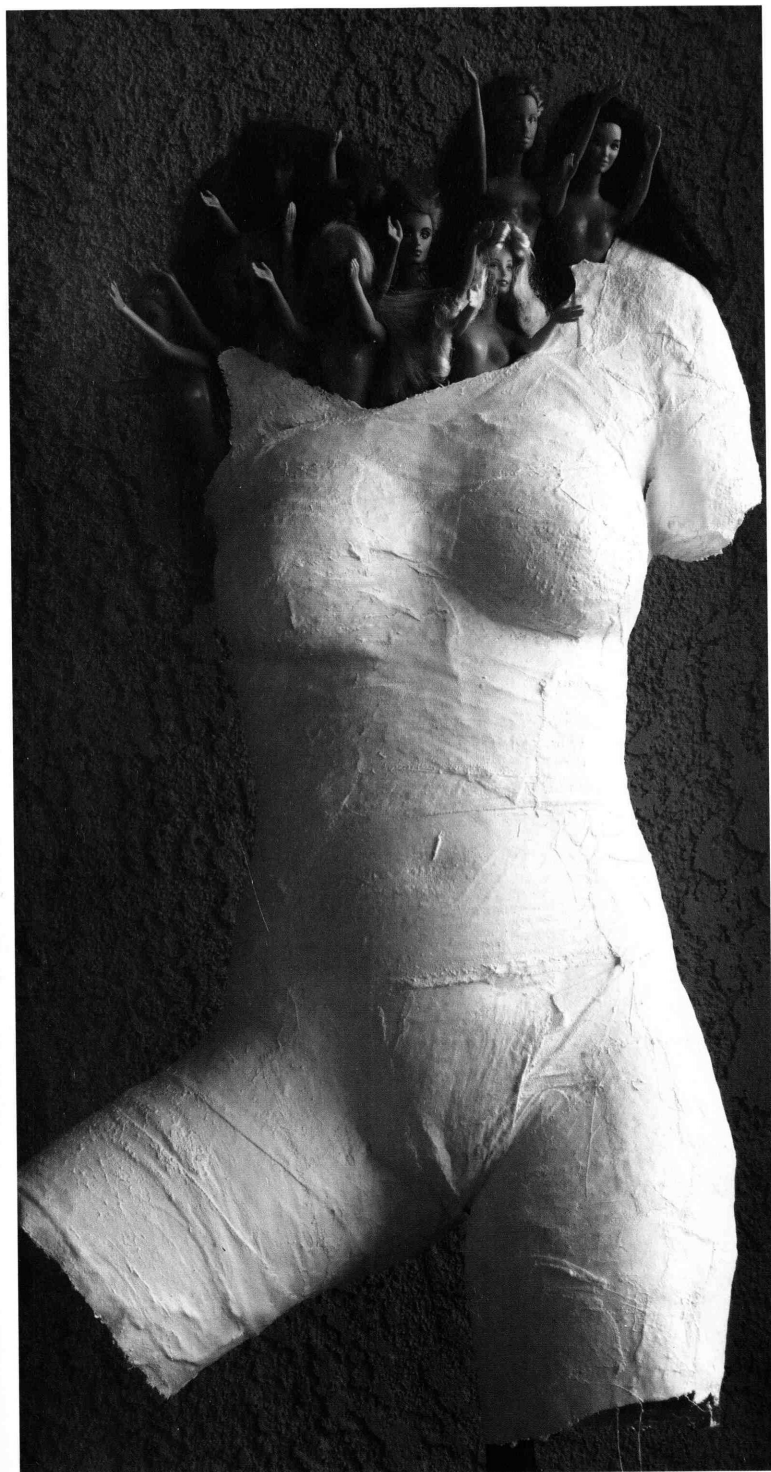


 community through conversation

SPECTRUM



Reflections on the NAD Women Clergy Conference

*Bakers, Birds,
Mothers, Cities
and Whores:
Female Metaphors
in the Bible*

God the Mother

*Lambs Left to the
Wolves*

Is Cohabitation Always Wrong?

*Student Poetry
and Art*

Some New EGW Compilations

community through conversation
SPECTRUM

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by Amy Cronk. Plaster
cast, 2009.

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Grappling with the Call to Community, the Call to the Ministry | BY BONNIE DWYER

"The relationship among the entities of the church is more than a matter of law and policy. Therefore attempts to codify that relationship will always be inadequate. The primary strength of the Church comes not from its structure but from its collective desire to live out a commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. **Such a commitment embraces a call to community.**" (emphasis added)¹

In Silver Spring, Lincoln, La Sierra, Berrien Springs, and Decatur, Georgia, too, the debate over women's ordination and church policy has intensified this year.

Lawyers have been consulted to give opinions on actions taken by the North American Division that countered those voted by the General Conference. Conferences and unions have appointed committees to review bylaws, draft opinions, devise language that will resolve the policy issues. In the Pacific Union and Columbia Unions special constituency sessions have been called for later this year. The matter has moved past being simply about ordination to being an issue of community. How do the levels of church relate to one another? Who decides the issue of ordination?

In the document quoted above, the distribution of authority and responsibility within the church is described as not being centralized in a hierarchical structure. "Instead authority and responsibility is distributed throughout the Seventh-day Adventist Church structure." For example, the document which was approved at the 2012 spring meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee, states "the final authority and responsibility for deciding who will be a church member is located at the local church; the final authority and responsibility for the employment/assigning of pastors and other workers resides at the local conference; and the final authority and responsibility for deciding who will be ordained is officially located at the unions."

This recognition of where authority lies set in motion the Pacific Union's call for a constituency session and will inevitably reverberate through the system in the years to come.

Just as the community grapples with what to do about its policies, individual women grapple with how to respond to their vocational call to ministry. Even though some have found places that welcome them, there is always recognition of the church's present two-tiered system. Will there ever come a time when people are placed above policy and ordination is discussed without regard to gender?

In this issue we listen to students and professors describe their experience at the North American Division Women Clergy Conference as well as their study of Scripture on this topic. We also look at feminine metaphors in the Bible.

"Through the approximation of metaphor, truth about God's character can be planted in our minds," Lora Geriguis tells us. Can you imagine God as mother as well as father? Sam McBride shares his thoughts about Jesus' words in Matthew 23:37 to show how "Mother" is a part of God's nature.

God's nature is also to bless us, and empower us. Writing in the Yale Divinity School's *Reflections* on "The Meaning of Calling in a Culture of Choice," Edward P. Hahnenberg says, "To speak of call is to acknowledge a caller, to see that God's gracious initiative precedes all of our projects and our plans, that our individual (and collective) journeys have a goal."²

Pacific Union College student Samantha Angeles summarizes the goal for us by quoting Galatians 3:28, "for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Although it may not seem like we are one while we are in the midst of debate, that is our call, our goal. ■

Footnotes

1. "The General Conference and Its Divisions—A Description of Roles and Relationships in Light of Organizational Structure Development, Current Governance Documents, and Practices." Action voted April 2012, General Conference Executive Committee Meeting, Silver Spring, Maryland.

2. Hahnenberg, Edward P. "The Meaning of Calling in a Culture of Choice." *Reflections* (Spring 2012), 22.



Drift, or Adventist Ideals at Risk | BY CHARLES SCRIVEN

Pardon me, but it's hard to find a new theme when we seem so vulnerable to pontifical drift. Vulnerable even when we want to *seem* like a Reformation movement.

The theme I refer to is ecclesiology. It won't go away—and it had better not: we seem poised for yet another abdication of our historic ideals.

But the leader of the church's Fundamental Beliefs Review Committee, Elder Artur Stele, offered a somewhat encouraging point of view in an interview published in the April 2012, issue of *Adventist World*, NAD edition. He said:

- Our doctrines are not “engraved” in stone, so occasional revision makes sense; new language may “better express” what we've always believed.
- In the revision process God “can use and speak through every member,” and he and his team want members to offer the committee short statements of “suggested” language.
- The committees has one “special assignment”: integrating into a revised Belief No. 6 an action regarding Creation that was “voted by the church's Annual Council in 2004.”
- Without a biblical doctrine of Creation the whole structure of Adventist belief, not least the Sabbath, gives way.

I identify with three of these four points. If faith is always *seeking* understanding, we should expect new insight. If Christ's work means the priesthood of all believers, we should make sure every member has a voice. If the Bible teaches

Creation, it is because Creation is a key premise for the whole story of salvation.

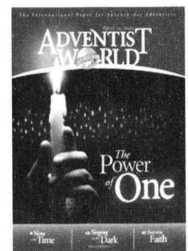
But the third point is scary. The Fundamental Beliefs Review Committee must incorporate words voted by Adventist leaders—overwhelmingly Adventist clergymen—at the church's 2004 Annual Council. Even though non-ordained participants were few, the council mandated—against the leanings of most Adventist scientists—a literalistic reading of Genesis. Creation is “recent”; and happened over six “literal 24-hour days forming a week identical in time to what we now experience as a week.”

The background was a series of Faith and Science Conferences that took place between 2002 and 2004. Conference organizers said their experience confirmed the importance of science, but not science that conflicts with literalist interpretation. The 2004 Annual Council's action was a response to their report; it included a directive to Adventist educators to uphold and advocate “the church's position [by which it meant the Annual Council's position] on origins.” Delegates said, indeed, that all Adventists should embrace the “church's” position.

But one motif in the report from the Faith and Science Conferences was that “some among us interpret the biblical record in ways that lead to sharply different conclusions.” There are “different theological interpretations among us regarding Genesis 1–11,” organizers wrote.

Among “us”—among, that is, the Adventist scientists, theologians and church leaders who participated. Here was clear evidence of diverse opinion *within the church*. But in the face of this,

*We seem
poised for
yet another
abdication
of our
historic
ideals.*



the 2004 Annual Council—overwhelmingly, ordained Adventist clergymen—expressed determination to rid the church of diverse opinion.

The first thing to say is that this development reflects early Christian heresy. In the New Testament church no privileged group exercised theological authority over the people as a whole. It's true that apostles and elders meeting in Jerusalem, Paul included, developed a written consensus (the "whole church" in Jerusalem was supportive) concerning Gentile converts and the Mosaic law. Their letter (Acts 15) said, among other things, that abstention from food offered to idols was one of the "essentials." But it was sent to "Antioch and Syria and Cilicia," where a crisis had arisen, and not to churches everywhere. Later, Paul shared the letter with other congregations (Acts 16). Still later, though, he described circumstances (1 Corinthians 10) where believers could, without qualm of conscience, *eat anything set before them*. The spirit of the Jerusalem letter—its passion for unity amid diversity—remained pertinent, as it does today. But to Paul its authority was not oppressive, not a basis for "lording it over" in the manner, as Jesus put it, of the Gentiles; the letter was consistent not only with the Spirit's gift of new insight but also with its sensitivity to local nuance. In spite of this, however, those "set apart" for leadership soon fell under the spell of hierarchy. Even before the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, bishops were seizing responsibility for authoritative definition of dogma; they had begun to think of themselves as superior in thought and character to the "unordained" members of the Christian community.

The second thing to say is that the current attempt by bureaucratic authority to stamp out diversity breaks with historic Adventism. In 1995 Charles Bradford wrote that early Adventists were "determined to expunge from their teaching and practice every trace" of authoritarian governance. He said further that "Ellen White coined the phrase 'kingly power' as a warning to pastors and leaders not to abuse their authority." An expression of Adventist doctrine that came out during Ellen White's lifetime underscores these points. In 1872 church leaders published a statement of Adventist belief that began with these astonishing words: "In presenting to the public this synopsis of our faith, we wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible. We do not put forth this

[statement] as having any authority with our people, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them, as a system of faith..."

These leaders did *not* think of their own perspective as being somehow the same thing as the church's perspective. They summarized what they took to be a wide consensus, but did not wish to disallow diversity of opinion. To them uniformity was a mistake, not an aspiration.

This is an energizing feature of nineteenth-century Adventism. It may help to explain why Artur Stele expresses interest in the perspective of "every member." It may also explain his arresting reply to an e-mail I recently sent him. Does his call for input from members apply to questions surrounding Belief No. 6? Is the Fundamental Beliefs Review Committee's "assignment" to integrate language from the 2004 Annual Council statement "non-negotiable," or is there, even here, openness to change "as a result of comment from lay people?"

Almost immediately, he replied: "O yes, feel free to send your suggestions!"

I do not know enough about the process, or about Artur Stele, to be sure what his comment may mean for the church's conversation over the next few months and years. But one suggestion I would make is to leave Belief No. 6 as it is. The present wording gives room for nuance (and for all our scientists) while expressing, nevertheless, a crucial—and highly countercultural—faith in God as Maker of Heaven and Earth. The current statement, moreover, is profoundly biblical; instead of adding divisive words, it echoes what Scripture actually says.

My second suggestion would be all the more important should Belief No. 6 change in the direction many Adventist leaders now seem to favor. It is that the preamble of any new document on Adventist doctrine end as follows: "This Statement of Beliefs is to be regarded as consistent with conversation meant to advance our comprehension of biblical truth." That would reflect the fact that all human understanding is fallible. It would reflect the spirit of the New Testament. And it would reflect as well the spirit of historic Adventism, which seems always at risk, yet always stubbornly alive, even to this day. ■

Charles Scriven chairs *Adventist Forum*.



A Forgiving Space

Marching Orders

A copy of Valentine's article titled "Time to Act: Strong Convictions Expressed at a National Summit on Adventist Education" in the Winter 2011 edition of *Spectrum* was presented at our local church school board meeting by a constituent pastor. I'm not a member, nor was I present, but my interest is piqued. It seems that our "marching orders" might be indicated. Thank you.

RICHARD WILLIAMS | *Via the Internet*

Response to "The Angry Believers"

Thank you for sharing the thoughts of Loren Seibold. It is, frankly, an amazing testimony to the grace of God that any of us can survive the "holiness" of the church.

PASTOR GARY WAGNER, DMIN | *Via the Internet*

Another Response to "The Angry Believers"

I am enjoying the glory of this day, having read the paper on the back porch, eaten some breakfast, and opened and perused the latest issue of *Spectrum*. Turning to the article, "The Angry Believers," I was uplifted by Loren Seibold's piece. What he says is so simple and yet he is able to write five compelling pages on the simple notion that losing sight of the basic tenet of Christianity to love one another does happen and gets excused by adherence to rules. I am jealous of the man's vocabulary! Fissiparous? Fabulous. Schadenfreudian? Formidable!

JENNIFER MAKOL | GRANITE BAY, CA

Revival Begins at the Top:

Blog responses to Charles Scriven's editorial (40.1)

Trudy | Tue, 02/21/2012 | 13:54

Thanks for this. It's important and I'm trying to focus on it. My local church is being revived and reformed to the point where I often don't even feel com-

fortable expressing an opinion anymore, and it can become so easy to get stuck in an us-versus-them mentality. When I feel I have to speak out about something that seems wrong to me, it's so hard to hold on to humility, to remember that 1) I might be wrong, and 2) even if I'm right, those who disagree with me have as much right to their views as I do to mine.

David Read | Wed, 02/22/2012 | 00:13

Charles wants a church "distrustful of patriarchy," but patriarchy seems to be the scripturally sanctioned model. Our opinion leaders in the Western world have decided to dismantle patriarchy, and eradicate all sexual differences and distinctions, but if the church hastens to go along with that, we're admitting that the world is right and the Bible wrong (just as we are if we go along with Darwinism).

We can talk about dialog and understanding and not being angry and not being arrogant and having humility, etc., but it's all just denial. The fact is that, religiously, I have far more in common with a conservative Baptist or even a conservative Episcopalian (assuming any of those are left) than I do with Charles Scriven. We don't belong in the same church, and I would assume that we will not be in the same church indefinitely.

marcio gonalves | Wed, 02/22/2012 | 02:36

the question that everything boils down to is: what does God expect from you and me. what are his expectations? obey or think? adventists have traditionally been taught to read and understand the bible a certain way; we can't and shouldn't assume this the one and only correct way to read it, this would limit God's diversity, and most of all, would contradict the whole point of the salvation story. it seems clear that if we truly believe the whole christian story, we must come to the conclusion that God values, above all, free will. if He didn't, we wouldn't be in this mess. now i can understand that for some, it is tough to unify thinking for oneself and obeying, or even thinking and being humble. Jesus, our example, was both—how can we be? i believe that, in the context of the salvation story and biblical message, blind obedience is one of things God hates the most. He wants us to know what we are doing, and then do it because we know it is the better way—a not only because it pleases Him. He wants dialogue and growth, which

would have been our main activities were there no sin. He knows we are all different but He still wants us to be together. we need to find God through our own search for truth and meaning, with his Word and with others on the same path. interpretations will differ, and we need to establish first and foremost that even if there were only one absolute truth or way of seeing things, we wouldn't be able to grasp it anyway. i think if you look at the bible carefully and try to figure out some of its seemingly contrasting views, it will be a pretty logical step to take the cultural and religious context into account—I think this is obvious to everyone in the discussion. it has to be the same for us and our time now—once it was enough to have a leader say something and everyone follow, and that was okay in some ages and cultures. it is not okay today, if we want to fulfill our mission. people want to know, they ask, they question and doubt. we must focus our shift on personal experience, on trying out God's basic truths, on living them. to be lead and to obey blindly—it doesn't fit our time and it has little to do with religion (= to reconnect). God desires a relationship, he is relational, that's what drives his creative power. obedience must be natural consequence of reflection, although i do think that sometimes obedience can lead to reflection and affirmation. what i do know is that obedience without humble reflection and relationship is completely useless, and its fruit won't be the fruits of the Spirit, that is clear.

Mike MacLennan | Wed, 02/22/2012 | 21:16

Charles Scriven wrote: "God-sent humility—the first criterion of Revival and Reformation—would fit us all for just and loving attention to one another, and surely that could open doors to a more truthful, more aligned, and less angry, Adventism. Humility would serve forgiveness and a forgiving space would help to rinse away our self-deceptions. Each of us, in our stations high or low, could then summon the will to grow by listening and looking. Instead of veering toward inquisition, we could ascend into gracious dialogue." ***** Hello Charles, Wonderful words of life for us to apply in our lives right here on these blogs. May we cultivate humility, "forgiving space", listening and looking and gracious dialogue; especially with those whom we think are completely wrong. Cheers, Mike

dmboyce | Fri, 02/24/2012 | 08:14

Discernment is all too rare in our church. We think we have it, we have all the answers, we attack with our witness. Perhaps this arrogance, the lack of humility, comes from the complete absence of any listening to others. True listening, not getting your next response ready while they are talking, but hearing others. These heady discussions are just noise if there is no listening. Sincere humility comes from openness to others and a sense of our part in the puzzle of life, a speck. Jesus showed humility virtually at every turn. Too bad his one episode of righteous indignation, cleansing the temple, is used as license to continuously live in the righteous indignant state. Driving home points over top of people leaving a wake of hurt behind. Out of touch with the effect our actions have on others is another variation on arrogance.

Meantime the conviction needed to lead must also fit in somewhere, it is not simple. The would be no harm taking a moment to check our motives at the door and just listen. The caution of listening is not to just listen to ourselves. I heard it on the radio so it must be right, oh wait that was me. Some people listen only to themselves. That is not the same. Blessed are the peacemakers.

Ed Reifsnyder | Sat, 02/25/2012 | 17:53

Interesting views on "patriarchy." Patriarchy could, and does, represent a lot of different things. Patriarchy could mean the system by which wealth is passed on generationally. Patriarchy could mean that estate assets bypassed wives and went straight to male heirs. It could mean some kind of power transmission in which governance/leadership is passed on generationally from male to male, kind of like kings and clan. It could mean the restriction of women's activities so they are precluded from functioning to any meaningful extent outside their home, like say, for example, they couldn't drive as is the case in Saudi Arabia. Maybe patriarchy means women shouldn't vote in civic affairs or hold office..

And of course, when you have patriarchy, it's the men who get to decide all this stuff! So maybe women shouldn't even have a seat at the table to influence the decisions about the meaning of patriarchy. (I suspect there is a fair amount of opinion among Adventist women that this is already the case.) The women just need to hear the outcome of the discussion among the men. Right? So for those of you promoting patriarchy, what is your point? How far down the range of possibilities do you want to take patriarchy? Do you want to take it just far enough that women can't have full ministerial status in the Adventist church? Or would you like to go for the whole patriarchal enchilada?

