of his artistic talent, they proposed that Rich come back to Weimar for a longer stay to paint for them. If he created artwork for their permanent collection, they’d subsidize the program costs.

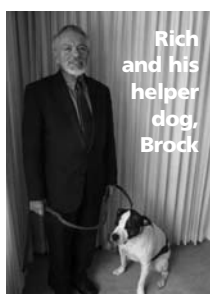
“I realized I couldn’t turn down the offer,” says Rich, “as long as they allowed me to bring my dog.” Three weeks and a dog later, Newstart had worked out a compromise with Rich. He was to paint the grounds of Newstart, and they were to help him get healthy.

“I was there for eight months,” says Rich. Those eight months were nothing short of life-altering for Rich. Fighting through bouts of gout, depression and another hospitalization, Rich managed to turn his health around. By the end of the program, Rich was walking five miles a day and had reversed his kidney failure, high cholesterol, and diabetes.

“Kent is definitely our poster-boy,” declares Lukens. Yet the most important gains Rich made at Newstart were

healthy habits. Staying with the vegan diet and exercise routine, Rich learned he could continue the program beyond Weimar. When his eight months at Newstart were over, Rich moved back to Salt Lake City where he continued his own healing through addiction awareness, dieting, walking, and of course, art.

“I couldn’t have had better emotional therapy as well as physical,” says Rich of his time at Newstart. “I got to paint every day. I formed a string quintet. I became friends with a lot of Adventists and got to know



some theologians really well. I got to talk to them about God’s intervention in my life.” Rich pauses, overcome with emotion. “I had never before had a therapist or doctor who would pray with me, who would talk to me about God’s hand in my health.”

Rich claims that, thanks to Newstart, he became an “adventurer.” He continued to lose weight by walking the southwest corner of Utah, the Mormon Trail, and 250 miles in Utah’s Uinta Mountains, among others—all while contin-



Three pastels by Kent Rich:
Veggie Cocktail, Chapel in the Woods,
and *Library in the Snow*

uing to draw, paint and photograph his surroundings. In 2008 Rich hit a landmark weight of 160 pounds, and he's kept it that way. He hasn't had diabetes for six years. And he's still around to create his artwork and tell his story.

Rich reflects over the past decade of his life with tears choking his voice. "It's been quite a journey, and there were multiple places where God intervened," says Rich. "But I also had to keep my focus—I had to pick a place up ahead and walk towards it without looking down. In this way, I've walked right out of death."

Rich continues to walk an average of ten miles a day, make art, and play music in a string quintet. He currently teaches private art students and group classes at the Peterson Art Center in Salt Lake City and in his own studio. "If you have hope, you get a vision of what you want to happen," says Rich. "But you also have to realize you can't do it all by yourself. God is always present, and when you realize that you're not alone in the healing process, having that faith is a power that creates things." ■

Heather Langley is the editorial assistant at *Spectrum* magazine.

To see Kent Rich's artwork, resume and contact information, please visit his website and online portfolio at <http://kentrich.com>



Through the Lens of Faith | BY MARTIN DOBLMEIER

At the Adventist Forum annual conference in Rancho Mirage last year, guest filmmaker and keynote speaker Martin Doblmeier shared his spiritual journey as he addressed the conference theme “Present Truth in Visual Media: How Film Illuminates Faith.” President and founder of Journey Films, Doblmeier is an acclaimed documentary filmmaker who most recently directed *The Adventists*, a film that looks at the intersection of faith and health through the work of the church. This is his key-note speech.

Before we begin, I want to show a clip from a film I did a number of years ago called *Creativity—Touching the Divine*, about the intersection between the creative self and the spiritual self. First, I want to give you just as a little background.

I was walking down the street in my hometown, Old Town Alexandria, VA, and saw this crowd of people gath-

ered. When I walked up, I saw a man sitting at a card table filled with brandy glasses, and those brandy glasses were filled with water at different levels. And from those glasses he was creating some of the most beautiful music you could imagine. When he was finished the people broke out into loud applause. After I talked to him briefly I took his card, which said “Jamey Turner,” and below his name was written, “*To God be the Glory.*” Johann Sebastian Bach spoke openly that his art form—music—was a powerful tool to proclaim the glory to God.

When I met Jamey Turner I had no idea how we would intersect in the future, but I felt we would. I kept his music and his gift in my heart, and sure enough, a year or so later I had the chance to produce this film on *Creativity*, and I knew Jamey would be perfect. The film had several stories—one was on Jamey—and to close the film I flew Jamie to California. In a single long day I shot this music video that was the close of the film. It is only a couple of minutes in length and is not meant to be too theologically challenging, so enjoy it.

Thank you for the invitation to be with you for this Forum. I want to thank Bonnie Dwyer for the invitation and for being the editor of a great publication. I want to thank Brenton Reading and Brent Stanyer for all their friendship and support.

And I want to thank two of my dearest friends who I can honestly say are the people who more than anyone else are responsible for my getting into this Adventist chapter of my life—Lee and Gary Blount.

Over this last year I have been traveling a great deal across the country with *The Adventists* film. While I am a Christian but not an Adventist—yet—people tell me I have come to see more of the Adventist Church than many Adventists, including congregations large and small, colleges, and campmeetings. The Jewish comedians



Jamey Turner

who traveled around the country used to say they felt like they were on the *Borscht Circuit*. I feel I have been on the *Haystack Circuit*.

I learned about Loma Linda Big Franks, which you can buy used on Amazon and at campmeetings, and spoke at the General Conference session in Atlanta. And while people have told me time and time again how grateful they are for *The Adventist* film, I am the one who is truly grateful for all that has happened and the many blessings I have received.

I know enough about the Adventist world to know where I am—that *Spectrum* attracts a certain kind of reader. Before I left home I told my wife I was going to be with those dangerous liberals of the SDA. Hanging out with the Left. But before you get too pleased with yourselves, look at what you are left of: a self-described conservative, Bible-centric form of good old American Protestantism, and in my mind that still puts you somewhere between Dwight Moody and Chuck Scriven.

We have begun the Sabbath, and one of the things I so admire is the genuine reverence Adventists have for Sabbath. It is, in my mind, not only one of the treasures you hold for a healthier body, mind and spirit but a model way to honor God as you put order and rhythm into a life that can too often be filled with chaos and wasted energy.

A Sabbath that begins on Friday at sunset is one thing you share with the Hebrew tradition. So I don't need to tell you that according to the Talmud—which stands alongside the Bible as Judaism's most important literary creation—the Talmud says *sexual relations are especially blessed on the Sabbath*. And Torah scholars in particular are *required to make love to their wives on Friday night*. So if any of you leave this talk early I will assume it's not because of the speaker. Who says religion is all work and no play?

Our conference is titled *How Film Illuminates Faith*. In many ways what we are really talking about is story—whether it is re-telling in new ways the parables of Christ, sharing tales of our ancestors in faith or putting words to the way we live today—it is story that binds us together, story that fuels our imagination, story that propels us to achieve in ways we never thought possible. Story—and not just in telling stories, repeating them for others, but it is having the courage to internalize a story so deeply that we have no choice but to become part of the story ourselves. The story then takes on new life—our life.

Rabbi Kagan

There is a great tale told in Jewish circles about a rabbi in a small village in Eastern Europe around the start of the previous century, during the early 1900s. His name was Rabbi Kagan. And Rabbi Kagan was known in his village as a brilliant man, a great scholar of the Torah and Talmud, but also a man who always favored *people over the law*.

And there was to be a trial on the other side of the county, and the lawyer for the trial needed a character witness for the man he was defending. So he asked Rabbi Kagan.

At the trial the lawyer introduced the Rabbi to the judge saying: "Here is a man of outstanding reputation—a scholar and a holy man." And the lawyer went on saying to the judge, "People tell the story about Rabbi Kagan that one day he returned home only to discover a robber in his house with an armful of his possessions. When the robber saw the homeowner, he fled out the door and down the street, still clinging to the Rabbi's goods. And Rabbi Kagan chased him down the street shouting, "I declare to all who hear my voice that the things this man carries belong to no one," so that the robber could not be accused of taking any man's possessions.

The judge looked at the lawyer and said, "Do you believe this story?" And the lawyer said, "I don't know, but they don't tell stories like that about you and me."

For Christians, Christ is the master storyteller, and according to the gospel accounts, his stories engaged people from his earliest years.