Fred Eastman | Tue, 02/28/2012 | 08:15

David, I think you make a valid point in that how society views "woman's work" tends to put more value on "men's work" and for some this may be a motivating factor to remove "gender roles" from the equation. Clearly from a biological/anatomical standpoint different genders have different roles. (a good thing in my experience :->) The problem as I see it is in areas that are not "physiologically" defined such as in the workplace or in the spreading of the Gospel etc. where do you draw the boundaries?? You clearly think the "patriarchal" system is God ordained and has no boundaries whereas many in modern society, me included, think that in modern times the boundaries need to reflect a better understanding of those roles/boundaries and that "woman's ordination" (for instance) doesn't make gender roles go away but rather is an area of "shared responsibility" by God's design and the blocking of WO has more to do with "power and control" by the "brethern" than "perpetuating God's plan"!! Unfortunately the "strongest defenders" of the "patriarchal hierarchy" seem to have a "conflict of interest" you might say, and should consider "recusing" themselves from taking such a "cast in concrete" stand on this and similar issues. All the best Fred ■

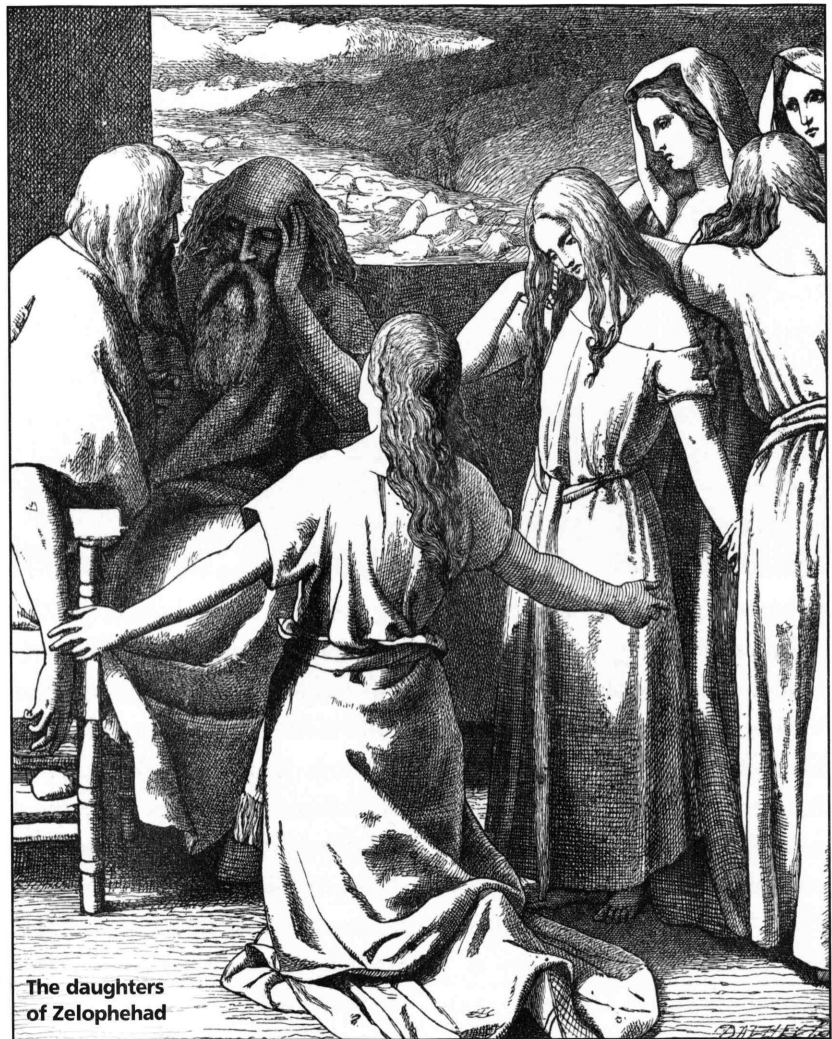


A Conference and Survey Give New Insights to Adventist Ministry

Reflections on the NAD Women Clergy Conference

BY KENDRA HALOVIK VALENTINE

THE CONVERSATION HAS CHANGED. No longer must women working as pastors in local Seventh-day Adventist churches defend the validity of their role, exegete the challenging biblical passages, argue the appropriateness of their vocation in light of Adventist history, or humbly articulate their commitment to their congregations and their ability to be effective in pastoral ministry. At the recent North American Division Women Clergy Conference, April 23–26, 2012, the leaders of the North American Division (NAD) Ministerial Department assumed all of the above without question. Acceptance of women in ministry was the new normal. In his final presentation to the group of approximately 120 ministers, President Dan Jackson repeated what had been said many times throughout the conference: “I want to thank each of you for responding to the call of God.” The only issue now, it seemed, was just how to resolve the ordination issue in terms of church policy and



The daughters of Zelophehad

governance.

Planned by the ministerial department of the North American Division, but shaped by the personal touch of Elder Esther Knott, associate ministerial director, the four-day conference met on the compound of

Adventist Frontier Missions in Berrien Springs, Michigan. A most impressive aspect was the dedication of the ministerial department staff, whose consistent ministry of presence during full days of presentations, break-out sessions, and

evening events exhibited a commitment to servant-leadership.

My take is that most of the women considered the sermon by Hyveth Williams on Wednesday morning the highlight of the conference. Her presentation, "Don't Sell Your Birthright to Satisfy Your Belly-ache," kept rhetorically returning to Esau's poor choice (Gen. 25:29-34), but more carefully followed the story of the five daughters of Zelophehad found in Numbers 27:1-11, who courageously confronted Moses, Eleazar the priest, Israel's leaders, and the entire congregation (vs. 2) by asking to be treated fairly. Their father had died without sons, but his daughters believed their family should still receive a portion of Israel's new land. Their request was approved by none other than the Lord (vs. 6-11). Policies regarding gender inheritance changed that day in Israel.

Williams then invited her sisters in ministry to be patient and to not spend valuable time together debating an issue that has "already been decided in our favor by our God." Alluding to passages about Jesus in John 1, she shared her conviction that the same Spirit is touching men today: "Never before have so many in positions of power been convinced.... Thank God for such men.... So be patient, my sisters, as daughters of God in Christ." As Williams moved towards her conclusion, she imagined the celebration of the five sisters upon learning of the Lord's verdict in their favor. Then she reminded the women that the crown of righteousness is their birthright, and "don't sell your birthright!" The meeting hall was full of women say-

ing, "Amen!" and many rose to their feet in a standing ovation.

Later, during a Q & A session with Dr. Dwight Nelson, senior pastor of the Pioneer Memorial Church, and Dr. Ron du Preez, director of adult Sabbath School and communication for the Michigan Conference, Dr. Williams spoke of Vashti whose story is found in the book of Esther. "Vashti made it possible for Esther," she said, referencing the many women who modeled effective ministry within Adventism. She said, "I owe so much to Elizabeth Stern-dale," and then continued listing Adventist women who, in recent decades, have paved the way for women in ministry: Josephine Benton, Jan Daffern, Kit Watts. Williams ended her response, "When you are ordained, do not forget the Vashtis."

The conference included a good deal of listening to the testimonies of the attendees, both in small groups and within the entire gathering. A booklet with short bios of the attendees, presenters and NAD staff provided a rich resource for networking and expanding one's circle of friends. A presentation by Dr. Darius Jankiewicz, of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, shared new insights into the origin of the word "ordination," while Pastor Stan Hickerson, senior pastor of the Stevensville Church in Michigan, shared what for many were new insights into the stories of women ministers who served in the early Advent movement.

President Jackson's first of two presentations focused on governance in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He began by stating that

governance flows in two directions, from the top down, and from the bottom up. After referring to his January 31, 2012, letter to North American church leaders, he listed the various unions and conferences that have now moved forward on the ordination issue. He understood that many might be wondering why the NAD was not commenting on these actions. His explanation was to begin singing the song first released by The Four Seasons in 1964, "Silence is Golden." He described the conferences and unions as doing what they feel God is calling them to do, and the NAD did not see its role as one of trying to stop them. "We are not going to chastise them... we are not going to affirm them." Instead, President Jackson sees the role of the NAD as one of educating the North American constituencies. He noted that it was clear at the 2011 year-end meeting that this question is not going away for the NAD, and that its role, in addition to education, is to find more pathways for women in leadership.

Kendra Haloviak Valentine, PhD, is an associate professor of New Testament studies at La Sierra University in Riverside, California. Experiences both in congregational and classroom ministry influenced Kendra's interest in the book of Revelation, and in 2002 she completed a dissertation on Revelation's hymns.

I Surrender All: A Response to the 2012 North American Division Women Clergy Conference

BY JILLIAN SPENCER

MY EYES FILLED WITH TEARS as I heard the music of united female voices filling the room at the Women Clergy Conference. Although both my conference and my congregation have fully supported me in my first year of ministry, singing at the ministerial meetings has been challenging.

When we sing together, I am usually one of maybe three female voices, and we have to hold our own.

Surrender is a fascinating word in many ways, as it relates to the realities of the women who were singing together in that room.

One day of the conference was devoted to storytelling, revealing how each woman there received her call to ministry. Many of us described a struggle to surrender to God's call; becoming a minister was the last thing we thought we wanted to do with our lives. However, we had to learn to surrender to God's will and deal with the consequences.

Once we got over our struggles to surrender to God, many of us were then hit with accusations of refusing to surrender to the Bible and/or church structure. Some of these accusations were violent or abusive. During one of my colleague's early years of ministry, a person actually came up to her after her sermon and slapped her. Another person accused a colleague of defiling communion by serving it. And the stories went on.

These women had surrendered all for ministry.

When the time came in the conference to discuss strategy and policy, a sense of tension permeated the room. Most of these women had surrendered all for God, yet the church we all love is constructed in such a way that surrendering to God and surrendering to his church appear, at least on the surface, to be in conflict. Individual women are called to ministry, yet even the leadership that felt compelled to facilitate communal surrender to God's will for these women found that they could not because of what the big red policy book says.



Yet a loophole exists. If individuals, churches, conferences, and unions start heeding the call of God and surrendering to it, the big red policy book and the higher church structure cannot stop them. If done carefully, the surrender of individuals to God's call for their lives and the church structure that was, after all, created to support his mission on earth, can be brought into alignment from the ground up. It starts with individuals, then churches, then constituents, then conferences, and finally, unions. There is nothing in the NAD or GC policy manuals that would stop those processes at each level.

This revelation makes it an exciting time to be a woman pastor. This loop-

hole could be the catalyst for amazing changes in the church, not just in the matter of women in ministry, but in how the church structure sees itself. But I would like to issue a word of caution, both to my colleagues and to myself. The moment that progress on this issue becomes about personal power or ambition instead of surrender to the will of God, it gets sabotaged. Ministers of the gospel, regardless of gender, are called not to acquire power, but to surrender to God in sharing his gifts of love, salvation, and healing with a world that

desperately needs them.

May God inspire all of his people to surrender all to selfless mission. As a woman in ministry, I'm rather fond of what Ellen White once said to the General Conference: "Find out what the Lord God of Israel says, and then do what He commands" (*Selected Messages*, Book 3, p. 33).

Jillian Spencer serves as an associate pastor intern at the Alhambra (CA) Seventh-day Adventist Church. Officially, this is her first post, but she has been actively involved in ministry of various kinds for over eight years. She has a particular passion for cross-generational and cross-cultural ministry. Jillian recently graduated from Pacific Union College with BA degrees in theology and Spanish.

Implications of Aging Ministry Could Hinder Future Staffing

May 8, 2012, Silver Spring, Maryland,

BY ANSEL OLIVER/ADVENTIST NEWS NETWORK

A RECENT REVIEW of pastoral demographics in the United States reveals that nearly 50 percent of Seventh-day Adventist ministers will reach retirement age within 10 years, a discovery that is prompting ministry officials to examine potential scenarios to address the coming dilemma.

Namely, will the denomination hire a new crop to replace retiring ministers, or will it urge much of its experienced, aging workforce to continue working longer than previously planned? Each option has its own advantages, and church leaders say they're exploring a mix of both possible solutions.

Retirement age is considered 66.5 for the year 2022, according to the U.S. Social Security Administration.

The choice of whether to retain ministers past retirement age into their late 60s and early 70s keeps experienced ministers on staff, church leaders say, but it leaves several generations between pastors and the young adults and teens they minister to. Yet this demographic is small—leaders say the median age of an Adventist in North America is 56.

How leaders address the situation could affect everything from hiring requirements and remuneration policies to seminary tuition and the cultural needs of the region's diverse congregants. All aspects of developing and supporting ministers could be up for analysis.

"We're going to be looking at how we can have top-level quality pastors in this

opportunity that's presenting itself," said Dave Gemmell, an associate director of the Ministerial Department of the church's North American Division (NAD).

What's certain is that leaders will explore how to renew recruiting efforts, sponsor more graduate students for theological training and develop the recently formed Board of Ministerial Education. Until recently, the NAD was the only one of the denomination's 13 world divisions without one. The board would offer additional formal training for practicing ministers.

"We have a good system of education, but we haven't historically had oversight of that in North America," said Ivan Williams, director of the NAD Ministerial Department.

A caveat

Church leaders noted that the above statistics on retirement age do not include "regional" conferences, church administrative units that oversee historically African-American congregations in the Central and Eastern U.S. There are nine regional conferences within the division's total of 58 conferences and one attached field. About 25 percent of NAD members belong to regional conferences, according to statistics from the office of the NAD executive secretary.

Statistics for this survey were gleaned from records in the NAD Retirement office. Regional conferences operate under a separate retirement structure, and comparable stats aren't available as of yet.

The entire division has about 3,460 ordained ministers and 230 commissioned ministers. There are about 920 licensed ministers, typically college theology graduates who have yet to enter the seminary or seminary gradu-

ates yet to be ordained.

The 1.1 million Adventists in the NAD live in the U.S., Canada, Bermuda, and the North Pacific islands that comprise the Guam-Micronesia Mission.

Hiring the trained

Addressing future staffing challenges in the U.S. also presents opportunities to examine other factors in hiring pastors. Ministerial leaders say they would like remuneration practices to better reflect a candidate's training. Currently, wages are similar for a pastor who has a doctorate in ministry compared to a pastor who doesn't have a college degree. That fact could lead NAD officials to consider making an adjustment in salary policies.

"I think [they] should," said Denis Fortin, dean of the Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

But that decision is ultimately up to leaders at divisions, unions and conferences. Fortin says a trend in the past decade is the increased hiring of pastors who don't have a master's degree in theology, and sometimes no college degree at all. A seminary professor said a study several years ago found that on average about four pastors in each local conference did not have a college degree.

This practice of filling pastoral slots with Bible workers who have completed a several-week training course actually violates the North American Division Working Policy. Section L 05 states that "educational requirement for entrance into the ordained ministry shall be the completion of the seven-year ministerial training program," specifying that college graduates "shall attend the Andrews University Theological Sem-

inary." Exceptions are allowed for "age" and "unusual circumstances."

Seminary leaders say an increasingly educated membership deserves educated pastors.

"Why would the ministry not need good, solid education when other professions in North America require good, solid education, whether it's a lawyer or someone in the medical field?" Fortin said.

One potential way to enforce the current hiring policy, Fortin said, could involve requiring a theological education before ordination or commissioning.

Who's at the seminary now

Fortin said the seminary graduate program has about 350 to 400 students enrolled, depending on the semester, and about 100 graduate each year. Church leaders estimate that about 200 pastors per year will be needed to fill future vacancies.

Walt Williams, an NAD Ministerial Department associate director and director of the seminary's InMinistry Center, said more second-career students are entering the seminary, many of whom are attractive hiring options to conferences seeking a candidate with more life experience.

The seminary continues to experience an ongoing shift in demographics. Nearly 20 percent of the seminary's current enrollment of graduate students is women, up from 15 percent a decade ago, Fortin said.

Also, ethnic demographics of seminary graduate students have shifted slightly. Caucasians still make up the seminary's largest ethnic group at about 35 to 40 percent, but Fortin said that figure is down from about 50 percent in the last decade. About one-third are Black, 15 percent are His-

panic and 12 percent are Asian, Fortin said.

Funding education

Another consideration up for review by NAD officials is which party will pay for a seminary student's tuition. Williams said he has noticed a shift in the last 10 years: where conferences once hired college theology graduates for an internship and then sponsored the candidate at the seminary, they now increasingly hire seminary graduates.

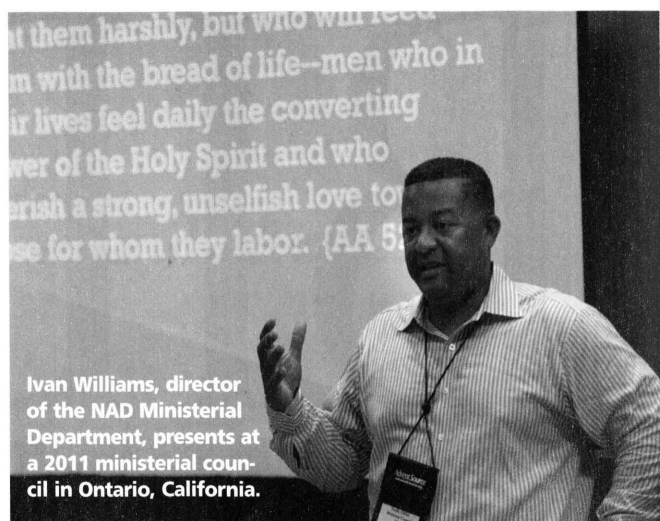
Part of that shift may have resulted from an incentive program to motivate conferences to hire seminary graduates. Several years ago the division began offering increased subsidies to conferences to hire unsponsored graduates fresh from the seminary. Some conferences are increasingly waiting to earn the incentive rather than risking sponsorship on an undergrad, with graduates frequently getting nothing to offset their debt.

"Now you have more theology majors going straight to the seminary without that one- or two-year break of an internship, which was very valuable," Williams said.

In many cases, it has also increased the debt load of more graduates. Now, only about one-third of seminary students are sponsored by conferences.

Division leaders want to reverse that trend. NAD now subsidizes the seminary's graduate program with about \$3 million annually based on 200 students, with another \$1 million of subsidies for unions and conferences to sponsor graduate students.

"We want more sponsored students,"



Ivan Williams, director of the NAD Ministerial Department, presents at a 2011 ministerial council in Ontario, California.

said Tom Evans, NAD treasurer. "We don't want conferences going to the seminary and hiring graduates at the last minute with the graduate having paid for everything."

NAD Ministerial leaders say conference hiring rates hinge on the economy. Williams, the ministerial associate director, said hiring has picked up some in the past year for the first time since the recession, but also proffered, "the floodgates have yet to open."

Still, most graduates find jobs. Fortin said seminary research suggests that about 85 percent of newly minted pastors are hired "within a year or two." Some of those positions are in chaplaincy and not in the traditional pastoral role at a congregation, he said.

Williams said he hopes that conference leaders continue to employ and train young pastors with a long-term focus in mind.

"Any farsighted conference that I've been in tends to hire younger pastors," he said. "It's going to take such courage to plan for the future."

"But I understand the challenge of administrators who have older pastors on staff who want to remain employed." ■

BIBLE

Women & Feminine Metaphors in the Bible



Bakers, Birds, Mothers, Cities and Whores:

Female Metaphors in the Bible | BY LORA GERIGUIS

A collection authored by a group of La Sierra University faculty members, revised for publication from a Sabbath School presentation made on October 15, 2011, for the Association of Adventist Women's conference held that year on the campus of La Sierra University.

Genesis 1 describes God's own "likeness" as expressed in the twofold creation of Adam and Eve:

Let Us make man in our image, according to our likeness...So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. —Gen. 1:26, 27¹

The depiction of dual-gendered human creation as woven from the fabric of God's "likeness" is difficult to comprehend. How can divinity and humanity, terms reasonably conceived as opposites, be anything alike?

One approach to answering this question lies in recognizing the role literary devices play in biblical language. Simile and metaphors are two such techniques used by biblical authors to forge definitional links between concepts normally seen as unrelated or even oppositional. The description of human creation in God's "likeness" follows the structure of simile, in which one thing (humankind, the *tenor*) is said to be "like" something very different (God, the *vehicle*). The key to unlocking this simile is beyond our human understanding, given our limited capacity for comprehension of the divine. Nevertheless, the Bible's use of this simile provides us with the reassurance that we come from God in a mysterious, but intimate way.

Not all figurative language in the Bible is quite so opaque. The power of another simile, the righteous "shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water," lies in the reader's understanding that the godly and the tree are not equivalent, but rather that the godly will "pros-

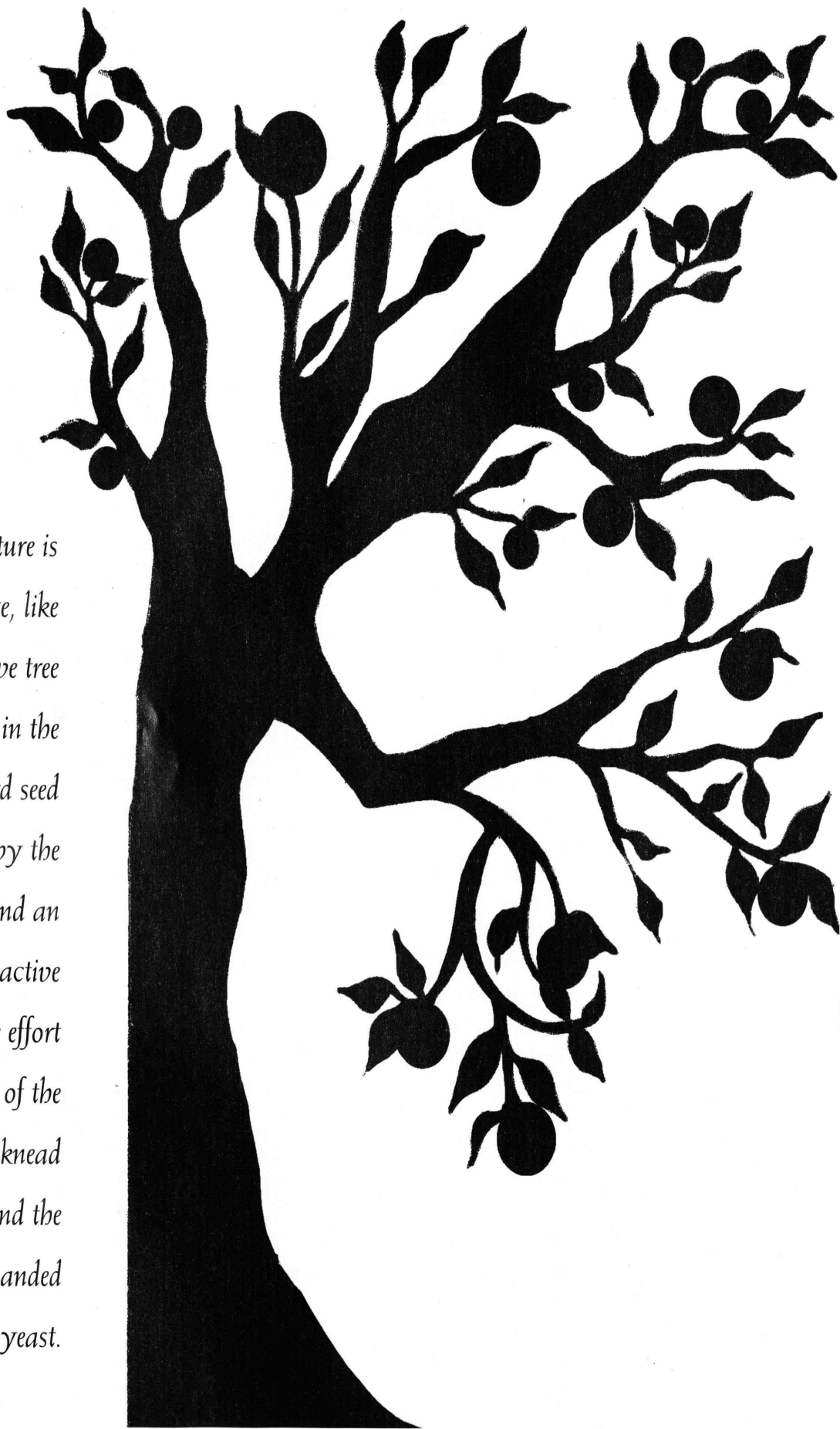


per" like a tree "that brings forth its fruit in its season" (Ps. 1:3). Here "fruit" is a metaphor, rather than a simile, because the produce of the tree and the good works of the godly have been completely overlapped, without the use of "like," which leaves the vehicle to stand in for the unnamed tenor. In fact, simile is simply an explicit type of metaphor.

One major category of biblical metaphors involves a reversal of the Genesis description of humans in the "likeness" of God, to instead portray God in anthropomorphic terms. In many of these cases, a simile (e.g. "the kingdom of heaven is like...") is used to set up a human metaphor for the divine.

Jesus employed both male and female human images as he sought to describe God in His parables. For example, Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed

God's nature is both innate, like the massive tree concealed in the tiny mustard seed planted by the gardener, and an act of proactive will, like the effort required of the baker to knead bread and the patience demanded of yeast.



planted by a male gardener, who sees it grow into a “great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it” (Luke 13:19). Notably, this metaphor of male agricultural labor is immediately followed by an illustration via female domestic labor:

And again He said, “To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.” (Luke 13:20–21)

The gardener and the baker are both metaphors for God, while the tree and the bread represent aspects of God’s kingdom. Jesus sets the male gardener with the mustard seed alongside the female baker and her leaven, suggesting that these two depictions of God’s kingdom reveal more in tandem with one another than either can say independently. Both images illustrate God’s life-giving nature in that the tree provides shelter for the birds and the leavened dough produces bread for eating.

However, the gardener and the baker as metaphors for God also set up a contrasting duality: God’s nature is both *innate*, like the massive tree concealed in the tiny mustard seed planted by the gardener, and an act of *proactive will*, like the effort required of the baker to knead bread and the patience demanded of yeast. The multiplicity of metaphorical illustrations, male gardener and female baker, is necessary in order to begin to express any truth about God in terms comprehensible to humans.

Another memorable juxtaposition of gendered images of God’s kingdom is found in the three parables of Luke 15, this time in a male-female-male pattern, with the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son depicting the lost state of fallen humanity. Co-starring in these stories are a male shepherd, a sweeping woman, and a longsuffering father, respectively, whose triple performances combine to gesture towards the diligent quality of God’s love for humanity. The example of the woman sweeping is notable for its depiction of a common cleaning task as a metaphor for God’s industrious pursuit of wayward humanity:

Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together saying, “Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!” Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repenteth. (Luke 15:8–10, KJV)²

In all these parables, Jesus harnessed imagery designed to haunt his first audiences after they returned to their daily lives. The story of the lost coin lent powerful new meaning to the ubiquitous task of sweeping dirt for all those women who first heard it. The parables of the mustard seed and the good shepherd must have echoed in the farmer’s mind as he lingered at sunset to ponder the trees on his land and the sheep in their pen. Picture the woman paused in her kneading to look at her dough, as if she hadn’t seen it a thousand times before. How often did serving dinners of fish and loaves remind the mothers of Jesus feeding the thousands? The mnemonic qualities of Jesus’ teachings, which transformed daily tasks into spiritual lessons, owe a great deal to the power of metaphor.

None of these figures—neither the sweeper, nor the shepherd, nor the pairs or trios of them—can adequately represent the divine. No human figure ever could. But through the approximation of metaphor, truth about God’s character can be planted in our minds. When describing the divine, something by definition so above our understanding, what else can humans do but seek illumination through comparison with what we do know, hence by metaphor?

Given the gulf that lies between God’s reality and human comprehension, metaphor is an indispensable literary tool for spanning the gap imaginatively. Paul employed the metaphor of a mirror to contrast our present incomplete understanding with the promise of a future when literary approximation will be replaced with full experiential knowledge of God.

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. (1 Cor. 13:12)

Paul’s mirror metaphor illustrates the Bible’s role as a divine revelation for humans, but one that is necessarily “dim,” a stopgap measure until we can see God fully. Ironically, Paul uses an intensely anthropomorphic metaphor, “face to face,” to describe the state of knowing and being known promised us in the future. A mirror’s defining quality of reflectivity—which necessarily replicates the image of the viewer—embodies the anthropomorphic quality of so many of the metaphors used to describe God in the Bible.

Jeanie C. Crain writes in exploring the literary tools of the Bible that “[m]etaphor achieves what ordinary language cannot: the union of ordinary experience and the ineffable God as Supreme Being.”³ The fact that the Bible frequently expresses

Female metaphors are among the most vibrant shades in the literary palette used by the biblical authors to paint their word portraits.

the unfathomable nature of God by means of feminine metaphors should remind us to value the full range of human identity as a nevertheless incomplete expression of God's creativity and identity. By neglecting the female qualities of the biblical depictions of God, we further impoverish our already too limited human capacity to fathom divinity. Conversely, by embracing all of these metaphors, male and female, we can enhance the glimpses into God's nature afforded to us in the Bible.

However, biblical metaphors are not limited to depictions of divinity in the Bible. Other concepts that pose difficulties for the biblical authors to describe and for humans to comprehend, such as future events or the nature of evil, are also frequently expressed through metaphor. On these occasions, the Bible as "dim mirror" might be best understood as a mechanism to protect us from information we cannot process, just as divine metaphors protect us from a glory we cannot survive.

Biblical metaphor as an overall technique can be described via another anthropomorphic metaphor: that is, as God's hand held up to protect Moses' eyes:

I...will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen. (Exod. 33:20-23)

When God finally takes the blinders of human frailty away from our eyes, our view will be of a "face," or rather whatever sense of God's immediate presence that metaphor implies.

Until then, we have the dim mirror of metaphor to aid our understanding. The Bible's male metaphors, such as God the Father and the Good Shepherd, have tended to enjoy great currency in our culture. Therefore, the authors of the following sections have chosen to highlight the contributions that female imagery has made to biblical language. Female metaphors are among the most vibrant shades in the literary palette used by the biblical authors to paint their word portraits: from baker to bird,⁴ from city as woman to country as women,⁵ from bride to mother to whore.

Some of the female imagery used in the Bible

is affirming of women in its celebration of pregnancy and mothering, for example. Others raise long-debated questions of women's relationship to nature and culture. Finally, a few, such as the whore and bride of Revelation, seem to capitalize on the most painful or pervasive female stereotypes. In all cases, a deliberately fostered appreciation for these female metaphors can both fix our attention on the powerful literary qualities of the Bible and greatly enhance our comprehension when we read scripture. ■

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director of the MA in English program at La Sierra University. She teaches courses on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British literature, literary theory, research methods, and biblical literature. Her academic publications consider literary depictions of nature, colonialism, and identity politics. She and her husband, David, have three children, Peter, Paul, and Julia.

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1. The word "likeness" in this context is repeated when the genealogy of Adam is later listed: "In the day God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female" (Gen. 5:1-2). All biblical quotations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the New King James version (NKJV). *Andrews Study Bible* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2010). The New King James Version (1982) and the King James Version (1611) are used here despite their reputation for less gender-inclusive language in order to demonstrate that even these translations use female imagery in important (often positive) ways.

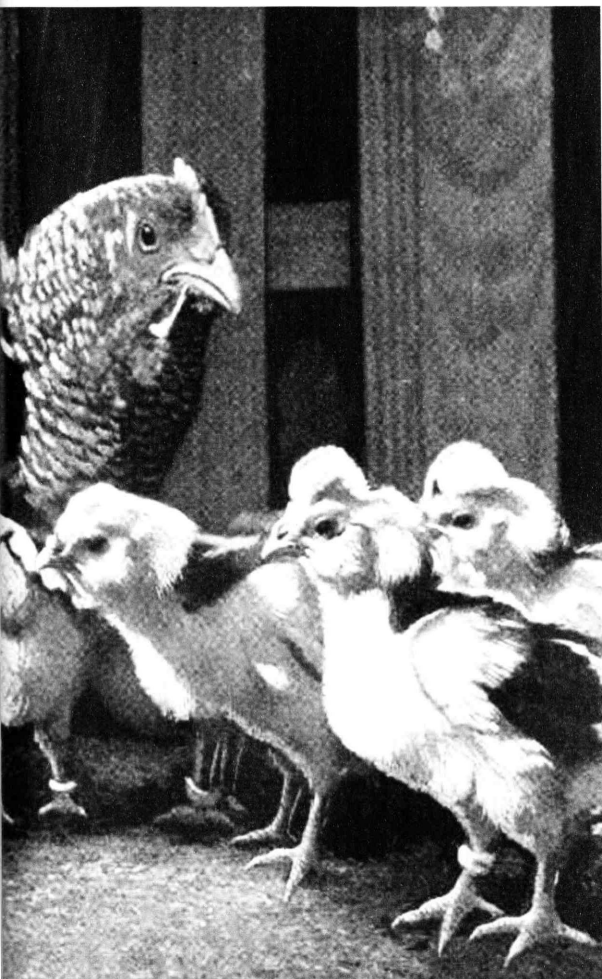
2. The Authorized King James Version was used for this quote because the New King James Version drops the reference to the woman's sweeping activity in preference for a more generic description of her as "search[ing] carefully." *The Holy Bible: Authorized King James Version* (William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1976).

3. Crain, Jeanie C. *Reading the Bible as Literature: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010) 50.

4. Using animal metaphors to describe God constitutes zoomorphism, a lesser-used but nevertheless powerful literary device in the Bible.

5. Metaphors that involve use of inanimate objects or non-animal nature as imagery are specified as personification, as distinguished from anthropomorphism and zoomorphism.

God the Mother | BY SAM MCBRIDE



Jesus used one of the Bible's most profound feminine metaphors in referring to himself:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

—Matt. 23:37 (KJV)

The image positions God as empathetic with both women and animals. Its power comes from that conjunction. References to motherhood within English-language literature often compare women to mother animals and birds, implying that a mother's impulse to protect approaches the level of instinct. Here Jesus implies the same about his own nature.

The metaphor also positions Jesus as the female version of the father in the parable of the prodigal son, wishing for the return of the lost. Close readers of that parable point out that the father did more than simply sit and wait for his adult son to repudiate the inappropriate exercise of his free will; instead, the father actively watched and then ran out to meet him. Yet Jesus' hen metaphor suggests an even more active maternal role, potentially interfering with behaviors that could endanger offspring who lack the ability to discern their own danger. The Christian concept of sin(s) builds on the story of the prodigal son to emphasize human guilt through the exercise of free will; perhaps the hen metaphor discloses God's desire to "save" us from dangers against which our "free wills" are irrelevant, just as the mother hen wishes to save her chicks from forces vastly stronger than they are.

Most English translations of the Bible use a phrase nearly identical to the one selected by King James scholars. One version, however, positions the metaphor within a statement of Jesus' desire:

Yet Jesus' hen metaphor suggests an even more active maternal role, potentially interfering with behaviors that could endanger offspring who lack the ability to discern their own danger.

I have wanted to be like a hen who gathers her chicks under her wings. (New International Reader's Version)

Two other translations verbalize the aspect of mothering:

...as a mother hen gathers her little ones under her wings. (Worldwide English Bible)

...as a mother fowl gathers her brood under her wings. (Amplified Bible)

This last phrase (using the word "brood" as a noun to indicate offspring) may remind us that the Bible (translated into English) has expressed another mothering metaphor for God using the same word, though in its verb form. That passage also reveals the difficulties of translating gendered concepts, particularly into a language such as English, which classifies many objects and concepts as neither masculine nor feminine, but neutral.

In the King James Version, Genesis 1:2 states:

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Few translations break rank with the KJV's "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Several of those that do, still maintain a gender-neutral image:

God's wind swept over the waters. (Common English Bible)
The Spirit of the Lord was borne on the waters. (Wycliffite)

(The "e" at the end of the word "borne" is not a quaint older spelling of the contemporary word "born"; rather, as the past participle of the verb "bear," it implies that the Spirit of the Lord was carried or supported "on the waters.")

However, a note accompanying an online Bible dubbed the "Easy-to-Read Version" (a name that does not seem calculated to endear the version to scholars) makes clear the intent of the original language: "The Hebrew word means 'to fly over' or 'to swoop down,' like a bird flying over its nest to protect its babies."¹

This knowledge will change a reader's perception of "the Spirit of God," particularly in wording chosen for the New International Version:

The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Perhaps the Message Bible captures this most effectively:

God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss.

Used as a verb the word "brood" has two main categories of definitions. The first, "to contemplate," seems inappropriate when applied to the Spirit of God because the contemplation implied by "brooding" usually includes obsession to the point of morbidity.

The other primary meaning implies incubation, a term that works beautifully when applied to God the moment before creation (or between two moments of creation), poised to bring forth light, life, and order from the chaos of the heavens and the earth. Technically speaking, incubation is not necessarily gendered; thanks to recent animated films, even children know that penguin fathers take primary responsibility for warming eggs. Yet female incubation is the norm, both scientifically and in the cultural imagination. Thus the image of brooding, whether passively incubating or actively protecting, inevitably associates with motherhood.

The comfort with which the Bible applies the metaphor of mothering to God, even coming from Jesus to describe himself, suggests a heavenly value associated with it. "Mother" is part of God's nature. ■

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Delivering Salvation: *Pregnancy and Childbirth* | BY MAURY JACKSON

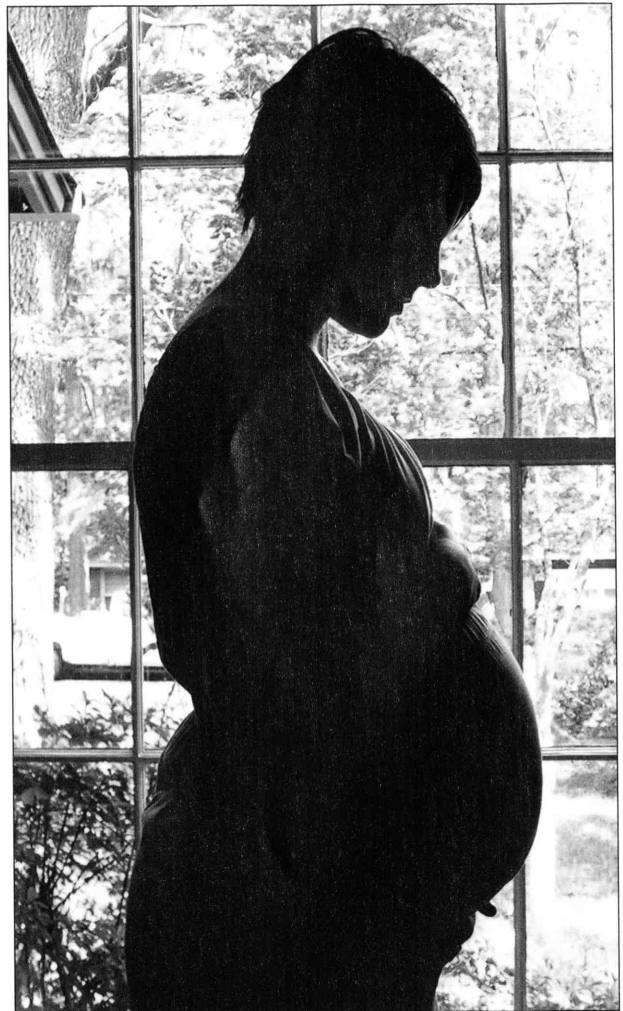
When Sojourner Truth phrased her “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech, she demonstrated that theology can be radically transformed when the gospel story is taken literally, and seriously, in the mind of a despised woman. With boldness, she confronted a clergyman who argued for the natural marginalization of women, based on biblical principles:

... that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.¹

Sojourner Truth placed “that little man,” probably for the first time in his life, in the position that women under patriarchal, authoritative readings of scripture feel all of their lives: mainly, left out. The courage to confront her male rival is only outdone by the power of her re-interpretation of the gospel. In her rendition of the nativity story, “Man [particularly “that little man”] had nothing to do with” the birthing of Jesus, but a woman did. By the clergyman’s own parameters, Sojourner Truth moved woman from the margins to the center of spiritual significance by reference to Mary’s role as Jesus’ mother. In doing so, Sojourner Truth appropriated the metaphor of maternity, which is used to such powerful effect by biblical writers as an image of divinity.

The Platonic idea of a perfect creation that experienced a hopeless fall is called into question by the apostle Paul’s use of the pregnancy metaphor. Paul inspires hope in an ultimately good outcome for our now troubled universe:

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. (Rom. 8:22–23)



With the apostle Paul, we might imagine the problem of natural evil in terms of a painful birthing experience, which ends in life-giving joy. In addition, we can compare our own angst for redemption in terms of child delivery. We wait like an anxious couple and a vulnerable, abandoned child wait for adoption papers in order to experience their metaphorical legal birthing and delivery. We are invited to think of the

We can
compare
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of child
delivery.

sin problem as a storied explanation of the discomforting, yet hope-producing conditions of our world. Here God is imagined as the midwife who helps to secure a safe delivery of redemption for the creation and for our human sense of cosmic abandonment.

Another way Paul employs the pregnancy metaphor involves imagining himself at worst a sort of failed surrogate for Mary: Paul is bearing children who have not come to full term, i.e., are not fully formed in Christ, or at best as having false alarm in his labor contractions:

My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you... (Gal. 4:19f)

Paul's allusion to the womb of a woman, in this text, calls for a reinterpretation of the priestly care and work in Christian ministry. In light of Paul's use of the pregnancy metaphor to describe his work with the Galatians, pastoral studies may be wise to consider *odimics*, i.e., the child-birthing metaphor, instead of *poimenics*, i.e., the shepherding metaphor, to refocus the "labor" of priestly care.