Jesus in the Temple

In the Gospel of Luke we have the story of Christ as a young boy who, during the Passover celebration, which was a time of massive crowds, deafening noise and chaos, gets separated from his mother and father, Mary and Joseph. His parents, naturally, are worried sick. Remember, it is only twelve years since an edict went out to kill all newborns in the hopes of killing this very boy. That could cause any parent to worry.

And where do they find Jesus? In the temple. Not at the ballfield or playground but in the temple with the rabbis, doctors and scholars. This story appears only in the book of Luke, who was a physician and a companion of St. Paul, a learned man.

And Jesus, at age 12, is "sitting in the midst of the teachers." He was not standing like a catechumen to be



Jean Vanier (left)

examined or instructed by them, but was allowed to sit among them as one who *has* knowledge, wants to *increase* his knowledge, and is anxious to *communicate* that knowledge. Christ, by all accounts, is excited to share his understanding, his story with others.

And upon finding her lost son, Mary says, "We have been worried sick, looking for you everywhere."

And Jesus speaks what amounts to his very first spoken words in the Bible: "*Don't you know I must be about my Father's business?*"

Business. Of course, no one has ever taken that line literally. "Mom, I know I am in trouble here, but give me five more minutes. They're eating out of my hands, and I'm just about to close a big deal." Business, in this case, means so much more.

And Luke continues writing: "...and his mother kept all these things carefully in her heart."

What did his mother keep in her heart—that her child was going to run off the minute she turned her back again? What did she keep in her heart? That this son had something in his heart, something he felt so compelled to share he was willing to get lost? Something learned people were excited to hear?

And in closing his chapter Luke writes, "*Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace before God and men.*" I must be about my Father's business. In many ways for me, that notion has stayed in my heart as it stayed in his mother's heart. On one side it may seem a bit callous and cold, lacking the emotion we so often like to associate with Jesus stories. But as filmmakers who continue to explore the unique world of faith in an increasingly troubled world—that matter-of-factness, that settling of the heart, that focus of mind, I find both comforting and empowering. Let's strip away the veneer and false shine and set about a framework for understanding; there is work to be done here, knowledge to be gained, and a remarkable, life-giving story to be both lived and shared.

I can think of no story in my life that better shows an example of that sense of doing the tough business of being about my Father's business than Jean Vanier, who, in the mid-1960s, began a series of homes called L'Arche for men and women with mental handicaps—based on the Beatitudes. He decided to build the homes as communities and make the handicapped person the center of the home. And in these homes, through these homes, he would be about the difficult and very un-romantic business of living a life of faith.

New Day in Television

When I began my career in television in the late 1970s, one of the greatest barriers to entry was access to the tools of filmmaking—the cameras and editing equipment. Today more and more the tools to make quality programs are in the hands of everyone. The question is, what will we do with them, and what will the films we make say about us? What will those films say about our faith and how we practice that faith?

Last week I participated in an event around digital media, what we now call User Generated Content. Facebook has over 150 million active users. News, sports, even prayers are being APPED to our cell phones. Blogs are getting more "hits" than the sites for what we used to consider legitimate news outlets. YouTube has millions of clips, but recently they reached an extraordinary and telling benchmark. They announced that every minute of the day 24 hours of new material is being uploaded onto their site. Imagine! Every minute of the day 24 new hours of material is posted on YouTube. It is a very different time, not just because the technology has changed but

because people genuinely have embraced it.

And look at what we are doing. We are recording our every thought, every silly pet trick, every foolish stunt, every presentation at every conference. Our children and grandchildren will be the most documented children in history. We are in love with our media to a point as the Canadian theorist Marshall McLuhan said, "The medium IS the message." McLuhan, who is credited with the expression "global village," also wrote, "*All media exist to invest our lives with artificial perceptions and arbitrary values.*" More and more we are seeing the truth in that statement.

In some ways we can see just up the road ahead that we will have to start more carefully separating the wheat from the chaff—what is worth holding on to and what is not. It is no longer simply because we don't have the storage capacity but because computer memory is getting cheaper each year. What is getting more and more priceless is our time.

And with all this mountain of material being created every minute, what will all this say about how God is alive in our world, what will it say about our story of faith? In the midst of all this mound of media will there be any room or any interest in what we as people of faith think is vitally important? How do we tell stories of faith and not see them thrown out with the chaff?

Not a Filmmaker First

It may come as a bit of a surprise to some, but I DO NOT consider myself first as a filmmaker. I do often find myself at film festivals, and I do talk at a number of film-related events. But I always make it clear that for me, film is a medium, and I am always first about the business of the message. Just as a typewriter has been a means of transcribing thought, not creating it, so, too, the camera is a way to capture faith, not create it.

For me the excitement is in discovering new ways to capture how God is alive and vibrant and working in our world *right now*. I know I must accept that for many people today religion is seen as the cause of so much of the world's problems. The media is not shy about telling us about how the latest religious leader has failed to live up to his or her vows and hurt others in the process. And when one fails so publicly, others are dragged down as well. Yet I live in a world where I have the privilege to stand beside people who every day put their own self-

interests aside to help others because they see in that other person the face of God. And that is the very reason I continue to do this work.

Our differences can be great—there's no denying it—differences in religion, education, economic status, differences in how we were raised, our family experiences. But the one thing we all share, the one thing that is undeniable, is that we are alive in this world right now, at this very moment in time. And we have these natural resources, these God-given natural resources, which we can either hoard and abuse or share and enrich. We have our histories which may be very different—yet the choices are the same. We can either view our histories as tools for teaching a way forward or as an excuse for our revenge. And we have each other, and we either recognize each other as a partner in this experience or as our prey.

The decisions we make today will be our legacy. The decisions we make will determine what others say about us to generations yet to come. The decisions we make will become OUR STORY.

MLK

One of the most memorable sermons ever preached by Martin Luther King, Jr., was called *The Man Who Was a Fool*. His wife, Coretta Scott King, later wrote that what this sermon contained in a few sentences was the whole of King's principle of social action and the struggle for change.

King said: "*All of us are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied to a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be.*"

In the film *The Adventists* I put out for the PBS audience the notion—the Adventist notion—that we need to care for the body for the simple reason that our bodies are the Temple of the Holy Spirit. I believe we are commanded to care for our neighbor's welfare—body, mind and spirit—for the very same reason. If I truly believe that my body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit, then I must accept that the same holds true for you.

That notion of compassion and care for the other must erupt out of us despite our religious divides, our political affiliations, class distinctions, education and our personal histories. Too much is at stake for us to fail. The decisions we make become our story.



Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Bonhoeffer

Are there stories that help us see our way forward through our differences to this common understanding? A number of years ago I had the privilege of doing a film on the great German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was one of the first clear voices of resistance to Adolf Hitler. He spoke truth to power at a time when it could be very costly to do so. He tried to challenge the state church to resist the temptation of following Hitler, but he was mostly unsuccessful. Often he was swimming against an evil tide, but that is often the circumstance against which faith is best clarified.

In the mid-1930s as Hitler was solidifying power, Bonhoeffer fled to England to escape the growing madness. He returned to Germany only because a number of pastors-in-training, pastors willing to also stand up to Hitler, needed a seminary director. It became one of the happiest chapters in Bonhoeffer's life because he could speak openly about the Gospel challenges to confront evil in their midst. To do that, he drew on many faith traditions and musical expressions to create for them an environment of trust and joy.

To my mind, Bonhoeffer is unique because he transcends so much of the rancor and vitriol present in our world today—especially in religious circles. The progressive side admires him and often quotes him because he put the Gospel message into social reform to overturn oppression. Bonhoeffer was often quoted in the struggle to overturn apartheid, and he remains a favorite son of liberation theologians in South America. Yet conservatives often return to Bonhoeffer because he is so Bible-focused, so Christo-centric. He truly loved Jesus, the Psalms, the stories. He was a martyr for the faith who was a man of the Book with an extraordinary gift for expression.

The *Bonhoeffer* film ends with a dialectic mix of tragedy and redemption as his closest friend Eberhard Bethge reads from a letter Bonhoeffer wrote to him from prison just after the last plot to kill Hitler failed. Bonhoeffer had come to see his fate was sealed, and his time on this earth was not long: *"I am still discovering right up to this moment that it is only by living completely in this world that one learns to have faith. By this worldliness I mean living unreservedly in life's duties, problems, successes, failures. In so doing we throw ourselves completely into the arms of God, taking seriously not our own suffering but those of God in the world. That, I think, is faith."*

Life's duties, that sense of being about my father's business means recognizing how God is suffering through his people in this world, right now, in our world.

Jesus Became Story

For Christians, Jesus remains the master storyteller. From his lips and by his examples we have parables and stories for the ages. In so doing he also showed us what we had to see, sometimes quite literally. He brought us to the broken, the poor and the outcasts. He pointed the way. He healed the blind so they could see. He literally opened their eyes.

With every day of our lives we must ask ourselves—do we see? We look. Our eyes are open—but do we really see?

Blessed are those who do not see the suffering in the world—who do not see those who are persecuted, who does not see those who hunger and thirst. Blessed are you who do not see the suffering, for you are not tormented by their suffering. For it is only when a person actually sees—when the suffering person becomes real before our eyes, and we actually feel their pain, that you must make a choice. And here is where the filmmaker can illuminate

what, in faith, must be seen. Our business is to bring light and sound and voice so those who are invisible can be seen, those whose voice is ignored can be heard. And through the power of that lens to speak truth to power and thereby offer the hope we all cry out for in our lives.

Admittedly, filmmakers must compress the world around them. They compress it for time so that it fits into strict formats. They compress complex notions and put them through the prism of their own lens which is always formed by the filmmaker's own realities and prejudices. And by that filmmaker's lens and prejudices it is not just that the story is being told by a liberal or conservative, progressive or regressive, someone from a red state or blue. It goes deeper than political persuasions. Is the storyteller angry or at peace, frustrated or content? Is their purpose to build up the world around them or tear it down? It seems tearing down is so much more in fashion these days. And those who choose to build it up often are labeled—naïve.

The lens a filmmaker sees the world through must be well cared for, like a fisherman who each day travels miles offshore must tend to his boat. Many years ago I did a story about a man in Washington, DC, who was trying to recapture the ancient art of iconography. He was a talented artist who not only studied the works but tried to understand the artists who painted them. Iconographers were mostly nameless people who were willing to forgo credit for themselves because they saw the work as sacred work that brought glory to God alone. Their talent was a gift from God, "To God be the Glory."

In the Middle Ages before iconographers would start a painting they would pray and fast to prepare their hearts. Then every act, from the gathering of the different pigments and paints, the mixing of the colors, to the painting itself, it all became an act of prayer. The artist often felt humbled before the image he was creating.

As filmmakers, especially those who tell stories of faith, we need to prepare ourselves, to ready our hearts. We must take seriously the research and prepare the equipment so it will not fail. But we must also prepare our inner selves and ask, "Is the lens through which I will see this story clean, or is it fogged up with my own issues and problems? Is my heart angry or at peace? Am I so fixed in my own view that I won't be open to a bold, new mystery I might encounter along the way? Will I be fully present or will I allow distractions to take over? Are my eyes

open—do I really see? Will this work become its own form of prayer?

This kind of preparation, this openness to making the work a form of prayer is not just for filmmakers—it applies to anyone who labors and wishes God to be part of that that labor.

No matter what our work is, preparing both our tools and our hearts and inviting God to be part of our efforts makes every form of work sacred work.

Become the Story

Iconographers believed God's hand directed them, inspired them. They saw themselves as simply the conduits for God's creative powers. I believe as important as that notion is, we are called to be something more—to participate in the creative act in a very personal way. I believe we are called upon—even commanded—not just to convey the story, but if we are to truly be part of the transformation of this world, then we are called to become part of the story ourselves. Jesus was the master storyteller, but in the end he became the story. His life, death and resurrection became the heart of the Christian story, our story. To be an active part of that legacy commands us to advance as Jesus did—in wisdom and age and grace before God and men.

How does film illuminate faith? How do our stories of faith not get separated with the chaff? By telling stories so profound and compelling, so poignant and riveting, that the medium itself is humbled in their telling. If we live the lives we are called to live—with our whole hearts—if we are truly committed to being part of the transformation of this world, then we will have no choice but to become part of the stories ourselves. It holds true whether we are filmmakers, health care workers, teachers, caretakers, no matter what we do or in what field we labor.

If we live our lives fully, with a joy that attracts others to the work at hand, we will *become the story*, and in years to come, that same lawyer will hear the tales about how we have gone about the business of transforming this world for the better and will have no choice but to say about us, "They don't tell stories like that about you and me." ■

Martin Doblmeier is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and president of Journey Films in Alexandria, Virginia. His films have been aired on national television and PBS stations and have received various awards, including an Emmy for best cultural documentary.

Capturing Spiritual Moments— Digitally | BY RAJMUND DABROWSKI



Spirituality—is it the “aaah haaa” moment you get that helps you recognize something out of the ordinary in yourself and the way you perceive life, behave, act?

In one definition, spirituality, and the meaning of it, touches that part of us that is not dependent on material things or physical comforts.

As a photographer, I express my own spirituality in

the way I perceive, stop and listen, and act through the images I see with the lens of my camera. I meet people and stop to frame their presence in a way that is consistent with my feelings and convictions. While looking for angles, I thrive in recognizing the details, shapes, and emotions. And I recognize stories in each photograph—my own and those of the subjects I consider.

In my spiritual journey the images themselves offer a

HOPE IN HAVANA

Taken in Havana,
Cuba, a woman's
moment of pause.



YES FOR CHRISTIANITY IN CUBA

An Adventist believer
from Cespedes, Cuba.



window into who Rajmund Dabrowski is. Yet I don't ask if my images have the proverbial one thousand words. Some of them do. When you see a meaning, you know, and others recognize it, too. In a sense, the images are as honest as the reality they capture. And you know when they...take you away.

My life's geography as a photographer is also explained in the influence or affirmation of my own values, hopes and personal vulnerabilities. My authenticity-driven imagination and creativity goes into fifth gear and is on display. Each image is given an attire of a story. It is laced with mystery.

The Johannesburg-Cape Town flight was like any

A MOMENT TO REMEMBER

An elderly couple posed for a
photo in Fomento, Cuba.



other. I put a newly-purchased photo album of Bob Gosani's "Tauza" people and a couple of new South African CDs on the seat next to me. A gentleman was seated by the window. He turned to me and started a conversation, expressing interest in my music choices and in the art photography.

A friendship developed instantly. Victor Honey was a university professor of art, and I was invited to visit him and his wife, Hester, when I came to South Africa next. Two years later, on yet another visit I was offered a treat. Victor said, "Let me show you the real Stellen-

bosch, not the one for tourists." He took me to a township within the city, a rather impoverished part, where for years he was conducting after-hours classes for children when it was not permitted to do so during the ugly days of Apartheid. He showed me a building where every week he continues to teach art to children and said, "*This place is my mission in life.*"

His words resonate with the way I am and what I encounter. My own story becomes richer when I become present to the moment I am in.

Henry David Thoreau said aptly, "You must live in



A MOVEMENT IN PRAYER

**Children Praying
in Chirala, India**



**VICTOR HONEY, STELLEN-
BOSCH, SOUTH AFRICA**
Victor Honey is a retired
Professor of Art from
Stellenbosch University.

the present, launch yourself on every wave, find your eternity in each moment." This resonates with another, closer-to-home reminder, and in God's words: "Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand new. It's bursting out! Don't you see it? There it is..." (Isaiah 43: 19–20 *The Message*).

My best work happens when I seize the moment. My eye, the lens, and being present in what I see and hear, align. Such alignment moves me into "listening" to what I am seeing. In being alert and attentive, I discover newness, hope, and perhaps the reaffirmation of things

that matter and continue to make me who I am.

In the words of Leo Tolstoy, "In the name of God, stop a moment, cease your work, look around you." And take a picture of it. It will be a reminder of the things to come. But for now, it may even create a monster of a change for a better world, a world where values of your faith are expressed through love. ■

Rajmund Dabrowski is a native of Poland. A writer and photo-journalist, he was Communication Director at the Seventh-day Adventist Church world headquarters, 1994–2010. He lives in Laurel, Maryland.