While there are other passages that can be considered, the last one that will be taken into account here is a text from Deuteronomy:

You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you; you forgot the God who gave you birth. (Deut. 32:18)

This passage uses Hebrew parallelism in order to name God the Childbearing Rock. The thought mirrored with the phrase "the Rock that bore you" is the phrase "the God who gave you birth." Here God's identity is unequivocally imagined as a pregnant mother who graciously and resolutely gives birth to the children of Israel. God in labor, what a picture!

Today the womanist struggle to find new language for God is undergoing its own birthing process. Men can be a part of the work and joy of this birthing process. It has happened before. In Exodus 6:2-3:

God also spoke to Moses and said to him: "I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name 'The LORD' I did not make myself known to them."

The God who delivered salvation to the enslaved Hebrew children had to be recognized anew.

"God Almighty" was a designation for a past saving experience for the patriarchs, but "the LORD" signaled the new designation for a future saving act through a "water-breaking" experience. How are we to name God's new act in the twenty-first century world?

Feminist hermeneutics attempts to (1) reclaim texts in Scripture, (2) reshape theological perspectives for how to read scripture, and (3) offer historical reconstructions of the scriptural community.² These approaches employ strategies to empower and embolden women's voices in the canonical community. These strategies remind male readers of those sacred writings how biblical authority and interpretation are "bound up together."³ Or as Elizabeth Johnson so aptly put it:

Ideas of God are cultural creatures related to the time and place in which they are conceived... No language about God will ever be fully adequate to the burning mystery which it signifies. But a more inclusive way of speaking can come about that bears the ancient wisdom with a new justice.⁴

According to Johnson, traditional Christian theology teaches that our use of the symbol "God" (1) invokes divine incomprehensibility, (2) finds its origin in the analogical use of language, and (3) points us to the tradition of the many names.⁵ Furthermore, when each of these incomplete discourses about "God" convenes, the Reality of which they speak escapes all our techniques to symbolize it.⁶ Metaphor, at best, is an insufficient approximation, but one which makes the variety of images employed in the Bible that much more critical for their individual and collective limitations.

Scholars have vigorously debated whether or not the gospel is a critique of the tradition

of the many names for God.⁷ Because God is not accessible to the five senses and therefore “God” is an object of thought, humans are naturally uncertain about the “essence” of God.⁸ This inability to perceive God’s essence compels us to continue on the path of the ancient and biblical practice of the many names. Some of those names for God provided to us in scripture are feminine, such as “mother.” Sojourner Truth reminds us of the stakes involved with embracing the full range of biblical metaphors of the divine, particularly such revolutionary metaphors as pregnancy. ■

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for the H. M. S. Richards Divinity School at La Sierra University. In the fall of 2008 he published a *Spectrum* magazine article entitled, “Answering the Call for a Sacred Conversation on Race.”

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Between the Wall and the Wilderness: *Woman as Cosmopolitan Wanderer* | BY MELISSA BROTTON

The
construct
of city
as woman
in the Old
Testament
connotes a
variety of
female roles,
such as
bride, wife,
mother,
daughter,
sister, and,
ultimately,
community.

*She: I was a wall, and my breasts were like towers;
then I was in his eyes as one who finds peace.*

—Song of Sol. 8:10 (ESV)

Though female nature imagery in the Old Testament abounds, such as an ostrich hiding her eggs in the book of Job and an eagle teaching her young to fly in Isaiah, female nature metaphors are much more scarce. This is surprising since feminized nature plays a substantial role in classical and British literature—so much so that feminists have expressed concern for the overriding ideology expressed in Sherry B. Ortner's seminal essay, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?":

The universal devaluation of women could be explained by postulating that woman is seen as "closer to nature" than men [sic], men being seen as more unequivocally occupying the high ground of "culture."¹

Ortner's time capsule has surfaced through generations of feminist writers wondering when the figure of woman would ever stand on the even ground of culture with that of man.

They need not have looked further than the Old Testament, where, rather than female nature metaphors, what we find plentiful in poetical books such as Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Lamentations are feminized pronouns for cities—the *she* as metropolis. Consider Psalm 46:4–5a, referring to the "the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not

be moved." Likewise, Lamentations contains passages linking the figure of city to feminine pronouns: "Zion stretches out her hands; but there is none to comfort her" (1:17a).

The paucity of female-as-nature metaphors in the Old Testament coupled with a multiplicity of feminized metropolitan allusions leads me to ask some questions: (1) Is there an embedded sense of empowerment of the female within the biblical figure of city or culture? Or do we read the *urbanite* images as containing susceptibilities and vulnerabilities that are akin to those of the *ruralite* ones? (2) Are the constructs *nature* and *culture* based on artificial distinctions in a language such as Hebrew, which valorizes the agrarian lifestyle even within a civilized space? In the ancient Judaic mindset, were nature and culture more congruous than divergent with a strong sense of community tying them together?

The construct of city as woman in the Old Testament connotes a variety of female roles, such as bride, wife, mother, daughter, sister, and, ultimately, community, according to Eva Maria Räßle. From the association of city with woman, we take the ideas of city-state, fortress, military strength, economy, empire, even goddess.² It seems as if ancient Hebrew cultural and poetic thought consciously connected the feminine with terms related to power or authority, regardless of the patriarchal nature of the ancient Hebrew societies. Could it be the aesthetic developments in these spiritual communities tended toward more subtle or indirect expressions of female

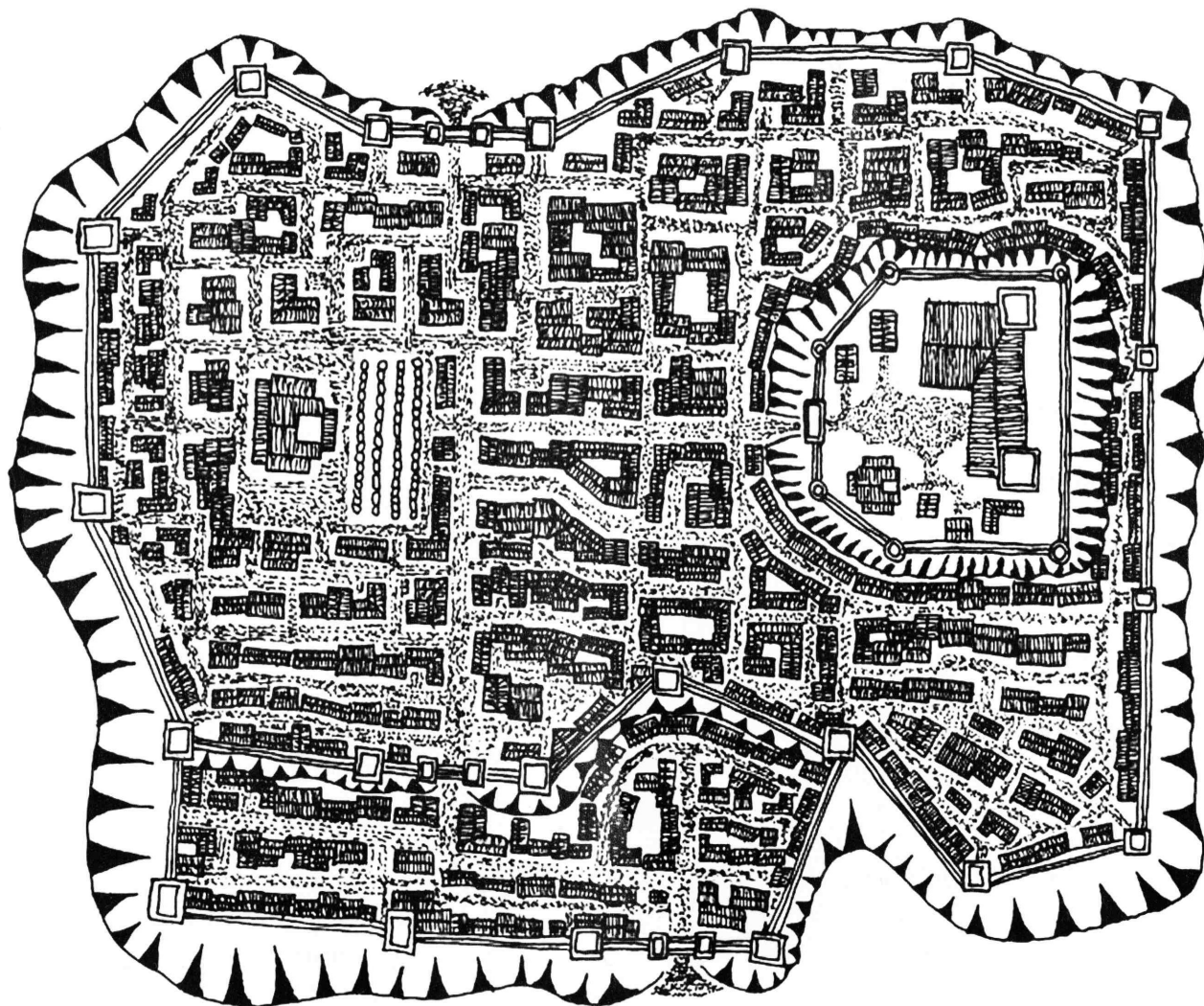
power? Did the ancient Israelites place the same values on city and country that we do today? Or are we drawing false lines to begin with?

Maybe we are. Welsh writer Raymond Williams questioned the distinctions between country and city established by influential writers since the sixteenth century in Britain, and concluded that these lines had been too simplistically rendered, existing mainly in the nostalgic imaginations of poets who mythicized their idealized memories of childhood.³ (If everyone's "back in the day" claims are valid, then at what point in history can we say that the idyllic age truly declined?) Where is the intersection between town and country, complexity and simplicity, community and solitariness? Williams found that the lines shifted from generation to generation. I suggest that

rather than view urban and rural as dichotomies, we see them instead as dialectical endpoints, informing each other, a wide expanse of fine gradation between them.

The villages of the ancient Levites were constructed circularly, according to a commentary on Torah by S. R. Hirsch. The houses were in the inmost part of the circle, and, moving concentrically outward, one might discern a green belt, at the center of which was a kind of park area, called *migrash ha-ir*, or, "the common," where animals and storage units were kept and perhaps where laundry was done. Stretching out from the green belt were the crop fields.⁴ Apparently the wilderness began on the outside edges of the crop fields. In this agrarian-metropolitan plan, the point of divide between civilization and wilderness was not a distinct line, but a

Did the ancient Israelites place the same values on city and country that we do today?



A figure
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and country
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who remains
in one
place.

strip of land between the fields and the dwelling structures. Someone wandering through the green belt might consider herself in both urban and rural places at once.

From this setting, we can see how the Shulamite woman in Song of Solomon may offer an enticing alternative to the figure of woman on one side or the other of the nature-culture dialectic. A transitional figure, she is comfortable wandering between the city and the country, true to her cultural identity.⁵ A chorus of voices forms her community and follows her from one space to the other. Although the idea of woman as transitional figure might represent an intermediate form of evolution beneath that of man to scholars like Ortner, I believe the roving role can be empowering. To cope with the demands of both spaces, a figure moving between city and country needs to be more resourceful than one who remains in one place or the other when everything is held constant.

Not only is a country girl able to attract (to the level of emotionally wounding) the king of her nation, but she is also capable of taming the wilderness into a garden and making a profit. Most importantly, she renders poetic voice to a successful cosmopolitan experience, ultimately transcending her identity with both spaces. She commands her choices, instructs her community, and meets her



lover in the garden on her own terms, freely. She has found a way to negotiate her identity as woman, daughter, sister, and lover with all the bounty of a lovely garden fortified like the strong walls of a city. ■

Melissa Brotton, PhD, teaches literature and directs the



composition program at La Sierra University. Her areas of specialization are late eighteenth-century women and Victorian writers, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and John Milton. She contributed to the recently

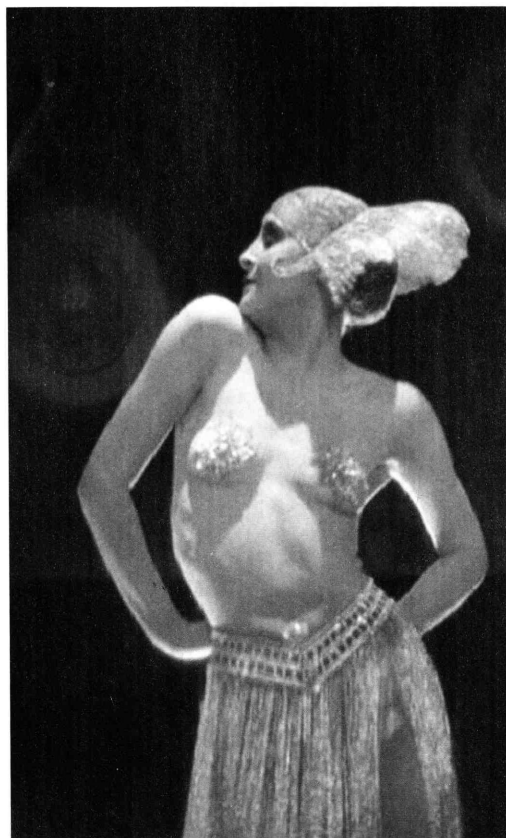
published scholarly edition of Barrett Browning's works and is currently examining texts from the emerging perspectives of ecocriticism and ecotheology. In her spare time, she rescues street dogs.

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5. In her personal essay, "How Wilderness Forms a Jew," Ellen Bernstein claims a sojourner identity for Jews, writing, "I recognized that my tradition embodied the most profound teachings about wanderings. For if anything, being a Jew is being a wanderer" (52). The essay is found in *Ecology & the Jewish Spirit: Where Nature and the Sacred Meet*. Ed. Ellen Bernstein. (Woodstock: Jewish Lights, 2008).

Of Whores and Horrors | BY KENDRA HALOVIK VALENTINE

What happens when a city goes bad? Many people get hurt. Babylon was such a place, as was Rome. A city of violence against God's people and of forced exile, Babylon is used by John the Revelator as a contrasting image to the city of Jerusalem, the location of the redeemed. But before the evil city is called "Babylon," it is described as a woman, as a particular kind of woman.¹ Her scene is one of the most dramatic in the Bible's last book. After a brief introduction, an angel says to John:



"Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters; with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.²

Some scholars suggest that the phrase "wondered with great admiration" is better translated "I was very perplexed." John is not the only one who is perplexed.³ So are we. This is a surprising picture. This vision certainly does not remind us of the vast majority of prostitutes in the twenty-first century, desperate girls helping their families survive through their own horrendous sacrifices. John's vision does not accurately depict prostitutes in the first century either.

At that time, to be a prostitute was the worst kind of slavery. Jennifer Glancy has described ways the bodies of slaves were used by their owners. Because of the lack of control over their own bodies, male and female slaves

The picture of the harlot in Revelation 17 as a powerful, wealthy woman eager and able to oppress others was not a picture of a normal situation.



Because of the lack of control over their own bodies, male and female slaves were in a constant state of shame.

were in a constant state of shame. Their bodies were often marked with scars and tattoos. A slave could not be sexually exclusive, because her or his body was not their own. Prostitutes were even worse off.⁴

The picture of the harlot in Revelation 17 as a powerful, wealthy woman eager and able to oppress others was not a picture of a normal situation. It does not seem to be historically accurate or culturally realistic. What would cause John to write about such a powerful whore? Where would such an image come from?

New Testament scholar David E. Aune believes that a coin created approximately twenty years before the book of Revelation was written may help us answer this question. On the coin, the goddess of Rome is depicted sitting on seven hills, a typical description of the location of Rome. She has water at her feet, and a sword in her left hand. In addition, a beast is under her, the she-wolf who, according to legend, nursed Rome's founders when they were abandoned twin infants.⁵

If this coin-picture of Rome were known by John's readers, perhaps his vision might not seem so foreign. How might John's depiction of a whore in Revelation 17 be a play on the coin? Rather than a goddess on seven hills, Rome was a whore sitting on seven hills (17:9). Instead of a she-wolf that nurtured life, Rome sat on a beast that destroyed life (17:3).⁶ Her power extended across the waters to many different nations and peoples (17:1b). John's account concluded with this upending of the image:

And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.⁷

In the violent description of the demise of the whore/Rome, readers finally face imagery that is more typical of prostitutes. The scene's "resolution" returns to a powerless prostitute brutalized by her clients. The powerful whore is gone. The city who thought she was a goddess and ruler over land and sea is exposed as the whore who must be judged and wiped from the earth.

How should we read such a female metaphor in scripture that works precisely because of assumed, condoned, and endorsed violence toward women? How should we understand this imagery? The believer is reassured of the end of evil but troubled by the method of resolution. Revelation 17 reminds us that metaphors both enlighten and confound; they shed light even as they raise new and disturbing questions.

A few chapters after the destruction of the whore, another female metaphor heightens the celebration of eschatological salvation—the Lamb takes his bride. Redeemed humanity, in



contrast with earth's evil, is the Lamb's bride (19:7), then a city of peace and promise, the New Jerusalem (21:1), then a bride again (21:2), then a city whose elaborate description takes up the rest of the chapter (21:9–27). The bride/New Jerusalem city has replaced the whore/city of Rome.

The final description of the New Jerusalem states: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (21:27). The whore of Revelation 17 held a cup "full of abominations" (17:4). Whores may not enter the New Jerusalem, the home of the bride. The metaphorical play reassures John's first readers of the sure end of Rome's system of oppression. But it does so by violently destroying the powerful whore.

Readers of the book of Revelation and the rest of the Bible find a range of female experiences in its metaphors. Perhaps it is even more remarkable that the Bible contains female images for God in a world where a brutalized female prostitute is an image of salvation and the triumph of good. Even as metaphors shed light, they remind us that we still only see dimly (1 Cor. 13:12). ■

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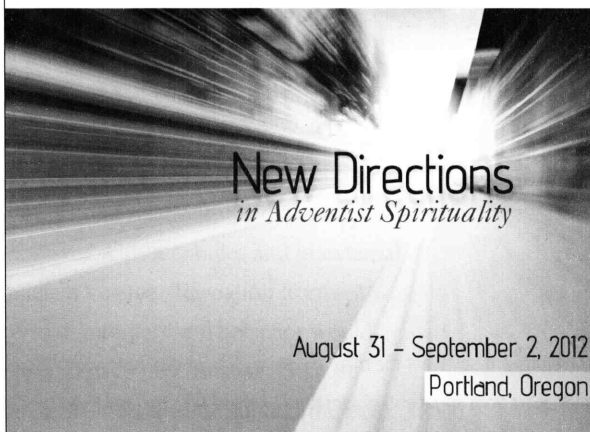


Experiences both in congregational and classroom ministry influenced Kendra's interest in the book of Revelation, and in 2002 she completed a dissertation on Revelation's hymns.

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4. Glancy, Jennifer A. *Slavery in Early Christianity*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006).
5. See David E. Aune's discussion of this coin in light of Revelation 17 in *Revelation 17–22*, pp. 920–923.
6. See Revelation 13, in addition to the violent images in this chapter.
7. Rev. 17:15–18.

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Shall Women Be Silent? | BY SAMANTHA ANGELES

⁸ Therefore, I myself want the men to pray in every place, lifting up righteous hands apart from anger and dissension. ⁹ Likewise, women (are) to adorn themselves in proper clothing, with modesty and discretion, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, ¹⁰ but that which is fitting for women professing godliness through good works. ¹¹ Let a woman learn in quietness with all submissiveness. ¹² But I do not allow a woman to teach or to exercise authority over men, but to be in quiet. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, (being) deceived, has fell [sic] to transgression. ¹⁵ But she will be saved through child-bearing if they stay in faith and love and sanctity, with discretion.

—1 Tim. 2:8–15 (author's translation)

This passage has been at the heart of many controversies in the Seventh-day Adventist church. Is it wrong for women to be ordained ministers? Does this passage state that women are responsible for the fall of humanity and are thus subject to ministerial restrictions? As the church revisits the role that women ministers are permitted to play in the organization, it is clear that answers to questions about this text cannot be found simply in tradition and personal preferences. They must be answered by a thorough study of the context of the passage, the culture of the time in which it was written, and what the text would have meant to the original hearers, in order to discover its true meaning and how to apply it today.

What is the context of 1 Timothy 2:8-15?

The first question to ask when trying to interpret a biblical passage is "What is the context?" Paul wrote this epistle to Timothy, the leader of the fledgling church in Ephesus, for the purpose of addressing an issue that was putting the church in critical danger. (Authorship in the Pauline tradition has been accepted based on Luke Timothy Johnson's text *The Writings of the New Testament*.)¹ Paul

states in 1 Timothy 1:5 that there are men in the body of Christ who are teaching false doctrines. Thus, Paul is writing instructions for how to counteract these doctrines, of which 1 Timothy 2:8–15 is only a section.