ADVENTIST EDUCATION



Time to Act: *Strong Convictions Expressed at a National Summit on Adventist Education* | BY GILBERT M. VALENTINE



To say that there was a palpable sense of alarm among the participants attending the National Summit on Adventist Education, “Crossroads of Peril and Promise,” held at La Sierra University (LSU), in Riverside, California, October 20–23, 2010, would not be to overstate the situation. Although the atmosphere was not one of panic—not yet—there were definite hints of it in the air right from the outset. Fletcher Academy CEO Dr. Dale Twomley’s frank opening keynote address clearly set out the seriousness of the situation, and in a pessimistic, iconoclastic response, Georgia-Cumberland Academy Principal Dr. Gregory Gerard wondered aloud whether there would ever be any real political will to fix things. From the perspective of more than thirty years in Adventist Education, many of them in leadership, Gerard was not hopeful.

So forthright was the tone that LSU School of Education Dean Clinton Valley felt obliged to remind participants that the views being expressed were not necessarily those of the sponsors. It was clear that these meetings would be significant. These first-night speakers were looking not at a looming crisis in Adventist education but at one that had already arrived. The data cited repeatedly during the conference was not necessarily new, but it was stark. During the last two decades more than 400 elementary and secondary schools in North America have closed. Enrollment has dropped more than 40% even as church membership climbed 20%.¹ Competent leaders to head up schools and academies are increasingly scarce. If available they are increasingly unwilling to serve. Leaders for some of the largest academies are being called out of retirement to fill the gaps.

The leadership vacuum is alarming.

The church is changing, and summit participants heard that the changes are having a compound effect on Adventist education. Ethnic diversity is increasing. The Caucasian church membership in North America has become one among the other minorities, and it is steadily graying (50% above age 55 in 2008). The birthrate among Adventists is generally declining. With the average size of younger families in the church steadily shrinking, the catchment pool from which Adventist school enrollments have traditionally been drawn is simply evaporating. While there are new growth areas in church membership in North America, the growth is occurring among people groups that either do not value Christian education in the same way as previous generations or are financially unable to afford it. A demographic study of the North American Division (NAD) undertaken in 2008 by Monte Sahlin and Paul Richardson reveals that 40% of Adventists in North America live in households with annual incomes of less than \$25,000. Another 30% live in lower middle class families with incomes between \$25,000 and \$49,999. Growing numbers of families clearly would not be able to afford the cost of private school tuition. As the Dean of the School of Education at La Sierra University noted, it appeared to many observers that Adventist education had entered a state of terminal decline. And the experience of other parochial school systems in North America was of no comfort. Urban Catholic schools across the nation have all but disappeared in the last 50 years, and Lutheran and Baptist schools by the hundreds were also turning out the lights and closing their doors.

This blizzard of bleak information provided the background to the sense of deep anxiety pervading the plenary sessions, small group presentations, breakout discussion groups, corridor networking groups and meal table conversations.

Almost 300 participants attended the sum-

Some participants reported that they sensed that perhaps at last there was developing a willingness to openly face the problems confronting the educational system and find meaningful solutions.



**Dan Jackson,
President North
American Division**

mit, surprising the organizers who had initially hoped for 100. According to the summit co-convenor, Dr. Clinton Valley, participants represented all nine Union Conferences in the NAD and over 100 K-12 Schools and more than 20 SDA and non-SDA higher education institutions. The largest single group attending consisted of eleven professors from Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, including their newly appointed Provost, Dr. Andrea Luxton. More than 44 papers were submitted in response to the call for papers. Following a blind professional review by a panel of LSU School of Education academics, 21 were made available electronically for all participants. Six of these were selected for plenary session presentation. Clearly, the level of interest was very high. And not all were pessimistic. Some participants reported that they sensed that perhaps at last there was developing a willingness to openly face the problems confronting the education system and find meaningful solutions. Dr. Valley observed that the summit had drawn so many because a perception had developed that this conference could make a difference. It had become clear that “business as usual” was no longer tenable. Something had to be done.

Good News Provides Impetus for Summit

The idea of a national summit first emerged in mid-2009 with the first startling results from the *CognitiveGenesis* study on Adventist Education. Commencing with the collection of data

in 2006, the LSU-based *CognitiveGenesis* study had undertaken a large scale investigation of the levels of academic achievement in Adventist Schools. Previously for over two decades under the leadership of School of Religion professor, Bailey Gillespie, La Sierra University had been undertaking a longitudinal *Value Genesis* study on how schools and colleges compared with other church agencies in shaping the values and nurturing the faith of Adventist young people. The results of that study had been very informative and helpful to church leaders and had helped shape many changes adopted widely across the denomination. But that study had not looked at academic achievement, and there was developing among the Adventist constituency the idea that Adventist schools were below par, and this was being cited as one of the reasons for the decline in support for the system.

In the face of these developments, Professor Elissa Kido, former Dean of the LSU School of Education, began to wonder how effective Adventist schools really were in promoting the academic success of their students. Could the academic progress of students in Adventist schools be documented and compared to those in other systems? Over a four-year period Professor Kido headed up a study in partnership between LSU and the NAD in which every school and every student in North American Adventist schools would be assessed.² The research project, funded predominantly by private donors, had demon-

strated by 2010 that students in Adventist schools, were in fact, on average, outperforming their peers in other school systems, private and government, by at least half a grade per year.³ This was true across all disciplines. Adventist education, if only Adventist parents realized it, was in fact a very good bargain. If the church's educational system was in terminal decline, it was not because schools were failing to provide excellent academic results. The church, its parents, and its educators needed to hear this, and the church needed to grapple with the real problems that were facing the system, thought Kido and Valley. The idea for a conference was born.

A steering committee was formed compris-



The research project...had demonstrated by 2010 that students in Adventist schools were ...outperforming their peers...by at least half a grade per year.

ing Elissa Kido, Director of the *CognitiveGenesis* project at LSU, Clinton Valley, then a professor of Administration and Leadership at LSU, Kelly Bock, Pacific Union Conference Education Director, Don Dudley, Superintendent for Schools for the Southeastern California Conference (SECC) and Marilyn Thomsen, LSU Vice President for Advancement. Professors Kido and Valley found ready support from other educational leaders who shared their concern for the school system and who viewed the situation as serious enough to join forces. The SECC Education Department made an early commitment of support with Director Don Dudley pledging that his staff and school leaders would attend. Kelly Bock of the Pacific Union Conference committed his department to help underwrite the expens-



Twomley warned that unless there was a change in the remuneration system to reflect community rates there would be no correction of the downward trend.

es of the meeting as did the NAD Vice-President for Education, Larry Blackmer. "We need new eyes," observed Blackmer, and the system needed "to listen" to make sure that as educational decisions are made they are made "for the right reasons and in quality ways."⁴ The conference had genuinely taken on the dimensions of a national summit.

As an added indication of the seriousness of the situation, newly-elected General Conference Education Director Dr. Lisa Beardsley also attended for the entire duration of the meetings, playing a significant supportive role, a fact that did not pass by unnoticed by summit participants. Would there now finally be a commitment to not allow the situation to drift further? The new North American Division President Elder Dan Jackson attended on Thursday morning to welcome and greet participants and to express support for their endeavor. He also encouraged participants and reinforced the perception that at last this summit might be a "game-changer." Elder Jackson recounted the deep impact that Adventist teachers had made on his life through their caring attitudes. "The need for Seventh-day Adventist Education in the North American Division has never been greater," he affirmed and indicated that the Division was committed to "reaching out" to its "institutions of higher learning." There was a need, he said, "to find the very best way possible to cooperate with each other." LSU observers noted that this was the first time an NAD President had set foot on La Sierra Campus in many years, and they took courage from this indication of the church's positive and affirmative commitment to higher education.

No Shortage of Ideas, Opinions and Hopes

The summit steering committee had wisely invited speakers representing a wide range of perspectives. They wanted to ensure that the problems of the education system were addressed from every possible angle. Larry



Blackmer acknowledged that there were "many, many people" who thought they could "run Adventist education better than Adventist education," but he hoped that "the variety of voices around the table at La Sierra" would help to uncover "manageable, intelligent, wise ways" to address the issues the system was facing. The plethora of diagnoses and remedies, often conflicting with one another, certainly gave participants much to think about. Dale Twomley asserted in his keynote address that a lack of adequate leadership was a key issue. Twomley, who has developed a well-deserved reputation as a specialist in rescuing endangered academies from extinction and turning them around and seeing them flourish, spoke of the systemic problems that put the system at risk of demise. Lack of leadership is a key issue, he said, largely because the system lacks an adequate remuneration system that encourages capable leaders to commit to the rigors and challenges of educational leadership. Twomley warned that unless there was a change in the remuneration system to reflect community rates there would be no correction of the downward trend. The leadership vacuum and the lack of an adequate remuneration scheme were reinforced by numerous speakers during the summit. The call to consider a reorganization of the system similar to that which was undertaken for the Adventist Health System was suggested. At the very least was there a need to develop a separate wage scale for educators?