How does first-century Ephesian culture influence the interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:8–15?

Distinguishing the difference between cultural and timeless principles is crucial to understanding this text. The guideline for women's dress is an important example. Paul says, "Likewise, women (are) to adorn themselves in proper clothing, with modesty and discretion. . . [with] that which is fitting for women professing godliness through good works." These principles are prominent in Adventism, and the similarities between the standards held then and now can blur the lines between what is cultural and what is timeless. However, it is important to note that in the Ephesian culture, modesty was valued among people for reasons beyond religious beliefs.² The reason that people *outside* of the Christian community held these values is because extravagant adornment signaled a lack of respect for one's husband and his material possessions and was a sign of sexual immorality.³ The difference between the ancient Ephesian culture and the present is that to both believers *and* non-believers, elaborate appearance was a sign of immorality and disrespect, which is not applicable today.

Significant cultural differences also need to be addressed to interpret Paul's statements regarding whether or not women should teach.⁴ It is important to note that in both Jewish and Greek culture, not only were women forbidden from having authority over men, but they were also forbidden to learn, particularly in Judaism. A common saying was "Better to burn the Torah than teach it to a woman."⁵ Because of this mindset, false teachers were

targeting women who had little to no religious education, and were taking advantage of their ignorance and leading them astray.⁶

It is also important to understand the culture of Ephesus as a whole, since it was the city to which Paul was writing. Ephesus was the “seat” of the goddess Artemis and housed her lavish temple. Because of the pervasive presence of Artemis worship, “Attitudes of female exaltation or superiority existed.”⁷ This pagan attitude was likely part of the “false teaching” that Paul says was corrupting the Ephesian church.⁸ False teachers were trying

to convince women to throw off the cultural restraints that, in their time, marked them as righteous women, and to persuade them to conform to their pagan culture.

Finally, to understand this passage, it is necessary to understand the “household codes” that governed Ephesian culture. These codes outlined the “lists of duties and relationships that were traditionally observed within families and in external society in ancient Greece...deviation from reasonable norms of interpersonal behavior would have been noted against Christians.”⁹ Because women were considered to be subordinate to



*The church
clearly adapts
to culture in
order to guard
its witness to
outsiders.*

men, they were expected to “behave in ways that reflected their subordinate status; that is, they were admonished to be silent and submissive to their husbands.”¹⁰ In such a culture, women who tried to hold a teaching office could thus contribute to outsiders gaining a negative impression of Christianity.¹¹ This would have been detrimental to the church, which is likely a reason that motivated Paul’s restriction of female teachers. One scholar explains, “Just as the church avoided shame in husband-wife relationships in Paul’s day by having women wear head-coverings, a common practice then, so women expressed quietness and submission in the church by refraining from teaching and exercising authority over men.”¹² The church clearly adapts to culture in order to guard its witness to outsiders. These understandings of the Ephesian culture, worship, and gender roles are critical to properly interpreting and applying 1 Timothy 2:8–15.

What are the translation issues in 1 Timothy 2:8–15?

While most words in this passage have solid English translations from the Koine Greek, there are four that pose problems:

1) “*akousia*” and “*pasay hupotagay*”

Paul states that women must learn in *akousia*, with submissiveness (*pasay hupotagay*). *Akousia* can be translated as “silence” or “quietness.” Thus, the text can require either literal silence, which can lead to the restriction of women speaking at all during worship, or it can prescribe a peaceful and calm manner of learning. Some scholars argue for the translation “silence,” partially because the word is in the context of a student being taught.¹³ However, the majority of scholars understand *akousia* to mean “quietness,” which suggests that women should have a quiet demeanor, allowing a place for women to be vocal.¹⁴ The most convincing argument that *akousia* means “quietness” is the fact that only nine verses prior, Paul instructs all Christians to live *akousion* lives, which is indisputably translated as “quiet lives.” Unless all Christians are required to live “silent” lives, it is clear that the word *akousia* should be rendered “quietness,” referencing peace and tranquility.

However, it is impossible to ignore the implications of the words *pasay hupotagay*, or “full submission.” This phrase literally “suggests not simply an attitude, but a structural placement of one person below another.”¹⁵ It is

impossible to escape the fact that Paul gives the Ephesian women a lower status than the authorities or overseers of the church who are teaching, in addition to exhorting women to be subservient to their husbands.¹⁶

2) “*ouk epistrepo*”

Paul writes, “*ouk epistrepo* a woman to teach...” This phrase can either be translated, “I presently do not allow,” or “I do not [ever] allow.”¹⁷ Depending on the translation, Paul is either restricting female teachers permanently, or for the time being. The purpose of exegesis is to understand this epistle in the context of the first-century culture as well as note the fact that it had a specific application for the original hearers. Thus, Paul is likely stating that women were not permitted to teach in worship, not as an absolute principle, but because of the negative connotations that would accompany a female teacher in first-century Ephesus, since this was his intended audience.

3) “*authentain*”

However, the last and most controversial of the translation problems in this passage stems from the phrase, “But I do not allow women...to *authentain* men...” (2:12). *Authentain* has many possible translations, including “dominate, exercise authority, govern, act autonomously, or call herself the author of.”¹⁸ The majority of authors debate the first two options. Those that argue for “dominate” permit women to teach men, as long as they are not acting coercively or manipulatively.¹⁹ Conversely, those that argue for “exercise authority” state that women are forbidden from holding any positions of power over any men in the church.²⁰ The latter party states that *authentain* should be translated as “exercise authority” because of the presence of a coordinating conjunction that links the term with the word “teach,” which is a positive term, so *authentain* should be rendered positively. However, the former party combats this interpretation, stating that just because *authentain* is positive does not mean that it cannot have a strong meaning, so it can indeed mean “dominate.”²¹

Significantly, Paul chose to use *authentain* over the more common word *exouziaseo*, which has “a history of very strong meanings.”²² For this reason, and because of the patriarchal nature of the passage, the logical rendering of

authentain is “exercise authority,” which clearly limits the degree of leadership that women were permitted to have in the Ephesian church. The further implications of this crucial translation will be dissected in following sections.

Interpreting the passage

¹¹ *Let a woman learn in quietness with all submissiveness.*

¹² *But I do not allow a woman to teach or to exercise authority over men, but to be in quiet.*

—1 Tim. 2:11–12

This verse is often used to oppose women ministers. However, the most important part of this command is not *how* women should learn, but that they *should* learn. In Koine Greek, this verse is in the imperative mood, meaning that instead of focusing on the words “quietness and full submission,” the true focus should be the words “*Let a woman learn.*” Since previously the sentiment was “Better to burn the Torah than to teach it to a woman,” the command to learn is very progressive. In addition, according to scholars, there is reason to believe that the majority of those being led astray in the church were women, because prior to Paul’s command to “let women learn,” women were not educated.²³ Another reason for the restriction of the Ephesian women was their acceptance of false teachings as a result of their inability to partake of religious education, not because it was inherently wrong for women to teach.

The manner in which women are instructed to learn, with “all submissiveness,” explains another difficult statement Paul gives in 1 Timothy 2:15—that women will be “*saved through childbearing.*” Just as Paul’s directives for women to be submissive stems from an undisputed part of their culture, another cultural aspect was the “realm” of women—the household.²⁴ Paul speaks through this perspective by paralleling the Ephesian woman’s place in God’s household; as one subservient to her husband in her

home, she also cannot be an active part of the Ephesian house of worship. As she has now been denied an active function in the church, her cultural function within the household is emphasized. However, this statement also has a much deeper theological meaning in connection with 1 Timothy 2:13–15.

¹³ *For Adam was formed first, then Eve.* ¹⁴ *And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, (being) deceived, has fell [sic] to transgression.*

—1 Tim. 2:13–14

This passage seems to overturn the exegetical work that suggests that these gender restrictions were limited to first-century Christians. Yet it is important to view this Old Testament reference in context, as well as evaluate whether or not it is cited to make the previous statements timeless, or to emphasize them. Looking at similar instances, Paul’s writings bring perspective to this text. Paul states in 2 Corinthians 11:3, “I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.” However, despite the Old Testament reference, the exhortation is to both men and women, for fear that they will be led astray. Similarly, Paul states in 1 Corinthians 11:7–8 that women must wear head coverings because of the order of creation, the same argument that Paul makes in 1 Timothy 2:13. Yet though this argument parallels that of 1 Timothy, it is rarely applied today. These instances exemplify direct use of citations as support for the preceding statements, and not as a tool to make cultural principles timeless.²⁵

Viewing this reference as a supportive statement for 1 Timothy 2:8–12 is logical because the circumstances of the fall of Eve parallel the fall of the Ephesian women: “*And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, (being) deceived, has fell [sic] to transgression.*” If the similarities of the cultural context of the epistle were added to the Genesis text, the passage might read, “*And Adam was not deceived [by the serpent] [as the men of the Ephesian church have not been deceived by false teachers],*



*It is
important to
separate
what
is cultural
from
what is
timeless.*



Failing
to support
equality puts
the church
at risk of
disunity and
disharmony
—the results
many try
to avoid by
opposing
women's
ordination.

but the woman, being deceived [*as the Ephesian women have been deceived by false teachers*] has fell [sic] to transgression." This understanding is not only logical but also connects what would seem to be an incongruous passage to the remainder of Paul's instructions regarding female teachers. The Ephesian women, like Eve, were deceived. Because they were deceived for lack of knowledge, and because a female teacher would be reprehensible to the general Ephesian culture, they were not permitted to teach. However, they are afforded the new privilege of learning, which allows the women a second chance to not be deceived by false teachers in the future.

This "second chance" is the key to understanding both the message and the confusing pronoun shift that would otherwise fail to make sense in 1 Timothy 2:15, which states, "But she will be saved through childbearing if they stay in faith and love and sanctity, with discretion." Many readers of 1 Timothy 2:8–15 have understood the "she" in this verse to refer to women in general. However, this is an illogical understanding, for why would Paul suddenly shift to a singular pronoun after using a plural pronoun for women throughout the passage? This facet can be explained by allowing the word "she" to reference Eve, since Eve is the only female mentioned in the previous sentence. Thus, the passage could read, "But *Eve* will be saved through childbearing..." Just as the women of the Ephesian church received their second chance through religious education, Eve received her second chance through childbearing. However, in the context of Eve, childbearing refers to more than just the act of bearing children. It refers to the context of her last moments in the Garden of Eden, when God says in Genesis 3:15b, "your offspring will crush [the head of the serpent]..." It is Eve's offspring that will break the hold of the serpent over women, thus providing her "second chance." Thus, Eve, who *must represent all women* in this passage in Genesis, since she clearly did not directly bear Jesus, is saved "through childbearing," specifically through *bearing Christ*, who would break the hold of Satan on all mankind. It is not the *act of*

bearing children that brings salvation, but the *bearing of Christ* that brings salvation, which is in harmony with the rest of scripture.

The final piece of the puzzle is realized when one examines the words in 1 Timothy 2:15: "She will be saved...if they stay in faith and love and sanctity, with discretion." Because Eve is the clear representative for women in this verse, Paul shifts from the singular "she," referring to Eve and the corporate role of women in "bearing" Jesus, and begins to speak again of women in general.²⁶ Here, again, it seems that Paul is stating that women will be saved if they (or perhaps their children) stay in faith and love and sanctity. However, just as Paul states that women profess their godliness through good works, he makes no distinction between the *act* of being saved and the *actions* of the saved. In Ephesians 2:8–9, Paul emphatically states, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." In light of this passage, women are also saved by grace, not by works. In addition, Galatians 3:28 states, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Regardless of whether or not this refers to all rights or strictly salvation, there is no question that *salvation for both genders comes through Jesus*. Thus, in light of these passages and Paul's lack of distinction between the saved and the actions of the saved, it is reasonable to interpret this last portion as listing *signifiers of women* who are saved, signifiers that are also listed in Galatians 5:22–23 as fruits of the Spirit.

What is the modern application of 1 Timothy 2:8–15 for Seventh-day Adventists today?

1 Timothy 2:8–15 reveals that due to the importance of unity and harmony in the church, all division must be addressed while carefully dealing with culture. Because of culture, Paul forbade the exercise of authority of women over men, but he also overturned one aspect of the male-dominated society—the

restriction of female religious education—while supporting the remainder of the cultural beliefs. In the same way, when the church deals with issues that are peripheral to the message of salvation, it must be careful to do so in a manner that will lead others to the acceptance of truth, and in the spirit of principles brought to light from scripture.

In westernized countries, what does it mean to deal sensitively with culture? In view of the fact that women in these areas have the freedom to be equally credentialed doctors, CEOs, and lawyers, many within and without the SDA church struggle to understand why women are not accorded the same right to ordination. While the gender restrictions affirmed Christianity to non-believers in Paul's time, the application of these restrictions now sullies the reputation of the SDA church, conflicting with its goal to be a witness without compromising the message of salvation.

In addition, since a testimony to nonbelievers is important, it is clearly inappropriate for those on either side of the issue of women's ordination to resort to name-calling, disrespect, or character defamation of those who disagree, for such actions contradict Christ's central message of love. This value is emphasized, for when addressing disruption, the church is exhorted to cease its arguing, "lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power" (1 Corinthians 1:10–17, NIV).

Finally, the last three verses of the passage emphasize its central message: the opportunity of a second chance and the means of salvation. For just as sin first entered humanity through Eve alone, so would salvation enter the world through a lone woman: Mary, the mother of Jesus. For today's church, the message is the same—regardless of the various pitfalls of this issue and others, and regardless of one's stances on them and the mistakes made defending one's point of view, there is always redemption through Jesus Christ.

The final question that this passage brings up is this: Should female SDA ministers hold a less privileged position compared to their male counterparts in westernized countries? For this exegete, the answer is no, on the grounds that enforcing such a regulation so grossly contradicts modern culture that in many cases both believers and non-believers, particularly those of the younger generation, are repelled by the faith. The proper witness in westernized countries is a witness of gender equality, not perceived discrimination. Failing to support equality puts the church at risk of disunity and disharmony—the results many try to avoid by opposing

women's ordination. Perhaps in countries with similar values as first-century Ephesus, women's ordination is not yet appropriate. Perhaps there, the mantra needs to be "let them preach," or whatever constitutes the "gentle step forward" that Paul prescribed for Timothy's congregation. But in westernized countries where the culture is dissimilar to first-century Ephesus, perhaps the "gentle step forward" needs to be "let them be ordained," to establish the support of the Seventh-day Adventist church for women in ministry, and to present the church as a living, united reality of Galatians 3:28 (NIV, emphasis added: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, *nor is there male and female*, for you are all *one* in Christ Jesus." ■

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Who is Worthy to Minister? | BY MADELINE S. JOHNSTON

Is it appropriate for women to serve as ministers in God's church? Are women worthy even to receive ordination as local elders? In some of our churches these questions have never arisen. In others they have long since ceased to be an issue at all. In still others, they are centers of hot debate.

Antagonists on both sides continue to marshal arguments in hopes of convincing the church of "the truth." Some observers of the strength of conviction on both sides fear that this issue could split the Christian community.

Not to worry—we have a precedent. One of the earliest splits in the church, born of uncompromising convictions, came precisely over the issue of who was worthy to minister, and the body of believers survived it! Looking back, historians and theologians view this split as a blessing for the church in the long run because it doubled the ministerial force.

This sharp disagreement arose between good friends, coworkers, and leaders in the church. Their association spanned several seasons and had been cemented by shared hardships as well as mutual joys.

It began soon after the Jerusalem church had sent Barnabas to Antioch to investigate reports of many Gentiles joining the church there. Satisfied that these conversions were genuine, but recognizing a need to establish these new believers, Barnabas had gone to Tarsus to find Paul. He brought Paul to Antioch, where together they taught for a whole year.

Then prophets from Jerusalem came to Antioch, predicting famine. The Antioch church sent Paul and Barnabas to deliver help to its brothers and sisters living in Judea. After completing their mission, they returned from Jerusalem to Antioch, bringing John Mark with them.

Mark came from a good home and showed promise of becoming a good worker. It was his mother who opened her home for prayer meetings and welcomed Peter there

after an angel released him from prison.

Later, the Holy Spirit told the Antioch members to set apart Paul and Barnabas, so they ordained them and sent them off on a missionary journey. Taking John Mark as their helper, the men visited Seleucia and then sailed to Cyprus. From Cyprus they sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where Mark deserted them and returned to Jerusalem.

The Split Develops

Some time after Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, Paul suggested a return visit to all the towns where they had preached. Evidently he liked working with Barnabas and valued him as a colleague in ministry. But this is when the dispute arose. Barnabas wanted to take Mark, his cousin, with them again. Paul did not. Apparently Barnabas thought Mark deserved another chance. Paul felt he was unworthy because he had deserted them on the previous journey.

Either could have said, "I disagree with you, but I'll do it your way to maintain unity." But apparently these weren't just opinions; they were convictions. Paul felt strongly that Mark, who had already failed by proving himself undependable, would definitely be a liability to the work of the church. Barnabas, on the other hand, felt that to deny Mark a role in ministry would unnecessarily stifle the growth of the church and of the individual himself, perhaps blocking the will of God for a more complete ministry. As each felt so convicted, the disagreement became sharp enough that these two long-time friends and colleagues parted company.

The Outcome

But what were the results of the parting? First, there were two teams instead of one. Paul chose Silas and headed for Syria and Cilicia to strengthen the churches there. Barnabas and Mark sailed for Cyprus. Paul and Barnabas did not allow

their diametrically opposed opinions to create a permanent wedge between them. They kept their principal focus on the spread of the gospel, and each allowed the other freedom to accomplish that goal as he saw best. Neither condemned the other as less committed to the Scriptures.

Many years later Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem with Titus to explain their practice of preaching to Gentiles. The leaders there, James, Peter, and John, agreed that Paul and Barnabas should go to the Gentiles. Paul still spoke directly, though, when he thought his colleague was wrong. He stated, for example, that Peter's hypocrisy had led even Barnabas astray when, in Antioch, he wouldn't eat with Gentiles.

Second, Mark developed into a seasoned worker. Even Paul admitted this when he requested of Timothy, "Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry" (2 Tim. 4:11 NIV).

In Philemon 1:24 Paul adds greetings from Mark, his fellow worker, and Peter elsewhere in scripture calls Mark "my son." Obviously, Mark had become a valued fellow minister.

Arguments Paul Might Have Used

Perhaps it would be instructive to take a few moments to imagine some of the arguments that Paul could have used to defend his initial position that Mark, being a mere youth, was unfit to join the ministerial force. (Any similarity to arguments heard today against the ministry of women is purely intentional.)

Paul might have said to Barnabas:

"Mark is weaker, emotionally, and he already let those weaker emotions get in the way and make him undependable."

"Mark's interest in getting involved is really just an outgrowth of the trends among youth in the secular society around him. Over in Greece, they get all excited about running races. In Rome, it's the army. Youth-libbers feel they have to be doing something. But the church should keep itself wholly pure from any such humanistic ideas."

"Furthermore, Mark shouldn't aspire to a higher sphere than God has assigned him. By attempting to climb higher, he will only fall lower. Let him stay at home with his mother and set up chairs for prayer meeting. Maybe the next time Peter is miraculously released from prison, Mark can even answer the door before Rhoda. This, too, is service for God, and he will find a great blessing in performing it. No young person should seek a higher sphere."

"The fact that other religions use young men as priests is no reason for us to. They also sacrifice infants. If we follow the religions of the world in ordaining young men, we will open the door to sacrificing our babies, sexual promiscuity, and other problems."

"The precedent was set way back in Genesis, where we read that man was made in God's image. We all know God is not a youth; he is the Ancient of Days."

"Jesus chose sturdy, experienced fishermen and even a tax collector for his disciples. If he'd wanted mere kids in ministry, he would have chosen some as disciples."

"Throughout Scripture there is a special symbolism attached to the 'firstborn.' It may seem arbitrary of God to choose age to represent himself, but he has that right, just as he chose the Sabbath as a symbol of creation and sanctification."

It is easy to see the fallacies in these arguments when they are applied to age rather than gender.

Lessons for Today

Paul's later full acceptance of Mark in ministry may suggest lessons for us as we seek the full acceptance of women in ministry:

- 1) It took time. Mark had to prove himself.
- 2) The opposition felt he wasn't ready for worldwide service.
- 3) An already established worker had to fight for him, give him a second chance, and support him against the opposition.
- 4) Accepting his ministry did cause a split. But because of the way the dispute was handled, the church grew as a result. Focused on spreading the gospel, Paul still allowed Barnabas to supervise Mark and waited for time to test and prove Mark's call to ministry.