Shane Anderson, pastor and author of the

widely read 2009 book *How to Kill Adventist Education and How to Give it a Fighting Chance*, resonated well with the participants, and he also identified the lack of strong leadership as a critical issue. He argued that the declining system could be turned around if educators would only recover a passion for the “unique mission and message of the Seventh-day Adventist Church...that we believe that Jesus is coming sooner rather than later.” For Anderson, the renewal of Adventism’s apocalyptic message is critical, for without it the church would lose its “reason for being.” Both teachers and staff needed to be “strongly Adventist personally,” and educators needed to link up anew with pastors because “they are the gatekeepers of Adventist education.” This “reformation solution” to the system’s ills was a distinctive strand of thought at the conference.

Other speakers, while affirming the view that spiritual vitality must ever lie at the heart of the system, did not agree that “reformation” would of itself fix the problems. Monte Sahlin’s video-recorded response to Shane Anderson pointed out the inevitability of the demographic shift taking place in the church. The church is ageing, families are smaller, the catchment pool of Adventist children is shrinking. This is happening in spite of spiritual vitality and renewal and needed to be factored into any solution. Steve Pawluk, Provost at LSU, applauded Anderson’s emphasis on the role of pastors as “gatekeepers” in the sense that their support of schools is critical. But he then noted the crucial distinction that schools are not the church *per se*. The church with its youth camps, Sabbath schools and youth meetings is a much cheaper way of achieving the goals of basic religious education and securing commitment to the church. Adventist schools are schools, not churches, and their focus on quality learning and teaching is critical to their success in preparing young people for professional service to the church and its community.

Another presentation received enthusiastically by participants was that by Pacific Union

Conference Associate Education Director Thomas Thambi who proposed a financial fix for the system. Frustrated principals burdened by their continual struggle with school finances liked the idea of a universal, additional 2–5% “tithe” contribution being asked of churches as part of an augmented tithing system (in essence making it a tithe and a half). Union conferences would retain an additional 5% of the tithe they would normally send on to the General Conference and would use this to fund schools. This would be the basis for a free admission policy for all Adventist parents in North America. Non-Adventist parents would pay community rates, and schools would send these community tuition amounts back to the Union. The proposal supported the broadened use of tithe on the basis that teachers functioned as “licensed ministers.” This “Five Per Cent Solution” he felt would certainly get the financial monkey off the



Elissa Kido, La Sierra University
Professor of Education

backs of principals. Pacific Union College Vice President for Finance, Dave Lawrence, also dealt with the financial dilemmas of the system. He reported on his study of school finance in the NAD which revealed, counter-intuitively, that on average Adventist schools achieved high rates of academic achievement quite independently of the varying levels of per capita expense. Less resourced schools did as well as more adequately resourced schools. This did not of course mean that schools still did not need money.

Besides a broadened tithe system, govern-

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ment money was also advocated as an appropriate source of revenue that needed to be expanded. Dr. Edwin Hernandez, a Research Fellow at the Center for the Study of Latino Religion at the University of Notre Dame, reported on some situations where state-funded “education vouchers” had been made available for students in private education. He encouraged a more aggressive approach from schools seeking these funds which functioned in similar ways to Pell grants for higher-education students and could be obtained without compromising strings attached. Dr. Hernandez urged a more mission-oriented focus for Adventist schools, particularly for students from a low socio-economic base. Such an approach would help address the needs of the growing Hispanic groups in the church. David Williams, Professor of Public Health at Harvard School of Public Health, and an alumnus of Caribbean Union College, Andrews University, and Loma Linda University, also spoke of the challenges of the changing demographics in the church and the need to be ready to help low-income families. The changing demographics should be seen as an opportunity and not a threat, he said. Appropriate government grants could help Adventist education to seize this opportunity. Is the rethinking of attitudes to appropriate forms of government funding part of the way forward for Adventist education?

If Adventist school finance was not an easy problem to solve, neither was governance of the Adventist school system. This was the issue for a number of speakers. Dr. Robert Summerour, co-chair of an organization known as the Alumni Awards Foundation (AAF), observed in his plenary session presentation that a major problem of the system was that it was hardly a system at all. When one goes looking for whoever is in charge of the system, no one can be found, he observed. No one person is in charge. This makes achieving any kind of change exceptionally difficult if not actually impossible. It was not like changing direction in a huge ship which might be

expected to be a slow process. Rather, the Adventist education system in North America was like a scattering of hundreds of independent yachts on an ocean, each sailing under its own mast each doing its own thing. Such fragmented governance arrangements, with parochial interests dominating over all else, is a systemic flaw, he maintained. Was it not time for NAD to become much more involved with ownership and control? Why could not higher education institutions integrate in some kind of multi-campus arrangement for much greater efficiency and long-term sustainability? The point was echoed in a candid moment during the college and university presidents’ break-out session when the moderator asked if the present arrangement for the provision of Adventist Higher Education in North America was sustainable. Not one of the five senior administrators participating was able to answer in the affirmative. In the light of the systemic hurdles, however, it appeared to the pessimistically-inclined participants that bankruptcies and withdrawn accreditation would force campus closures rather than a proactive system of mergers.

In the face of these intractable systemic problems, a solution for the K–12 system proposed by AAF, although “outside the box,” resonated with a number of principals. AAF is a non-profit organization that has sought to empower Adventist schools to reach their full potential through a series of incentive grants and awards. Summerour’s organization now



**Victor Brown,
Kettering College
of Medical
Arts Dean for
Enrollment
Management**



Lisa Beardsley,
General Conference
Education Director

proposes a separately funded and operated network of schools commencing in 2013. The aim of the new network is to “create a new model to grow into,” Summerour explained to a crowded lunchtime audience. Beginning with a selection of five, AAF plans soon to publish the criteria for schools to be accepted into the network. Schools will not be required to sever relationships to conferences. Although there will be new accountability requirements, the organization is not envisaging school closures. The organization is committed to securing financial capital and using it wisely, he explained.

Before the summit, some school principals had expressed the view that they hoped the conference would not come up with the simplistic view that all that was needed to fix the system was better marketing. But while discussions of marketing did feature in the program, it seemed clear that better marketing by itself could not be a fix. A number of presenters highlighted the particular marketing challenges facing North American schools. In break-out sessions recruiters reported on the increasingly difficult challenge of marketing to Adventist families. Victor Brown, Dean for Enrollment Management at Kettering College in Ohio, identified a number of key difficulties beyond the demographic issues. Competition among schools, a tuition-driven system and an increasingly polarized church membership made traditional marketing approaches both more difficult and less effective. It was a clear consensus that while marketing would contin-

ue to be important, by itself, it would not turn the system around. Social networking would prove to be of more value than any sophisticated software or technological approach, argued the Dean of La Sierra’s School of Business, Dr. Johnny Thomas. “Every relationship matters,” when you are talking about marketing, he pointed out. But it was important to establish a “purple cow” kind of niche and market that point of uniqueness.

Just what it is that constitutes the distinctiveness of Adventist schools was a much discussed issue at the summit. Numerous voices in plenary sessions and in smaller discussion groups sought to clarify what should be the central purpose of Adventist Education. Some voices asserted the primary *raison d’être* is to indoctrinate students in Adventist doctrines and lifestyle. Other voices claimed that the primary purpose is to give students an opportunity to develop a personal relationship with Christ and make a personal Christian commitment. Any Christian school could do that, responded the Adventist indoctrination advocates. Yet others asserted the primary purpose was to provide quality education but within a distinctively Adventist world view. The claims for primacy were overlapping, competitive and ultimately unresolved. How much the competition for primacy was simply semantics was not clear either. The undercurrent of competing claims for primacy of purpose illustrated a perplexity that school administrations of whatever stripe have to face—the perplexity of the “pile of purposes” that society and constituencies heaped on to their educational institutions.

There is no one simple and crystal clear objective such as that which drives a business where ultimately, profit is the bottom line. Adventist educators wrestle still with their own “pile of purposes.” John Webster, Dean of the School of Religion at La Sierra University, proposed that the biblical concept of “Advent” could provide the organizing theological principle for Adventist education. Grounded in the “Advent” of God in the past, the theme not

**Is the
rethinking of
attitudes to
appropriate
forms of
government
funding part
of the way
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**In a final vote,
the summit
participants
expressed
their convictions and
endorsed a
resolution
that...urged
the church
to action.**

only points educators and students forward to the “world to come” but introduces them now to “the joy of service” in the presence of Jesus in the present. Adventist-centrism and Christ-centrism in this way are one and the same.

Participants heard reports of K–12 schools that were endeavoring to refocus their purpose to enable them to address the changing demographic challenges. These schools were becoming more evangelistically focused and intentionally reaching out to their non-Adventist communities. A number of schools were thriving under this focused, outward-looking model. Dr. Don Williams presented the rationale for such a model particularly for Adventist colleges and universities in his paper entitled “The Centered Set.” The paper cited a number of examples of this kind of institution from the history of Adventist education. A “bounded set” institution in contrast to a “centered set” institution followed a more familiar pattern which involved the following: a) the listing of essential characteristics of those within the set, b) ensuring that those within the set shared common characteristics, and c) identifying who is either inside or outside their boundaries.

By contrast, “centered set” Adventist institutions would place Jesus at the center, and the process of discipleship adopted the goal of moving people toward the center. The adoption of the “centered set” model for an educational institution would require an “institution to be very purposeful in its mission,” he



explained. Furthermore, moving to a “centered set” orientation should not be driven by economics. Creeping compromise would accompany such a move. While in the case of the centered set approach a conscious choice is made to enroll a more diverse population, the institution must have a more intentional mission and a more clearly chosen theological position. Williams illustrated the differences between the two approaches with an agricultural metaphor used by Frost and Hirsch in their book *The Shaping of Things to Come* (2003). In Australia, water wells rather than fences are used to control herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. Providing a source of water keeps the livestock centered geographically. In contrast, livestock in America are largely controlled by fences.

Beyond the Campfire

The sense of urgency that pervaded the entire four days of the summit did not dissipate as delegates prepared to leave. Rather, at the last plenary session on Friday afternoon, October 22, a formal action was taken to move beyond the talk. Stephan Gray, Vice-principal of North Dallas Academy, had expressed the sentiment of many in his hope for measurable change and no more “sitting around the campfire.” Frequently participants had voiced the concern that business could not continue as usual. Something had to change. In a final vote, the summit participants expressed their convictions and endorsed a resolution that captured the mood and concern and urged the church to action.



Their action read:

Whereas

- this national summit of almost 300 educational and church leaders has received reports and considered research data that clearly establish that the Adventist K–12 education system in North America is in serious decline, and
- it is clear that both the K–12 and the higher education systems are confronted with major challenges arising from changing demographic and economic environments as well as financial and systemic factors, and
- it is the conviction of the summit participants that the Adventist Education system in North America faces grave threats to its sustainability; therefore,

RESOLVED

To request the North American Division Office of Education to establish a Commission on Education in North America (CENA) to study and make strategic recommendations to the relevant authorities that will ensure the future viability of both K–12 and higher education in the North American Division. The Commission should be subdivided into subcommittees co-opting expertise and resources as appropriate to accomplish its mission for K–12 and higher education.

The Commission's terms of reference should include but are not limited to the following issues:

1. *Identity and Mission*
2. *Structure and Governance*
3. *Marketing*
4. *Funding*
5. *Constituency Involvement*
6. *Leadership Development*
7. *Pastoral Partnership*

The resolution was forwarded to the North American Division Office of Education by the Summit conveners Professors Kiddo and Valley the following week. The resolution is now in the hands of the North American Division. Whether the turn taken at these crossroads leads to peril or promise remains to be seen. ■

An Update:

In November, the North American Division Office of Education determined to deal with the "Resolution" by proposing that each of the nine Unions in the NAD establish a taskforce to review and make resolutions on one of the seven areas of concern. This approach was endorsed by the Association of Colleges and Deans of Education (ACDE) at its meeting in Tampa, Florida in December and then enthusiastically approved by the North American Education Advisory. Taskforce preliminary reports are due in May 2011.



**Whether the
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ise remains to
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References

1. In the Pacific Union Conference territory alone during the past decade K–12 enrollment had declined almost 21.8%. Varying rates of decline have been cited depending on the span of time considered, the sector and the geographic region. Long-term steady decline everywhere is the general pattern.

2. Robert J. Cruise of La Sierra University and Jerome Thayer of Andrews University provided statistical expertise for the study.

3. The comprehensiveness of the study and the significance of the results have attracted attention from research organizations and publishers. See <http://www.cognitivegenesis.org/article.php?id=2>

4. LSU Executive Director of University Relations Larry Becker provided regular detailed advance news releases as well as reporting by journalist Darla Tucker for the summit. These reports published on the LSU website have provided valuable resources for this report. These include "First national SDA education summit to brainstorm change" (Darla Tucker) August 4, 2010; "National ed summit produces plethora of opinions, ideas, hopes"

New York's Best-Kept Secret

Winter Highlights:

Feb 12

Rebekah Wang—*Polarization in the Adventist Church / What makes a Hospital Adventist*

Feb 19

Rev Eliezer Reves—*Immigration and Religion: An Ethic of Reciprocal Solidarity in the Works of Jane Addams*

March 5

Gina Rae Foster—*Lyric Dwelling: The Art and Ethics of Invitation and Occupation*

March 12

Brian Straver—*Triumphs & Tragedies of Louis Conradi / When Loughborough Got it Wrong*

March 19

Ron Lawson—*Review of Finding My Way in Christianity*

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March 5 **The Role of Faith-based Colleges in the World of Higher Education** — Drs. Richard Osborn and Richard Winn, Vice Presidents, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)

May 20–22 **Thirteenth Annual SDAF Retreat at Pine Springs Ranch near Idyllwild, Calif.** — Dr. John R. Jones, LSU School of Religion

Recent Happenings:

January 8, 2011 **Genesis 1: What in the World did that First Hebrew Audience Hear?** — Brian S. Bull, MD, LLU School of Medicine, and Fritz Guy, PhD, LSU School of Religion

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(Darla Tucker), October 22, 2010.

5. <http://www.alumniawards.com>

6. Frost, Michael and Alan Hirsch. *The Shaping of Things to Come*.

(Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 47.

Gil Valentine (pictured, previous page), is Chair of the Department of Administration and Leadership in the School of Education at La Sierra University. He has served as a senior administrator in Adventist Higher Education institutions in Pakistan, Thailand and Australia. Prior to his appointment at La Sierra he served in the South Pacific Division Education Department as Tertiary Education Officer.

FEEDBACK ■ Continued from page 9

the usual chronological questions. We wanted to direct attention to the theological significance of the text; this significance, we are convinced, was its message. Thus we would encourage twenty-first-century readers to avoid the common but unwarranted assumption that ancient Biblical texts directly address modern scientific concerns.

Incidentally, Dr. McMahon is not the first conservative Creationist to cite the late eminent Hebraist James Barr in favor of a literal interpretation of the Creation days in Genesis 1. Barr is very clear:

Interpretations which suppose that the seven "days" of creation are not actual days but long ages, days of revelation, or the like...are all transparent devices for making the Bible appear to be factually accurate by altering its meaning at the awkward points. In other words, schemes...which are reputed to preserve the authority of the Bible and the accuracy of its narratives seldom succeed in doing so: they paper over one crack while causing another and yet larger one to appear elsewhere.

Barr then continues with a listing of what he considers to be factual errors in Genesis. His point was that a reader who takes the Genesis author's 24-hour days as factually correct must also take the vast ocean above the sky as factually correct. We believe that those who cite Barr's authority at the one point where he agrees with them are, in the interest of intellectual honesty, obligated to state that his overall view of Genesis is radically different from theirs.

BRIAN BULL

FRITZ GUY

Congratulations! Now What?

Q & A with Mt. Ellis Academy's Principal Darren Wilkins | BY JARED WRIGHT

In September Mt. Ellis Academy in Bozeman, Montana, won \$500,000 in the Kohl's Cares contest on Facebook. After finally receiving the check, Mt. Ellis Principal Darren Wilkins takes time to talk about the contest and the outlook for Adventist education.