Perhaps today God is waiting for his church to expand its ministry to a dying world by allowing women to prove their calling. We need not wait until each local church around the world is ready to accept women's ministry. Perhaps all we need is to let women work in those churches that would welcome their service, in some cases alongside established and supportive pastors. Let us all focus on the spread of the gospel, allowing God and time to reveal the results. ■

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FAMILY

Issues



PHOTO: GEORGE MARKS

Is Cohabitation Always Wrong? | BY REINDER BRUINSMA

An increasing number of young, and not so young, people in the western world are cohabiting.¹ In some countries “living together” among the younger generations has become the norm rather than the exception. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau published in 2005, some 4.85 million American couples were cohabiting at that point in time.² Currently, 9 percent of all men and women between the ages of 15 and 44 cohabit.³ Other countries, such as Australia and Britain, report even considerably higher figures, and this is particularly true in Scandinavia, for example.⁴

It must be noted that it is difficult for researchers to determine the exact statistics for cohabitation, as it frequently reflects a rather fluid situation. The beginning and ending of the living-together arrangements are often not as clear-cut as marriage and divorce. Also, in any discussion of this topic, it should be recognized that it concerns a rather complex phenomenon. While we see widespread “pre-marital” cohabitation, there is also a very considerable degree of “post-marital” cohabitation. For many, cohabiting is an alternative to *marriage*, while for others it is rather an alternative to *being single*.⁵ Furthermore, the legal status of cohabitating couples differs substantially from country to country. However, we discern a definite trend in the western world to treat unmarried couples who live in a stable relationship, for legal, fiscal, and economic purposes, in a way that is similar to what applies to married couples.

Why do people decide to cohabit? For



The biblical view of marriage rules out the legitimacy of many cohabiting arrangements.

many seniors “living together” is, for financial and other practical reasons, preferable over marriage—or, often, re-marriage. For those of a younger generation—statistics indicate that the majority of people living together are in the age 25 to 34 bracket—a wide variety of reasons apply. For some, in particular for those who grew up in less than ideal family circumstances, a fear of marriage often plays a role.⁶ Others want to be sure that they are compatible with their partner and want to live together for some time before entering into a formal

marriage, that (in spite of the availability of relatively easy divorce) is considered as more "final." Some move in with the partner for economic reasons. Usually the sexual availability of the partner plays a major role.

For our discussion of an Adventist perspective on cohabitation, some aspects must be highlighted. It must be recognized that cohabitation differs significantly from area to area,



even within the western world. In the United States it tends to be a rather short-term arrangement, usually intended as an introduction to marriage, whereas in many western-European countries long periods of cohabitation, often without any intention of ever getting married, are much more common.

One of the arguments against cohabitation that is frequently emphasized in conservative Christian circles is that the risk of divorce is much higher for couples who lived together before they got married than for couples who did not cohabit.⁷ While there are many studies that clearly point in that direction,⁸ in particular in the United States, some scholars insist that the data that suggests greater marital and family instability after a period of cohabitation is not as clear-cut as many believe.⁹

Recent research, in which a number of demographic factors in fourteen western

countries were compared, shows some highly significant facts. American cohabiting relationships are comparatively fragile when compared to some other countries. The percentage of children seeing a new partner enter their home after a disruption of their parent's relationship is also significantly higher in the United States than in Europe or Australia. And, to mention another telling statistic, the percentage of American women below age 35 who have lived together with three or more different partners (in sequence) stands at almost 10 percent, while countries in the higher cohabitation bracket, like Sweden, New Zealand, and Canada, have percentages of, respectively, only 4.5, 3.9, and 2.9.¹⁰

The Adventist position

The Adventist Church strongly promotes marriage as the only acceptable form in which people (of the opposite sex) should live together and enjoy sexual union. In theory, the only other relationship option is to live a single life of sexual abstinence. Official Adventist statements are adamant that marriage was divinely established and entails a "life-long union between a man and a woman in loving companionship." A "common faith" is an essential ingredient. The other key characteristics of marriage are: "mutual love, honor, respect and responsibility." The marriage relationship is to reflect "the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church."¹¹

Several official Adventist statements and guidelines underline this position, although it is recognized that even among Adventists "some family relationships fall short of the ideal."¹² Finally, however, sexual activities are to be restricted to married life. A 1987 statement classified "pre-marital sex" with adultery and "obsessive sexual behavior" and as "contrary to God's expressed will."¹³

Several official church documents clearly condemn cohabitation, although mostly implicitly. The Biblical Research Institute (BRI) at the denominational world headquarters has at times

been more explicit in referring to cohabitation. It published a statement authored by Dr. Miroslav Kiš, an ethicist at Andrews University, which strongly condemned cohabitation in all cases.¹⁴

Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, the former director of this institute, also addressed the topic in a relatively recent article. His language is pastoral and avoids harsh condemnation. Church members should, he says, show "love and care" for cohabiting couples, "in spite of the fact that we do not approve of their lifestyle." Considering the biblical understanding of marriage, Rodríguez finds cohabitation seriously wanting on a number of counts and believes that cohabitation "simply" does not reflect "the beauty of a truly Christian home."¹⁵

Adventist practice

Unfortunately, there is a lack of hard statistical data regarding the practice of cohabitation by Seventh-day Adventists around the globe.¹⁶

There is abundant anecdotal evidence, however, that the practice is widespread, and increasingly so, in many countries in the western world (and beyond). Some interesting data is available regarding trends in cohabitation among North American Adventists. Extensive data on Adventist family life in the United States was published in 1997,¹⁷ based on data collected in 1994 from a sufficiently large sample, quite representative for Adventists in the United States. It was found that by the mid-1990s cohabitation was a common reality in the Adventist population. To the question "Did you and your spouse live together prior to being married," 18 percent responded with "yes." Somewhat surprisingly, the percentage of those who responded positively was higher among the "baby boomers" (born 1946-1964) than among those of the generation since 1964 (26 and 19 percent, respectively). To European Adventists it comes as a further surprise that the percentage of those who at one time or another lived together prior to their marriage was lower among white Anglo-Saxons (14 percent) than among American blacks (21 percent), Caribbean blacks (17 percent), Hispanics (22 percent), or

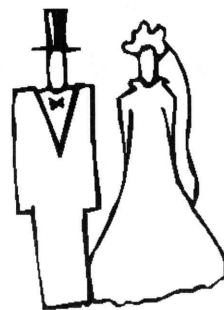
Asians (19 percent).¹⁸ This reflects what is found among the American population in general. Information regarding European Adventists would, however, suggest that in Europe the immigrant sectors of the church tend to be more "conservative" and less tolerant (at least in theory) towards cohabitation. Recently, newer data has become available. The percentage of American Adventists who lived together before getting married has remained at the same level of 18 percent.¹⁹

A biblical view

In some Christian denominations, cohabitation has ceased to be an important moral dilemma, and now they consider cohabitation as acceptable, provided certain conditions are met, such as a sufficient level of long-term commitment. Most conservative and evangelical Christians, as well as Roman Catholics, continue, however, to stress what they consider as the only biblically defensible view, i.e. that marriage is divinely established, and therefore the unique format for living together as a heterosexual²⁰ couple and as the only acceptable context for raising a family.

The first step in determining whether cohabitation must always be considered as inferior to marriage, or as simply morally wrong, would to a large degree depend on a definition of terms. How exactly does the Bible define marriage? No serious study of the topic argues that the Bible offers a clear defense for the contemporary outward forms of marriage, with a prescribed wedding ceremony before the civil authorities and/or in the church. In fact, the form of marriage that we are accustomed to is rather recent. Not until the Middle Ages did the church involve itself with the performance of marriage, and the laws that govern current marriage and family statutes are also of relatively recent origin.²¹

Not only did the laws and customs surrounding marriage change, but so did the very nature of marriage. It changed from a mainly parentally controlled and largely economic arrangement to an individualized emphasis on romantic love. For a long time "courtly love" was reserved for the privileged class, while for



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most people more mundane concerns governed the choice of a partner.²²

Readers of the books of Ellen G. White will note that in her writings on the topic of marriage, a strong emphasis is placed on practical matters.²³ Her counsels, in particular her reticence to speak openly about the physical side of relationships,²⁴ must be understood against the background of the time in which she wrote.²⁵ Her strong condemnation of extra-marital sexual activity of married people is explicit in many places in her writings, while her rejection of any form of *pre*-marital sex is just as strong, though rather more implicit.

Most authors who have written on the biblical concept of marriage refer to Genesis 2 as the ultimate basis for the marriage relationship. The Genesis story sets forth the ideal of one man entering into a unique relationship with one woman, which supersedes all other human relationships, in full loyalty and commitment to one another, accepting their differences as complementing their oneness, and reserving their sexual expressions exclusively for each other.²⁶ It is a "decisive act of both detachment and attachment."²⁷ Usually these authors also stress that the "leaving" of the parents has a public dimension, and they usually emphasize that cohabitation, in contrast with marriage, often lacks this aspect of public announcement.

Christians will naturally look for the way in which Jesus related to marriage. According to John's Gospel, Christ began his public ministry during a wedding (John 2:1–11), which appears to underline the importance Jesus attached to marriage. When, at some later moment, asked about the permissibility of divorce, he acknowledged that the sad reality of sin resulted in the equally sad reality of divorce, but that this was not how marriage was originally intended. He underlined the creation ideal as still valid. After quoting the words from Genesis about the "leaving" and "cleaving" of a man and a woman when entering into a lifelong union of ultimate intimacy,

he adds, "What God has joined together, let man not separate" (Matt. 19:6).²⁸ This is not to be interpreted as if God is the One who brings people together, without any exercise of their own free will. In fact, many unions are contrary to the will of God, in particular when those involved consciously disregard their obvious mutual incompatibility (2 Cor. 6:14), religious or otherwise.²⁹ The main point in Christ's statement is that marriage is not just a private affair, merely a social contract between two persons, but that God is involved—and that his involvement gives marriage its sacred character. No wonder that in the New Testament marriage becomes a metaphor for the close, permanent, and exclusive relationship between the Lord and his church (Eph. 5:22, 23).

Marriage may best be described by the biblical term *covenant*. The term *sacrament* carries connotations that Protestants do not agree with, while the term *contract* is too shallow to cover the essence of marriage.³⁰ Although there are only two places in Scripture where the word *covenant* is explicitly used in connection with marriage (Mal. 2:14; Prov. 2:16, 17), the term expresses most succinctly what biblical marriage is. It captures the permanence, the intimacy, the mutuality, and the exclusiveness of marriage as a sacred bond between a man and a woman, entered into before God (whether or not the persons involved acknowledge this).³¹

Marriage or cohabitation?

Cohabitation cannot be simply ruled out because of a clear biblical injunction that only marriages that have been performed in a town hall and/or in a church are biblically valid. The fact is that the Bible nowhere prescribes a particular ceremony.³² Nor, in most western countries, can opponents of cohabitation claim any longer that the laws of the land demand an official civil or religious wedding, and that, since Christians are admonished to abide by the laws of the land, they have no option but to seal their relationship by marriage. Again, the plain

fact is that in most countries other options are legally available, and in an increasing number of countries, different relationship forms carry the same, or almost the same, legal rights and duties as marriage. Therefore, in most places a cohabiting couple cannot be accused of breaking or ignoring the law of the land.

Yet, it should be clear that the biblical view of marriage rules out the legitimacy of many cohabiting arrangements. Whenever a cohabiting situation is entered into without the clear commitment of both partners, not only to love and support each other, but to stay together permanently in an exclusive sexual relationship, it may be a relationship that finds plenty of social support in contemporary society, but it will lack the stamp of divine approval, for such relationships do not conform to God's intentions "from the beginning."

On the other hand, if we abide by the biblical definition of marriage, there may well be instances of cohabitation that are, in fact, quite indistinguishable from biblical marriage. One might sum it up in just a few words: *a relationship is not what people call it, but what it really is when measured with the biblical yardstick.*

The attitude of the church

Should the Adventist Church continue to oppose all forms of cohabitation? Should church members who choose to live together without a formal marriage certificate be disciplined, or at the very least be excluded from any church office? Should pastors do their utmost to convince cohabiting couples that they should either break up their "sinful" relationship or get married? Let me offer a few suggestions that may point to a more fruitful approach than we have often seen in the recent past.

- The church must continue to recognize and strongly proclaim the biblical *ideal* of monogamous, lifelong, committed, exclusive, heterosexual relationships, in spite of the fact that the *reality* in this sinful world—even among church members—is often far removed from this ideal.
- While upholding the ideal, the church must treat those who are falling short of the ideal with loving care. Rather than condemning people who live together, such couples should be encouraged in whatever possible way to more fully reflect the biblical ideal. Cohabitation may be, or may become, "for many people, a step along the way towards that fuller and more complete commitment" that characterizes the ideal for marriage.³³
- Many cohabiting situations do indeed fall far short of the biblical ideal. But the relationship of many couples who have been formally married is likewise far removed from the biblical ideal. Rather than harping constantly on the desirability that cohabiting people seal their relationship with a formal wedding ceremony,³⁴ the church might better use its energy in emphasizing, in convincing and creative ways, how commitment, loyalty, exclusivity, and permanence will enrich relationships—both for married and cohabiting people.
- Whether or not people cohabit or are formally married should not be the main criterion as to whether they can or cannot hold a church office. Some married people may have the kind of relationship with their partner that makes it undesirable that they



The percentage of American Adventists who live together before getting married has remained at the same level of 18 percent.

should be elected to any office, while in some cases cohabiting persons live in a relationship that may reflect more fully the biblical ideal, and might be more suitable for a leadership role in the church.

- When discussing issues around marriage and cohabitation, an awareness of differing situations in different countries and in different cultures is necessary if one wants to arrive at a balanced judgment.

There remains one other factor that demands attention. There still is a majority in society—and certainly in the Adventist Church (and most definitely in America)—that favors marriage over cohabitation. Western society in general has become quite tolerant of those who choose to live together with their partner and even raise children without getting formally married. But should not the wish of parents and majority opinion in the church count for something? While there are Adventist parents who do not worry overly about whether their children marry or live together (“as long as they are happy”), and while many church members will tolerate cohabitation under certain conditions, there is a majority in the Adventist Church that does not feel comfortable with it. Shouldn’t cohabiting people take the feelings of family and fellow church members into account? If you intend to stay together, why not conform to what so many would prefer? After all, the apostle Paul reminds us that things that may be permissible are not always “beneficial” (1 Cor. 6:12) or “constructive” (1 Cor. 10:23). Moreover, when cohabiting people, whose relationships correspond to what the Bible demands, know that some of their fellow believers consider their choice for cohabitation as morally wrong, why not take that into account? It is, once again, the apostle Paul who reminded us that those who are “strong” must be considerate with regard to those who are “weak” in the faith (1 Cor. 8). Would that principle not also apply here?

Nonetheless, whatever else might be said, a

relationship that merits divine approval is not identified by just looking at the label that human beings may attach to it. It is rather the relationship that truly represents a covenant between two people who have joined their lives together, with God as their witness. ■

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6. Johnson, pp. 75–84.
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9. Lawler, Michael G. “Questio Disputata: Cohabitation, Past and Present,” in: *Theological Studies* 65 (2004), 623–629.
10. Ibid, pp. 205–211.
11. Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists, no. 23 “Marriage and Family.” The document is to be found in many official and semi-official publications of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, e.g. *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, ed. 2005. (Silver Spring, MD: Secretariat of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 19–29; see also: “An Affirmation of Marriage,” 1996, in: *State-*

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12. "Statement on Home and Family," 1985, in: *Statements, Guidelines and Other Documents*, p. 55.

13. "A Statement of Concern on Sexual Behavior," *Statements, Guidelines and Other Documents*, pp. 94–95.

14. See <http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/documents/CohabitationandSDA.htm>.

15. Rodríguez, Ángel Manuel. "Living Together," see <http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/Biblequestions/living-together.htm>.

16. In 2007 the *Valuegenesis* survey was conducted among young European Adventists. The survey contained several questions that are relevant to this chapter. However, to date, the results have not yet been published in a form that enables us to draw sound conclusions. Also, it should be recognized that this survey was restricted to a limited age group (14–25).

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18. Sahlin, p. 227.

19. Sahlin, Monte. *Adventist Families in North America*. (Milton-Freewater, OR: Center for Creative Ministry, 2010),

24. <http://www.adventistfamilyministries.com/site/1/docs/AdventistFamilyStudyReportNoCoverFinal2010.pdf>

20. In this article the issue of same-gender relationships is not discussed. That does not imply that the reality of the attraction that many feel towards the same sex is not recognized, nor does it suggest that Christian theologians and ethicists should not try to do full justice to all relevant factors.

21. Stephanie Coontz has provided a fascinating and very readable history of the marriage institution in her book *Marriage, a History: How Love Conquered Marriage*. (New York, Penguin Books, 2005).

22. Balswick and Balswick, pp. 166–168.

23. White, Ellen G. *The Adventist Home*. (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1952), 25ff, 43–128; E. G. White, *Messages to Young People*. (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1864 ed.), 452–5, 461–3.

24. In *Solemn Appeal* (1980), in a chapter about "female modesty," Ellen White describes a person who gives a young lady "a kiss at an improper time or place" as an "emissary of Satan."

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26. Bacchiocchi, Samuel. *The Marriage Covenant: A Biblical Study on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage*. (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1991), 20–31.

27. *Seventh-day Adventists Believe: A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines*. (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005 ed.), 331–2.

28. I have used the NIV translation throughout.

29. *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, pp. 876–7.

30. Köstenberger, Andreas J. *God, Marriage and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), pp. 81–89.

31. Köstenberger, pp. 89–91; A useful overview of the biblical concept of marriage from an Adventist perspective is found in the chapter "Marriage and Family" in the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*. The chapter (pp. 724–750) is written by Calvin Rock. The volume is edited by R. Dederen and published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000. See, in particular, pp. 726–729.

32. Rock, p. 725.

33. Church of England, General Synod Board for Social Responsibility. *Something to Celebrate: Valuing Families in Church and Society*. (London: Church House Publishing, 1995), 115.

34. Contemporary weddings are often outrageously expensive and hardly evidence of careful Christian stewardship. Wedding ceremonies have, in fact, changed dramatically in their symbolic meaning. Rather than signifying in a public manner that two people are beginning their life together, the wedding is meant to announce that the couple has made such a success of their relationship that they are now ready to "go to the altar." See Andrew J. Cherlin, pp. 139–141.

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A Study of Family Violence at Andrews:

Implications for the World Church | BY LANDON SCHNABEL

Most people are irritated when their neighbors play loud music, especially at night when they are trying to sleep. While this is certainly annoying, anyone who has heard neighbors fighting knows this situation is more disturbing. During Christmas break, my wife and I visited family in Washington, and when we returned to Andrews University where we live in student housing, our sleep schedule was off. We were wide awake at three in the morning watching a movie when we heard a knock on our door. We turned the movie down, worried

we had disturbed someone trying to sleep. When we opened the door, a security guard asked us if everyone in the apartment was all right. We were confused but quickly alert. When we looked out the window a bit later, we saw an ambulance in the parking lot. Shaken, we were worried it was a case of domestic abuse (which was our worry every time we saw an ambulance in the parking lot). We did not know what had actually happened until a few weeks later. We had a friend over who, unknown to us, was privy to more information about what happened at our apartment complex. We



told him about our middle-of-the-night experience; he said that it was probably the stabbing between a resident and his brother-in-law.

This took place in the campus-owned apartments at Andrews University, which are largely populated by seminary students. The resident who stabbed his brother-in-law was a seminary student who subsequently withdrew from school.

Many students are frustrated by distractions when they are trying to study for finals; loud media is annoying, but people screaming at each other just a few feet from you is worse. Thankfully, the stabbing was a few doors down. However, our next-door neighbors had some challenges as well. We would hear screaming, and sometimes slams and other bone-chilling sounds of impact at all hours of the day and night. We were relieved when there would be a day or two of reprieve, but during finals we were not so fortunate. We were subjected to frequent bouts of vicious screaming.

We called the authorities on them many times, and later found that the neighbor on the other side of their apartment had felt it necessary to report them as well. The yelling would go on for hours through extremely well-insulated brick walls, and my wife and I would hold each other in agony, with a phone ready to call as soon as it seemed things were escalating. We felt horrified and unsure as to protocol; we had not received clear information from campus housing about what to do if this happened. We had never been in a situation like this before, not even as housing assistants in wooden-walled apartment buildings at Walla Walla University. We were calling campus security, assuming they would report the issues to the police; in hindsight, it might have been better to call the police directly.¹

One might think that what we experienced at the seminary represents a small sample of the whole. However, during the required weekly chapel service on August 30, 2011, I was confirmed in my belief that these were not isolated incidents. The director of the

Master of Divinity program presented a formula for spiritual growth and relationship with God based on the life of a patriarch. During the talk he said in passing that Campus Safety (security) complained that it is the seminary students who cause most of the disturbances in the campus apartments, but that this group of seminary students would be different (especially if they followed the patriarch's method for spiritual growth).

From local to global: the fall out from what we think and say about women

I want to state emphatically that this article is not about the evils or even the shortcomings of an institution. Instead, what is happening at Andrews University provides some insight into global Adventism and the gender role and ordination debate. Being at Andrews provides a vantage point; it allows one to get a pulse of worldwide Adventism. It represents a large concentration of Adventists, many of whom eat, study, and live in close proximity to one another day and night. While a variety of factors contribute to the situation (which will be addressed later), these circumstances are not unique; rather, they represent a widespread attitude toward women in a global movement with predominantly male leaders and policies that promote this male hegemony.

The first hint that there was a serious problem was revealed at a personal assessment session for seminary students. The seminary's resident psychologist told us a bit about the psychological inventory before we took it, informing us that it would deal with various aspects of our lives such as personal experience and familial relations. A student raised his hand and asked almost belligerently, "What does any of this have to do with being a pastor? How does my relationship with my family affect my ministry?" The professor kindly attempted to help him, as many of us silently agreed that one's personal life and his or her ministry are certainly interconnected.

After having experienced life in the campus

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apartments for a while, I took a class on Jewish Life and Thought from Jacques Doukhan. I vividly remember his talking about Jewish gender relations and that in Judaism, unlike in much of conservative Christianity, abuse is seen as a legitimate reason for getting a divorce. When a seminarian raised his hand and Dr. Doukhan called on him, the student asked whether this would entail the types of actions that are called abuse in America. This student thought too many things were labeled as abuse and preferred the "African" view of abuse. Thankfully, Dr. Doukhan, who holds a master's degree in Egyptology among his numerous graduate degrees, dealt with this quite directly, adequately, and hopefully effectively, as he ended with historical Egyptian views and responses to abuse. He asserted that "abuse is abuse," and that there is not one "African" view of divorce. I was encouraged by a professor responding passionately to the question, but the fact that it was even asked terrified me.

I am sad to admit that our denomination's uncertain theology in relation to issues of sex and gender can surface in class lectures. While some professors debunk the pre-suppositions that allow the justification of abuse, it seems that some perspectives are presented that could facilitate the religious justification of abuse. In one class, I got into a heated debate with a professor over whether or not rape is possible within marriage. Thankfully, he did think a man should not force his wife to have sex against her will; however, he was unwilling to acknowledge the term "marital rape" because he thought that getting married entailed a sort of blanket consent that made forced sex within marriage something different than rape. Though I do not know that professor's perspective on women in ministry, there are a few classes where I get the general feeling that the teachers are unhappy with the fact that females are in their classes studying to be ministers. One professor told our class that our section was better than the other section of the same class he teaches. Someone asked why; he thought about it a moment and said that he probably should not say. When pressed by the class to share, he said it was because our section was all male.

Commendably, Andrews University has recently developed important policy changes. In the handbook provided to all students, a couple of years ago a section on stalking was inserted after what the university had already included about sexual harassment. Most significant for this article, however, are additions made to the 2011–12 handbook on

domestic/relationship violence. The new section defines this offense, including important non-physical elements such as "coercive... behavior," "emotional/psychological abuse," and "physical and social isolation."² Information is provided both for initiating a complaint to the university and for involving law enforcement. The "dignity and self-determination" of the victim are protected in the policy and options are provided for both formal and informal charges.

During October, which is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a dating and domestic violence awareness walk was advertised and sponsored by the Counseling and Testing Center. Unfortunately, high winds and rain hampered this excellent program, which was moved indoors. I certainly hope other seminarians are outraged by this oppressive evil; however, I was the only seminarian who attended. Being the only seminarian there, I felt very alone, but I did not feel as alone as those experiencing emotional, religious, and physical abuse. I am incredibly happy that there are people at Andrews seeking to address this challenge.

Why does it happen? Domestic violence under the microscope

A wide range of factors are involved with domestic violence at any institution like Andrews. Various stressors contribute to deteriorating relational interaction.³ Higher education in general places a burden on families, as the rest of the family makes sacrifices for the sake of the student. Financial stressors are often amplified when a spouse and/or parent goes back to school from a more lucrative financial environment. Class responsibilities can lead to peaks in stress levels in the home as exams approach and papers are due. To compound the situation, previous support groups can be lost when a family uproots themselves, leaving their family and friends to move to a community in which they may be relatively isolated. The challenges are increased when this move is cross-cultural. Part of Andrews University's renown comes from the fact that it consistently ranks within the top ten American universities in both racial and international diversity. While the university as a whole is quite diverse, the seminary is the most internationally diverse segment of the school. On top of all the normal factors involved when adult learners go back to school with families, with seminary students there can be a spiritual factor as an individual feels called to become a minister.⁴ Unfortunately, this "call" is not

necessarily received by other family members who may not want to give up the life they had to live in small apartments and wait in line for food aid.

Thankfully, Andrews University offers help to those who have the confidence and agency to get it. The Counseling and Testing Center generously offers free counseling to Andrews students and their families. The October 2009 *Self-Study Report* prepared by Andrews University for the accrediting association of SDA schools, colleges, and universities provides a list of issues addressed by clients who use the center, which "is fully accredited by the International Association of Counseling Services,"⁵ and the percentage of individuals that brought up these concerns. The report states, "Center staff members recognize that the stress experienced in a challenging academic environment during a critical developmental phase can lead to problems which can be alleviated through therapeutic intervention."⁶ While the most common area of interest among clients who visited the center for counseling was personal growth, with 67 percent of individuals including this in their counseling experience, 46 percent addressed concerns about stress while utilizing the center's services; 21 percent brought up challenges with adjustment; 19 percent desired improvement in issues of anger; and 6 percent voiced a desire to deal with abuse.⁷ According to 2007–08 survey results, 9 percent of those served by the center were international students,⁸ and "the overall mean for client satisfaction was 4.5 on a 5-point Likert-type scale."⁹ The availability of this service is wonderful, and I believe people are getting help. Unfortunately, there can be religious, ideological, and cultural barriers to some individuals getting help. These, in addition to other barriers, lead many victims of family violence to suffer in silence; not only does the violence go unreported, but victims do not feel empowered to seek professional help for their needs. This widespread challenge is not unique to Andrews; it is simply magnified due to its concentrated population of the global Adventist church.

Don't tell: Religious barriers exist for Adventist victims worldwide

Understanding how Adventist beliefs can act as barriers for Adventist women experiencing domestic violence is examined by a multi-author article which includes researchers from Southern Adventist University and Fordham University. The authors point out that while other risk factors have been explored extensively, "there is less research on religiosity and the impact of religion or religious beliefs on Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)."¹⁰ This became their focus. They first mention the barriers typically addressed:

*Pressure not to talk about or address IPV, failure to recognize events as IPV or that IPV was wrong, self-doubt and low self-esteem, fear of losses, fear of perpetrator, desire to protect the perpetrator. . . , shame, fear of retaliation from perpetrators, denial of abuse or minimizing the seriousness of abuse, feelings of entrapment and disempowerment, belief that health/social service providers would not be able to provide an appropriate level of individual assistance, fear of reporting policies. . . , women's perceptions of service-related barriers, lack of resources, race and cultural barriers.*¹¹

Christian barriers include beliefs about the sanctity of marriage and "a religious ideology that portrays worthy women as wives and homemakers."¹² Many religious women contact a religious leader first when seeking help; unfortunately, clergy responses have been found to be "most often characterized as maintaining the status quo while offering little practical help."¹³

To research particular Adventist-belief barriers for women seeking help, the researchers "received permission to conduct the study from Andrews University's Human Subjects Review Board" and interviewed forty Seventh-day Adventist women who self-identified as abuse survivors.¹⁴ Three categories of internal religious-belief barriers were highlighted by the study: "[1] beliefs about marriage and divorce, [2] stereotypes about Christians, and [3] beliefs about Christian gender roles."¹⁵



We were calling campus security, assuming they would report the issues to the police; in hindsight, it might have been better to call the police directly.



Internal belief that divorce was sinful except for adultery was prevalent; more than two-thirds of the participants held religious ideology about marriage that kept them from “moving towards safety.”¹⁶ One woman said, “I would not have stayed...if I knew he was also unfaithful. And, ‘cause see, then I had the biblical grounds because all that time I thought, ‘I can’t leave him anyway.’...[If I hadn’t had biblical grounds] I would have gone on and endured.”¹⁷ Beyond the woman’s internalized beliefs, external religious pressure to stay married in spite of divorce came from clergy, church members, extended family members (including parents), and their abusive spouses.¹⁸ These people would suggest that if the woman would pray more and treat their husband in a more godly way, God would take care of them and solve the problem.¹⁹

Sixty-eight percent of those studied held stereotypes about Christians that acted as barriers to getting help. These “stereotypes included the notion that Christians do not abuse others and that Christian marriages are essentially happy.”²⁰ Survivors tended to not recognize behavior as abusive because their good Christian hus-

band would not abuse them. One interviewee said, “I didn’t have enough sense to question him because he was up preaching and teaching and leading. And I used to look at him and just be in awe at how the words would just flow.”²¹ Especially when going to church on Sabbath, women wanted to protect the image of the happy Christian family; as good Christians, they perceived themselves as belonging “to a subculture and a different group of people who are on show all the time.”²² Again, as in views of marriage and divorce, external factors contributed to the internal religious beliefs held by the survivors. Clergy, fellow church members, abusers, and the Adventist Church at large contributed to the stereotypes and the desire to appear as if everything is ok. One woman shared the nature of abuse she was experiencing with her pastor:

And I said, “Bobby is sexually abusing me and tying me up,” and I felt that I could confide in him [the pastor] a little bit. And I said, “I need help.” And then he says...“This is hard for me to believe...I have never seen any evidence of that in him. All the times I’ve ever been with him, he never even said a curse word or anything, so it’s hard for me to believe.”²³

Another survivor shared her experience:

*The leaders [of Adventism] want the church to appear that everybody there is so righteous. Everyone there is ready for translation. . . Nothing bad can happen in the church, so therefore if you are having a bad marriage, you are too embarrassed to talk about it. You will not talk about it. And there you will wear this façade and you'll say and go on as if everything is ok.*²⁴

Finally, for many survivors, beliefs about gender roles and an understanding of the man as the head of the household kept them from moving away from abusive relationships. For these individuals, male headship meant that men are in charge of the household and women must submit their will to them. One survivor's words vividly express this religious ideology:

*He was sexually very demanding and very violent during sex, and I thought. . . that because it had been drilled in me by the church that I was supposed to submit to my husband. I thought that I was supposed to submit to whatever he wanted no matter how perverse, vulgar, or vile, and he would force me to perform sexual acts that I wasn't comfortable with and beat me during those acts.*²⁵

Beyond the internal belief barriers, similar categories of individuals put pressure on victims to conform to gender norms. One husband used the Bible to justify his abusive ways: "He was one of those that would see the text and zero in on it. 'Well, this text says the wife should be submissive to the husband.' He zeroed in on that and took it radically."²⁶ For one woman, her friends had a strong influence: "I got all kinds of Christian friends saying you're never supposed to say no to your husband. I tried not to say no."²⁷

Culturalism vs. universalism: Who's in charge?

Abuse takes place in many Christian homes; this was clearly exposed over twenty years ago in Phyllis and James Aldurfs' book, *Battered into Submission: The Tragedy of Wife Abuse in the Christian*

Home.²⁸ Ideology contributes to, or is used to justify domination. Andrea Smith's *Native Americans and the Christian Right: The Gendered Politics of Unlikely Alliances* includes the narrative of a man who theologically justifies his abusive ways: "I guess I did it because I was the head of the family, and it was my right to do whatever I wanted to my wife and kids."²⁹

Some challenges are intensified in religious communities: "The impact of IPV on women in faith communities is amplified by a belief system that obscures the notion of partner abuse and by the constant responses they receive from others in their immediate community."³⁰ Researchers have increasingly been considering religiosity and religious beliefs in conjunction with family violence.³¹ Adventist researchers have been involved in some of this research, and violence within Seventh-day Adventism itself has been considered in multiple studies.³²

A survey was conducted in which 1,431 Adventists responded in five states of the North Pacific United States. Ninety-five percent of the respondents attended church regularly; 40 percent were male, 60 percent were female.³³ As a result of this study, it became clear that Seventh-day Adventists are not immune from intimate partner violence. Sixty-five percent had experienced controlling and demeaning behavior from their partner (e.g. told you what to do and expected obedience, monitored your daily activities or exhibited a general contempt for your gender); 46 percent experienced common couple violence (e.g. destroyed cherished possessions or pushed, grabbed or shoved you); 29 percent experienced sexual victimization (e.g. persuaded you to do something you consider perverted against your will or raped you); finally, 10 percent experienced severe physical abuse (e.g. threatened to or actually used a weapon on you or beat you up).³⁴

The Seventh-day Adventist Church tends to see itself as the possessor and disseminator of absolute truth. Many in the Adventist Church oppose relativism and point to logical objectivity of their theology. However, we have adopt-

... support groups can be lost when a family uproots themselves, leaving their family and friends to move to a community in which they may be relatively isolated.

ed a highly relativistic approach to gender roles. While numerous studies have been undertaken which have not found theological reasons to exclude women from ordination, the world church has decided that the majority will rule in the case of gender (in)equality. While some divisions of the church have pushed for the ordination of women, others oppose it vehemently. Using the terminology of family violence intervention, the Adventist Church has adopted the culturalist,³⁵ rather than the universalist approach. What this means is that we are creating policy, in the name of maintaining unity, that is culturally determined, rather than based on a universal standard or objective truth.

As a global church, Adventism needs to consider whether the subordination of women is an issue that can be left to cultural relativity and majority rule, or if it is a moral issue on which the church must take a stand.³⁶ This may be even more important than other theological issues because it can contribute to the mistreatment of women, including even physical and emotional abuse. We need "to avoid falling into culturalism"; the issue of sexism and its relationship with violence goes "beyond culture."³⁷

Currently in Seventh-day Adventism, (as in much of conservative Christianity), there is an

*internal barrier, contributing to women's tolerance of abuse in intimate relationships. This polarization of roles between male authority and women's submission, seen as divinely prescribed, intensifies the indecision when it comes to moving from abuse to safety for women in faith communities.*³⁸

When considering the factors that contribute to abuse in Ghana, researchers found

*that egalitarian decision-making and equal household contributions are associated with a reduced acceptance of abusive actions toward women. We suggest that new questions must be asked concerning the present and future role of men and women within households and the community.*³⁹

What if we questioned the assumption of male superiority? What would happen if we questioned power differentials? What would happen if there were as many female as male pastors?⁴⁰ What if our administration and university theology departments were balanced? If these things happened, would women in the church be encouraged in their enormous potential for changing the world for good?

Rabbi Abraham Heschel said, "Few are guilty, but all

are responsible." We all need to consider how gendered church policy and culturally relative ideology can affect the (mis)treatment of women. ■

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16. *Ibid.*, 400.
17. *Ibid.*, 401–402.
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19. One survivor shared that she was reluctant to move to safety because of what good Christians were telling her: "You need to just pray more. God can work this out. God can change his heart." *Ibid.*, 403.
20. *Ibid.*, 404.
21. *Ibid.*, 404.
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23. *Ibid.*, 405–406.
24. *Ibid.*, 406.
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*I got into
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debate with
a professor
over whether
or not rape
is possible
within
marriage.*

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35. In "culturalism," abuse is determined according to changing majority rule over time through the development of cultural norms. "Universalism" believes that there is a standard by which abuse can be judged, and just because something is appropriate in a person's culture does not mean that their action is acceptable; however, while there is a standard external to culture, practitioners who hold a "universalist" perspective can still be sensitive to cultural issues in intervention. See Lene Bull Christiansen, "'In Our Culture'—How Debates About Zimbabwe's Domestic Violence Law Became a 'Culture Struggle'," *NORA: Nordic Journal of Women's Studies* 17.3 (2009); Tina Hancock

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36. While believing in the existence of an ethical standard, culturally sensitive methodology can be used. The welfare state of Finland illustrates this point: "In culture speech, differences can be constructed as dichotomous and hierarchical (culturalization), but also in a variable and lateral way. The universalist discourse has paradoxical effects. It functions as a counter-force to culturalization, but it also discourages and prevents discussion about how to take into account the different starting-points of the diverse clientele. The welfare state plays an important role in both. While the universalist discourse is embedded in welfare state ideologies, the culturalist discourse (re)produces welfare state nationalism. Finnish authorities and practitioners distance themselves from cultural relativism but have developed forms of practical multiculturalism to reach migrant clients." Keskinen: 153.

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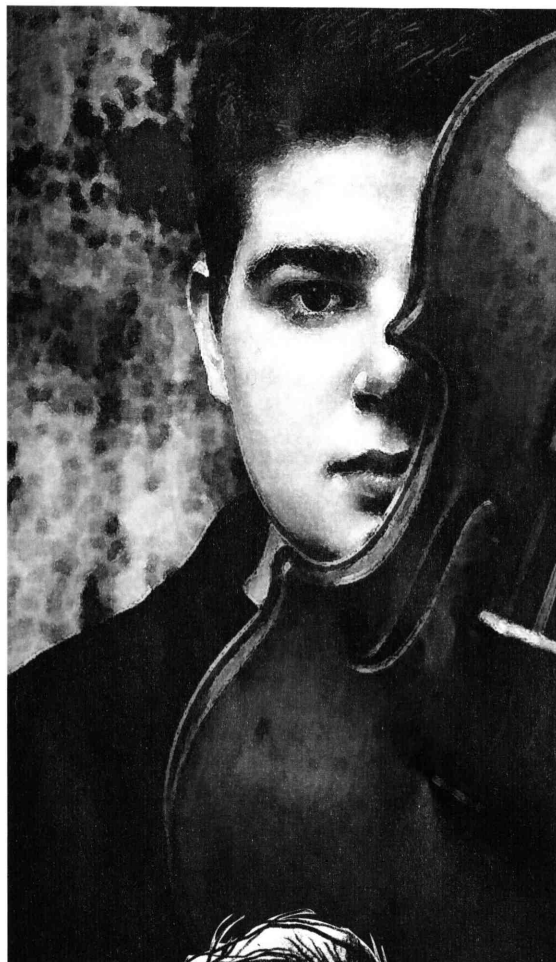
39. Mann and Takyi: 323.

40. "Within the faith community, the pastor's position and message on marriage and divorce and on patriarchal gender roles may seriously limit women's options when it comes to pursuing change and safety. Women in our sample also referred to an institutional/corporate belief that Adventists are called 'to protect God's reputation,' with any attempt to disclose IPV being a threat to this quest, and a mark of imperfection that will affect the entire community." Popescu and others, "'Because of My Beliefs That I Had Acquired from the Church...': Religious Belief-Based Barriers for Adventist Women in Domestic Violence Relationships," 410.

This
widespread
challenge
is not unique
to Andrews;
it is simply
magnified
due to its
concentrated
population
of the global
Adventist
church.



Broken Bridge | BY STEPHEN SUNDIN



He practiced violin near an open window, see-through curtains slipping, blowing his baseball days away. He saw summer run out of his Dad's garden, past rain-soaked rhubarb with thick stalks, past the turnips with their hairy leaves and buried roots, pride of the crucifer family. He'd practice for hours, his teacher could tell how many, by the way the strings behaved, the depth of the vibrato, the balance of sentiment and occasional brilliance. Fifth grade was near, but weekend lessons always spoiled his Saturdays—two long hours at his teacher's house, its walls recessed with niches shaped like open caskets filled with carved saints, their eyes blinded by triumphant woodworms and the antique smell of old sheet music.

What kind of sounds does God like?

Would He put His pink ear on the roof and listen to this?

He tried to make God hear. He imagined his joints as whole notes, clear circles connecting harmony from wrist to elbow to shoulder, compared his student posture with mental maps of constellations. But when he heard whispers behind him, the small of his back tightened, and his hips waited for the disciplined swat of his teacher's bow. If he played well, he had to sit on his teacher's lap, the old man's eyes shaking in their sockets, his calloused fingers moving back and forth over the boy's rumpled wool pants. He was anxious to get home, to help his Dad creosote some fenceposts, to hold the level, watch the long white lines of the fences breaking down into the ocean.

Stephen Sundin is a poet and retired dentist. This poem is autobiographical,



and was originally published in the *Denver Quarterly*. When Sundin was a boy, his family provided for lessons with one of the best violin teachers in Los Angeles. The teacher owned a Stradivarius, and had over one hundred pupils, several of whom were

from the Methodist church where Stephen's family attended. When these families understood what was happening to their boys, they all stopped the lessons.

No prosecutions were ever taken against the teacher. Stephen's father sold his violin the very next week.

Lambs Left to the Wolves | BY PEDRO GRECO FERLIZI

I was born in the south of Brazil into a very dysfunctional family. My Polish-German mother was a lovely woman possessing a strong work ethic, but she was also a very naïve ex-Catholic nun. My father, the son of Italian immigrants, was at the time of their wedding a charming, soft-spoken gentleman who soon afterward revealed himself as an abusive womanizer. When my youngest sibling was about one year old, my mother mustered enough courage to flee her oppressor. She started jumping from place to place in the pursuit of a better way of living.

In 1974, at the suggestion of someone trying to help us, my mother decided to leave her two eldest children—my sister and me—to be looked after in a children's home, Lar Infantil Neandertal, maintained by the Seventh-day Adventist church in the state of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Once there, my sister and I soon felt at home. The couple in charge of the home were called "Mum" and "Daddy" by the all the kids living there. The environment was better than anything we had experienced before, with plenty of food, entertainment, toys we never dreamed of, a nice school, and a big family with a father and a mother to look after us. The whole thing was very surreal because being there felt like being in heaven, but a strong awareness of my origins kept my heart divided.

A few years went by, and one night our (foster) father visited me in my bed with a behavior that seemed at first to be a normal expression of affection from father to son but developed into some strange touching that prompted me to draw back. I was overwhelmed by that experi-

ence and couldn't make sense of things, but about a week later I managed to face him, asking what that was about. His answer, as he turned his face away from me, was a plain, "It was a test!" I didn't dare say anything further. I just tried to forget about it, but our relationship was never the same again, and I have struggled ever since to trust that charismatic, lovable person who was my absolute reference and example.

In 1980, after having lived in that home for six and a half years, my sister and I went back to live with our mother in the state of Parana, and our links to our "foster family" weakened.

Then in 2005, while living abroad and traveling, I had the opportunity to visit one of our (foster) sisters, and in a casual conversation I brought up my suspicion about the circumstances surrounding the discharge of another of our siblings from the home. From her I learned that "our father" had abused at least five other boys, and that the death of one of them happened as a direct consequence of that abuse.

The stories haunted me. Finally, in 2009 I managed to go back to Brazil with the firm purpose of confirming with the other victims these stories of abuse that I had heard. Then I planned to confront the abuser and demand that he surrender his SDA "retired minister" credentials. By doing so, I hoped to make his admission of guilt clear to all the victims and allow for reconciliation. But my plan simply didn't work; rather, it prompted him to produce excuses to explain the incidents related to his withdrawing from the "pastoral duties" and to even blame me in a twisted way.

Pursuing legal action was ruled out during

*I learned
that 'our
father' had
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least five
other boys.*



All we wanted was for someone to acknowledge what happened to us and to apologize.



that trip, too, when I learned that according to Brazilian law, cases more than twenty years old cannot be brought to court. As time went by, the feeling of deep urgency to resolve the issue increased, but I didn't know how to do it. At that point I was still in denial, and my declared actions were aimed at helping my brothers who had been abused. It was not until 2010, while discussing the problem with a family life educator, that I finally got it.

"You were abused; stop hiding behind the bush!" she told me.

So I went to the president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and was told that he would intervene only if the South American Division could not deal with the problem. I had two meetings with the South American Division President (and some of his assistants) and proceeded to tell them the facts corroborated with the evidence and gave them the names of people who could confirm the veracity of my claim. Two of the assistants tried to diminish the relevancy of my claim, but they finally promised to assess the situation and return to me with an answer.

Twenty-one months have gone by, and the only thing that I have heard from the Brazilian church leaders is that they are "raising the facts." The abuser is still in regular standing in his church, despite my request for a review of it. They simply play a game of silence and deny us the much-needed acknowledgement of those abuses.

It is very interesting to see the lengths to which those people are going in order to protect the "status quo." Many people in Brazil have heard about these cases, and several church members have asked the local South American Division conference officers, "What will be done about 'that man?'" Interestingly enough, those requests are fuelled by concerns about preserving the good name of the church, with no regard for the victims still suffering the consequences of such crimes.

The president of the General Conference, on the other hand, after receiving several messages asking for his intervention on the aforementioned cases, eventually replied:

The General Conference will not get directly involved in this matter. It raises the liability level that could come with this situation. This matter is of a local nature. I must mention that even though we will not get involved, the General Conference does not condone any type of abuse.

"Do the right thing no matter the cost" used to be a very popular saying in SDA circles (especially regarding tithes and Sabbath-keeping), but it seems to be going out of fashion and giving way to a more business-like approach in which the ends matter more than the means employed to reach them. Even if liability were to be a concern to the SDA church regarding the abuses that have been revealed, is their denial of it enough to grant them exemption from accountability before the very God they profess to represent?

In spite of the disillusionment resulting from the SDA Church (GC and SAD) leadership's failure to support me and the other abused people, it has been good to receive so much support from many Adventist people, especially in the North American Division, the Euro-Africa Division, and the British Union Conference, as well as from friends in different denominations everywhere. SNAP (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests)¹ has also been of great assistance to me in this matter! Finally, my quest for obtaining acknowledgement about our plight will soon be achieved through the publication of my story by several secular newspapers (and inclusion in this issue of *Spectrum*). All we wanted was for someone to acknowledge what happened to us and to apologize, but the SDA Church hierarchy seems to condone these specific abuses by removing themselves from the picture... Should we accept that? ■

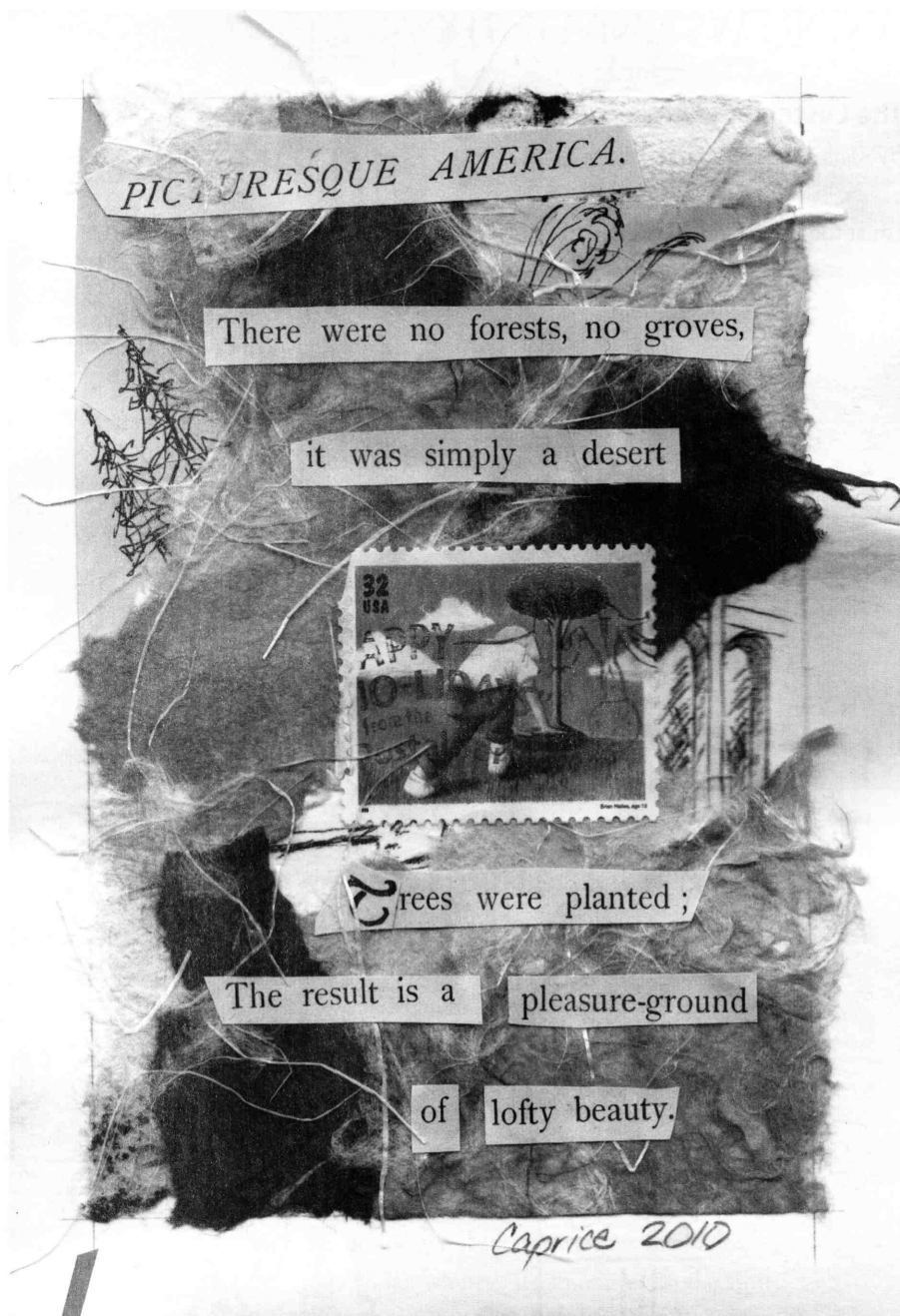
Pedro Greco Ferlizi is a Seventh-day Adventist member of the British Union Conference.



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1. <http://www.snapnetwork.org/>

"Arbor Day"
Caprice Scott
Senior, Art
Collage
Walla Walla University



Student AND POETRY

The Customer is Always Right

By Mark Joslin | Sophomore, English

I'm at the fruit stand. You drive up, slowly, a badger venturing out of its den after hibernation. Your old person's form regards these vegetables warily, not to be trusted. You inquire after the freshness of the cabbage. Picked yesterday, I say. Wordlessly, you look at me with eyebrows raised, and I know I'm caught. I've been hiding all of today's produce. This stand is a tiny link in a statewide conspiracy to deprive you of all the best of agriculture. I'm a puppy who's been caught after an accident indoors. Picked yesterday! As if I thought I'd get away with that. Teenagers. We're one and the same. Someone set me back on the straight and narrow, and soon. That's the problem with this generation, no moral fiber.

You buy two and leave.

I didn't work yesterday. And if I could choose the day for you to come back, I'd pick yesterday.

"Mercado San Pedro"

Ben Jepson

Senior, Graphic Design

Acrylic and Marker

Walla Walla University



ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

"Bikes"

Jeremy Caesar

Senior, English

Photograph

La Sierra University

Here Comes the Sun

By Stacy Scott | Senior, English

My mother's sister
The one with the costume jewelry
And the grand piano that's collecting dust
Polishes a glossed wood coffee table
As she sits on a dead and trimmed cow
That is only worn out on only one side.
She says, that I can't love the music.
Little darling,
She says, you can't love it because of your generation
And then she says words like
lack and appreciation and computer era.
But all I know is that when I hear the music,
The sun comes out in my darkest night,
And I can feel the ice slowly melting,
Timed to aged techno rhythms.
Open up the cabinet and let's get a sip or two of that
Renewable wine, a vinyl coated toast
To five guys that knew it would be hard for me to get
through the day
Forty years later,
They sing to me, and I'm their little darling
as far as I know.
And as long as there are long, cold lonely winters
I will turn it up
And I will help my aunt put it on her iPod
The one from the computer era.



Roadside Assistance

By Kathleen Wilson | Junior, English

Of all adventures shared by you and me
none compare to our first search and rescue:
Her car had died, the two of us came through,
A dual reservoir of energy.
Two feet, two hands, working to spark to life
the motor-carriage. While Damsel finds
her new way to best de-stress us, she blinds
us with her whines, "It's so not worth the strife."
Together, with colored-coded labels,
a snake of cord we've yet to fully uncurl,
we slide the U-turn, and grab the cables,
saunter our way over, help the hopping girl.
Words of thanks to us, her Strong and Ables,
a kiss, hug; a smile and a twirl.

LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY

I Fought Robots.

By *Abdiel Vallejo* | *Sophomore, English*

I've played in sand,
dug intricate tunnels and built forts as tall as skyscrapers,
flown folded paper and imagined myself an ant upon the crest,
and what's best,
I fought robots.
Feared no evil strong enough to penetrate my sheets,
and once the devil left I'd promptly pull my head from out
my feet,
breath relief for once escaping from the suffocating heat,
I'd confirm the lack of strangers in my bed then go to
sleep,
that was really all I'd need.
But now, the bright lights of machinery keep me distant
from my sleep,
and my eyes are not accustomed to the city's yellow gleam,
yet before I bid adieu and drift eternally ashore,
I pray I may return to fight robots just once more.

In Arizona...

By *Joe Perez* | *Senior, Liberal Studies*

a man ropes a beast
in the dust and heat,
in "Prescott's Show,"
the "First Rodeo,"
a feat from six score
years passed is still lore.

In the desert's past
his rope still flies fast.
Among all men there
his hand's raised in air.
He was put to the test-
he alone named "best."

In Arizona...
a man, Juan Leivas,
still lives, and still walks.
He rides among kin
in all shades of skin.
He rises and sleeps,
he laughs and he weeps...
in Arizona.

Dedicated to Juan Leivas—the first winner of the
"World's Oldest Rodeo®" on July 4, 1888, in Prescott,
Arizona...and to all rodeo winners after him



"Lighted Plant"

Jeremy Caesar
Senior, English
Photograph
La Sierra University

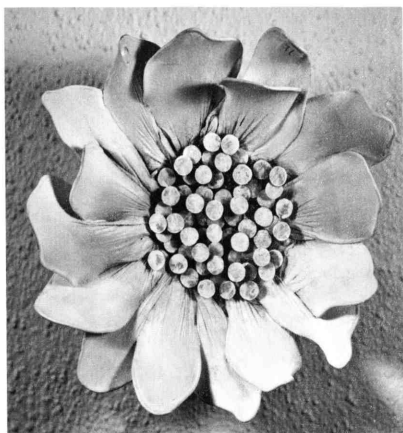
"Inherently Open"

Casey Pohren

Sophomore, Fine Art

Found Objects

Pacific Union College



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY

HUMN 405

By *Cornelia Salgado* | Senior, RN to BSN

Dedication

Mountains, valleys, and springs
Reveal an amazing story
Of faith and bravery
Of strength and purity

The Age was Dark
But faith was crystal clear
As stars in the night
Immovable as the snowy Alps

This world was not worthy
To witness these faithful souls
Praying, singing, and reading the Word
In the most majestic church: outdoors.

Waldensians' voices echo today:
Will not compromise. No matter the price
Their lives still tell the story
Of faith and bravery. Of strength and purity.

PACIFIC UNION COLLEGE

Traveling Song for my father

By *Christiana Robbins* | Junior, Communication, English, Honors

13,000 hours
is a lot of time in the air.
A lot of jet fuel and
UV rays and nights which
sink
bones creaking
lowering down on another hotel bed.
1.48 years of breathe-in,
breathe-out stale recycled air.
And so many moments of bursting through cloud cover
into glorious sun and
I imagine I am there with you.
Quietly sitting beside you,
our matching Bose headphones shining,
our hearts shining,
as you turn and point to God
in the Technicolor sky and say,
"This is why I love my job."
13,000 hours
is a lot of time in the air.
A lot of missed birthdays,
late nights, long weekends gone.
A lot of small-child fears
when your plane dropped off the radar;
when the engine sputtered and died;
when turbulence smashed your head
against the ceiling and knocked you
unconscious and you woke, blinking
minutes later and you knew,
(and you know) you died there for a moment.
Died, died, and you wonder why
your wife screams at you,
sullenly ignores you, when you
finally walk through our basement door,
and stretch those creaking limbs,
and groan softly and say, "I'm home."
Dad, you need to know.
And I don't think you understand.
13,000 hours
is a lot of time.

Bridgework

By Midori Yoshimura | Senior, English, Spanish, Honors

PACIFIC UNION COLLEGE

In the twenty-first century,
trolls work above ground
collect bridge fees from
disgruntled drivers.

Two weeks into this job, I stopped saying “thank you.”

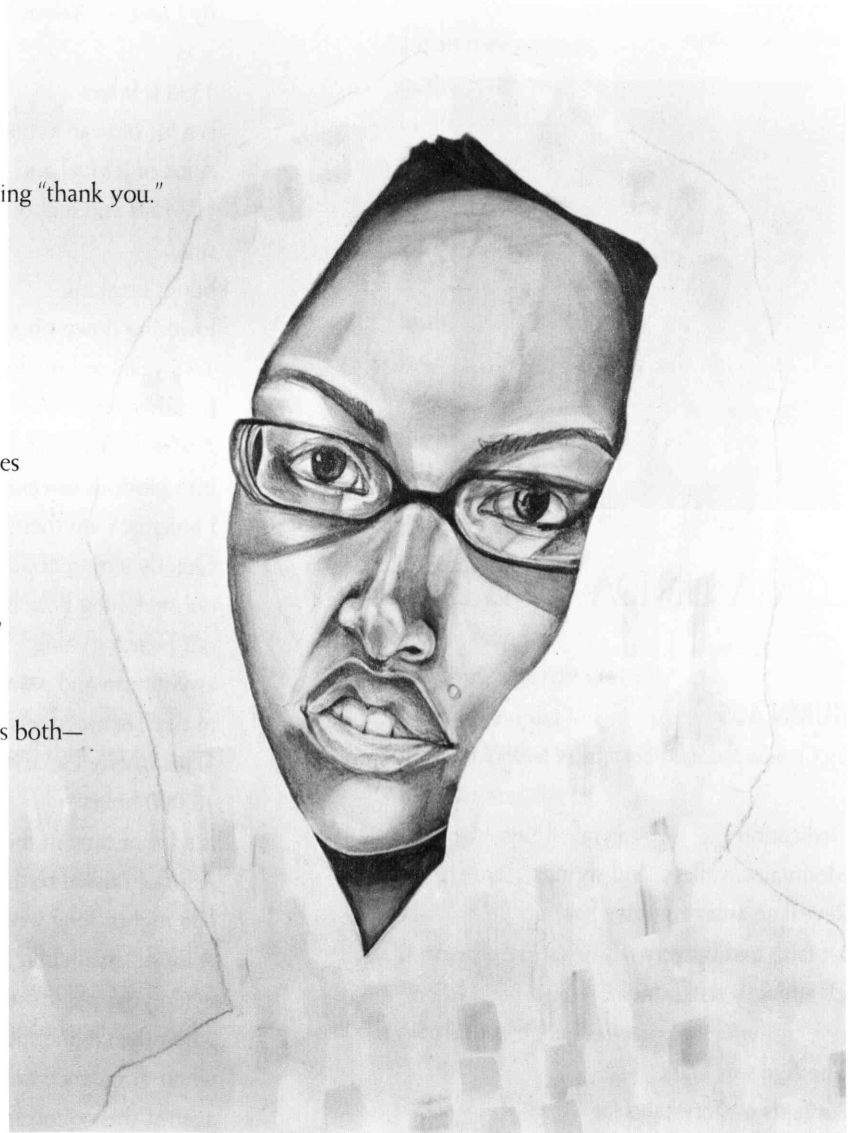
Every morning (if I get the day shift)
I put on uniform-ugly neon vest,
pull clean hair out of aging face,
drive, under the speed limit,
to work at the bridge, where
a sci-fi novel and strong bladder muscles
are my salvation.

Johnny Cash is too famous
to cover the sound of irritated exhaust,
as you rush to your high-power job
in your high-end car.
Look, I’m trying to make it easier for us both—
you wave money in my face,
I’ll wave change in yours,
and we’ll both think,
you’re a jerk.

“Some arrogant [gesture]”
I mouth at Chuck, one lane over.
“Some stupid schmuck,”
you groan to carpool companions.

Me, I’m in it for the money—
decent insurance, job as steady
as the bridge.
Minimum wage plus
enough for a few evenings out.

Some nights on the way home
I stop by the darkening park,
visit the bocce ball court,
play a few rounds
by myself.
With my odd hours,
no one’s around to see my perfect shot
or watch me cheat.



“Self Portrait”

Mayah Robinson

Freshman, Graphic Design

Graphite

Pacific Union College

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

Thy Will Be Done

By Krista Turner | Senior, Art, English

"Thy will be done."

Four words that I've always been afraid to say.

Those four words mean cancer.

They mean losing a limb.

They mean struggle of the hardest sort.

They mean death.

But lately I've come to the realization

That those four words mean something completely different.

They don't mean escape from catastrophe,

But they mean sustenance of the sturdiest kind.

They don't mean that I am free from pain,

But they mean I am being saved from even greater pain later.

They don't mean the end of everything good,

But they mean maybe waiting for something that is even better than good.

"Thy will be done."

They are still hard to utter

But now they are words I need not be afraid to say,

But words that I should say everyday.

Those four words mean trust.

And those four words manifest Love.