Q: *First, big congratulations on coming out on top in the Kohl's Cares competition. Can you briefly take us through the experience of the competition and Mt. Ellis' victory from your vantage point?*

A: It's hard to know how to nutshell an experience that I could talk about for hours. This school has been an audacious faith venture since its founding in 1902. The school's history is one of miracles and commitment from its constituents. When we became aware of the Kohl's grant opportunity, we were just dumb enough to think we might have a chance. We had a huge need that fit well within the parameters of the contest.

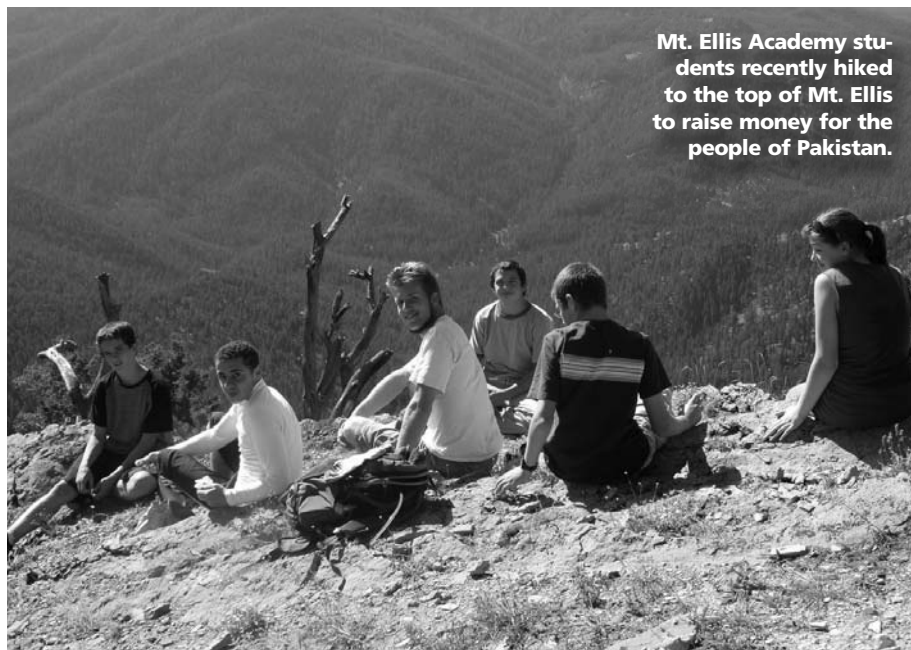
Our summertime staff put everything else aside and focused on getting the word out to our students, parents, and constituents. We asked them to vote and get everyone in their sphere of influence to do likewise. We developed a simple slogan, "SOS—Save our Sewer," that caught on very quickly.

Within three days we broke into the top 100 schools. At that point our local media became interested in the story and provided great coverage the rest of the way. There was a growing sense of excitement as we climbed the leader board. Our local community and public university got on board. Volunteers from all over the country handed out thousands of fliers. Many of our foreign alums worked very hard in their countries to get the word out, resulting in thousands of votes from Italy, France, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Bahrain, Pakistan, Gaza, and China. Our students produced a 20-episode video series called "Sewage Watch 2010" that became somewhat of a YouTube sensation.

As momentum built there was a strong sense that something miraculous was happening. The whole thing was getting much bigger than we were, which was very humbling. We spent a lot of time praying as a school family. We wanted to focus on the blessings we had already received and not have our gratitude hinge on whether we received the grant or not. Even when we broke into the top 20 schools with two weeks to go, we knew we would need a massive infusion of votes to stay there. We were hoping and praying that the Adventist Church in North America would notice



Mount Ellis Academy staff Kevin Emmerson and Darren Wilkins celebrate the arrival of the \$500,000 Kohl's Cares check.



Mt. Ellis Academy students recently hiked to the top of Mt. Ellis to raise money for the people of Pakistan.

that something very special was happening for its academy in Montana. To win a grant we would need our sister schools, churches, and institutions behind us.

Just when it seemed that we had plateaued and were beginning to drop out of contention, our North American Division Leadership sent out communications to every church, school, and university strongly urging them to rally as a family behind our school. To us it was a gift from heaven. It turned the tide at a critical juncture. During the last week we received a deluge of votes. E-mails and phone calls rolled in from around the country and around the world. They were messages of support and excitement. We weren't able to breathe easily until the last hours of voting. In those last hours the votes rolled in by the thousands, and when voting closed Mt. Ellis Academy had 144,006 votes.

After a lengthy process of vote validation it was determined that our school finished ninth out of all the schools in the nation for votes. We have received the check for \$500,000, and we'll begin work on our new sewer system in the spring.

Q: *This contest saw an unprecedented cooperation among Adventists from the North American Division, and indeed, from around the world to propel Mt. Ellis Academy to the win. What does it mean to you and to the academy to be the center of all that?*

A: I can tell you that our whole school community is still pinching itself. We feel so grateful and blessed.

Honestly, in the aftermath of the contest there was very little talk of the grant itself. The only thing on our minds was the unprecedented unity that swept over our church. The fact that this school that we love so much was the object of that unity is almost too much for us to wrap our minds around. When I step back and look at it objectively I think there are big lessons for all of us to learn. Our campus pastor, Barry Curtis, may have said it best. Immediately after voting ended, he posted this simple question on his Facebook page: "What can we agree on next?" In a time when agreement

among believers seems elusive, this seems to me to be a shining example of the power of unity.

Q: *The \$500,000 Mt. Ellis won in the contest will go toward renovating the school's septic system. Now that you have won the money, what's next?*

A: We have a long-range campus master plan to renew a very old campus and make it viable for the future. Three years ago we completed phase one with the construction of a new dining hall. New water/sewer infrastructure is the next phase. We're now blessed to be able to focus our future fund-raising on excellent programming for students, ministries, and above-ground structures. Future construction will include a new church and administration building.

Q: *This contest also highlighted the challenges facing Adventist academies. During this economic downturn, and with enrollment numbers flagging for many schools, paying for infrastructure upgrades and operation costs is becoming tougher. How do Adventist schools remain financially viable under these circumstances?*

A: That is a question that defies easy answers. The bottom line is our schools will be around for as long as we value them. If parents, conference administrators, people in the pew want them, they will be there. We have difficult demographics (a graying church), tough economics, and parent ambivalence working against us. I'm not ready

to throw in the towel, though. I'm a huge believer in our schools, and I think they're worth fighting for. In our particular situation that means doing everything we can to become leaner and more excellent at the same time. For us that has meant upgrading and downsizing our dormitory operation. We've worked hard to increase our day and foreign student numbers. We've also established a niche: this is the place to come if you want a college prep education with an outdoor adventure emphasis. Another important element has been a total commitment to a philanthropy program. We've done our best to set the academic bar very high. Most importantly there is no replacement for the combination of fervent prayer and hard work. We need miracles to operate every year. We pray for them and then watch for open doors.

Q: *With the price tag on Adventist education making it seem cost prohibitive for many families, how does a boarding academy like Mt. Ellis continue to attract students and quality educators?*

A: First of all, boarding school is not cost prohibitive. It does require sacrifice on the part of parents and students. It is not always easy to convince a high school student that it would be better to spend his/her summer earnings on academy tuition than on a car. I can't think of a single case where we haven't worked things out for a kid who was willing to work and a parent who was willing to make sacrifices commensurate with his/her economic situation. Our development program raises over \$100,000 a year in student aid. This is my message to parents: don't be frightened off by the sticker price. Make that phone call to the academy of your choice. You'll be surprised at how doable it is.

As for attracting quality educators, I've been very blessed. I never had a shortage of excellent applicants for teaching positions. Mt. Ellis may be small, but it is located in a spectacular place with tremendous outdoor recreation. The place sells itself and attracts exactly the kind of people we need for our outdoor adventure emphasis. We're currently in our fifth year of zero turnover in our teaching staff.

Q: *The North American Division recently said on Facebook, "The future of our church rests in Adventist education." If that is the case, what does the future of the Church look like? What is your assessment of the church present and future in light of Adventist education?*

A: That is a very good question. What we do know empirically from the *Value Genesis* and *Cognitive Genesis* studies is that students are more likely to excel academically and remain in the church as adults when they attend our schools. Those are both good things. Frankly, the future church will be determined by the people sitting in the pews and that will be determined by both education and generational dynamics. Young people have always changed the church as much as it has changed them. I believe that the role of Adventist schools is first and foremost to introduce kids to Jesus, not to perpetuate an institution. Our school's vision statement is, "To Follow the Lamb Wherever He Goes." That phrase is the primary descriptor of the 144,000 in Revelation and is at the core of Adventist belief. You can't follow something that is standing still. If we can help students to orient their lives around following the Lamb, I really don't need to worry about the future.

Q: *If there are changes that need to be made in Adventist education at the academy level, what near-term or long-term changes might you call for?*

A: Well, every school has a different set of circumstances, so I hesitate to generalize. I will say this. We could fill every desk in every SDA school in North America with children of immigrant families who can't afford to pay for private school. If we really want our schools to have an impact on the next generation and on the future of the church, we need to figure out how to get those kids in our schools.

Q: *Concerning your personal involvement in education, where do you find your Zen—your impetus—to do what you do?*

MEACHURCH.ORG



North view of Mt. Ellis Academy campus

A: I find it where I am. I am often asked why I've stayed nine years at such a small school. I just love the place. I love the quality of relationships in a small faculty team that works together to do a whole lot with very little. I love watching kids snorkel in high mountain streams to observe trout habitat. I love having students in my living room studying for a test. I love being a place where everyone is crazy. Crazy enough to try things like Kohl's Cares [contest] and do it heart and soul. Most of all I love being in a place I know God called me to.

Q: *Looking forward, what do you see as the continuing role of Adventist Christian education? How is Mt. Ellis taking part?*

A: Adventist schools are part of the ministry of the church, and, as such, their primary role is to build the kingdom in the lives of young people. This is not about recruiting foot soldiers for the kingdom, but rather helping the kingdom find a home in individual hearts. The other primary function of Adventist schools, in my view, is the equipping of future leaders of the church. I believe this is happening in fantastic ways. When I compare the students in our schools right now with my generation that passed through in the 1980s, I feel strongly that we've come a long way in terms of discipling students and equipping leaders. I'm very optimistic about the future based on the students I see. I am often disappointed by the apathy in the North American church toward our schools just at the time when I believe they are doing their best work.

I also hope that our Kohl's Cares effort and the vast support it received awakened new energy and commitment to all of our sister schools around the country.

Finally, I want to say, "Thank you, thank you," to everyone who worked so passionately for our school during the Kohl's Cares Campaign. The journey was better than the destination. It bonded the school to its local community, Adventist constituency, and alumni. It energized our faculty and students. I hope that it also provided some inspiration for people to work passionately for their own local schools. If our school could pack a little snowball and start an avalanche, so can yours. You can make your school great. ■

Jared Wright is a member of the *Spectrum* web team and on the pastoral staff of the Azure Hills SDA Church.

ARCHEOLOGY ■ *Continued from page 41*

What became clear in listening to him is that 'Umayri, a relatively small site without the grandeur of the Roman city of Jarash or of the great temple in Petra, nevertheless is significant to Jordan because of the domestic architecture—the best preserved four-room house in the whole of the Levant—and because of what it reveals of the Bronze and Iron Ages in Jordan, eras that are not as well represented as the later Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic periods. What is revealed at 'Umayri, especially during the late thirteenth century BC, becomes an important chapter in the narrative of ancient life in Jordan.

Canty Wang, recent La Sierra graduate, put what we do this way: "We are the garbage cleaners of ancient history. The pieces one finds connect people of today with people of the past. This process of connection broadens our human understanding. Today most of us are focused on the present and the future—our jobs and what we will do or accomplish. It becomes important then to understand ourselves backwards through time" (Fig. 13: *Canty Wang at her sift*, page 41).

The time spent on the dig becomes an experience like no other—rising at 4:15 am, the living conditions, the constant digging, the short showers, the routine day after day—it's exhausting, but, yes, a big part of the experience is finding things. Excitement comes after a lot of hard work, when a door to a small shrine, a seal, or even the Mother of all Grinding Stones emerges from the dirt (Fig. 14: *Large Grinding stone in House*, page 40). Indeed, the thrill of holding a seal impression with a finger print of some person alive here thousands of years ago, or to find a hearth inside a home—the ashes still there of a distant fire where someone, a mother say in 1200 BC, bent over a fire to make food for her family—is hard to quantify (Fig. 15: *Fireplace in house*, page 39). In archaeology we seek such moments again and again. That which is lost is found and made real again. It's why we dig dirt.

We'll be back next season on the tell, *insha 'allah*.¹ ■

References

1. Arabic for, "Hopefully, if God wills."

John McDowell is the Director of the Honors Program and Professor of English at Pacific Union College. He has wide ranging interests—from art to archaeology. At 'Umayri he was the dig photographer. His art can be viewed at jmcdowellart.com.

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"Walk in My Shoes"
by Kent Rich. 2002, oil.

Artist Biography:

Kent Rich is an artist from Salt Lake City, Utah. "Walk In My Shoes" (cover) is a tribute to Kent's battle with diabetes and successful transition to a healthier lifestyle. The shoes depicted in Kent's artwork are the same shoes he wore while participating in the Adventist diabetes health program, Newstart, in Weimar, CA. Thanks to the program, Ken says he has lost almost 210 pounds. He has been free from diabetes for six years and his overall health has improved dramatically. He wishes to thank the program and staff at Weimar for helping him achieve this success.

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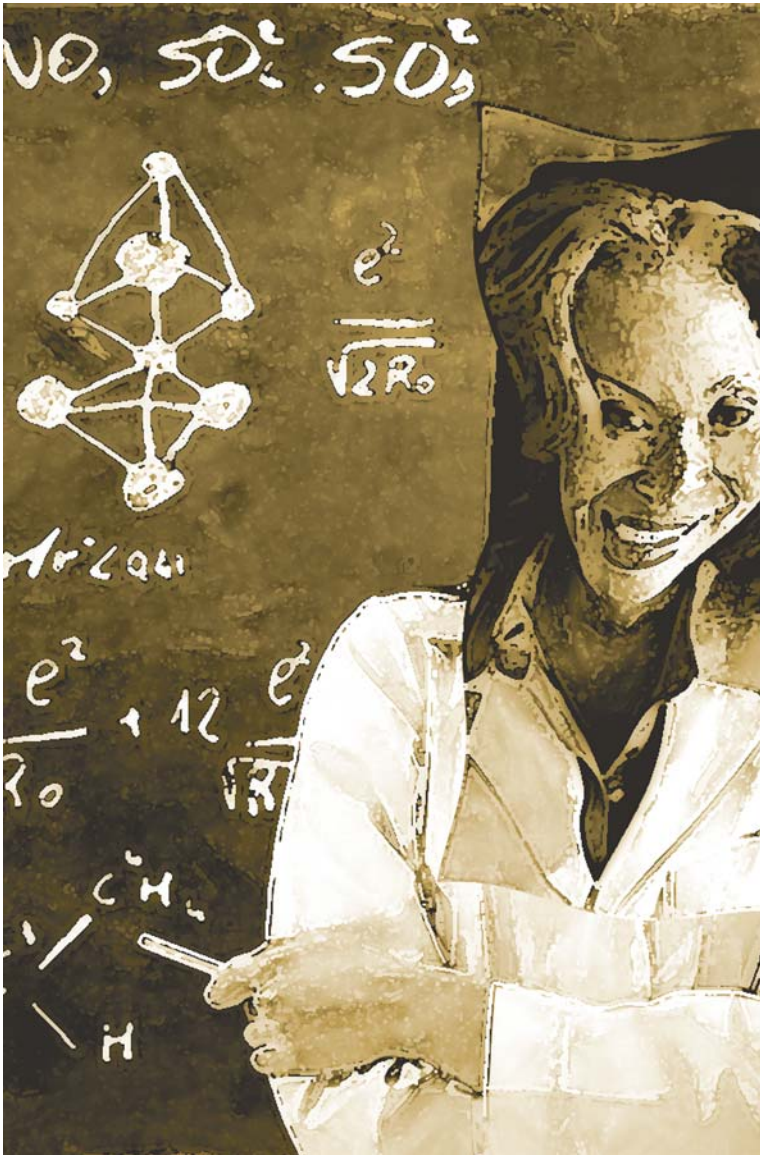
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POETRY



SHE PRESENTS A PAPER ON THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING

BY MIKE MENNARD

It's come to this: The scientist
proves more and more a poet kissed
by Muses in her epic gist
of everything. Her verses orphic,
her calculations metamorphic,
her every stat and line and list,
like thought, anthropomorphic,
and truths, like God, once more exist.

Mike Mennard is assistant professor of English and Communication at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska.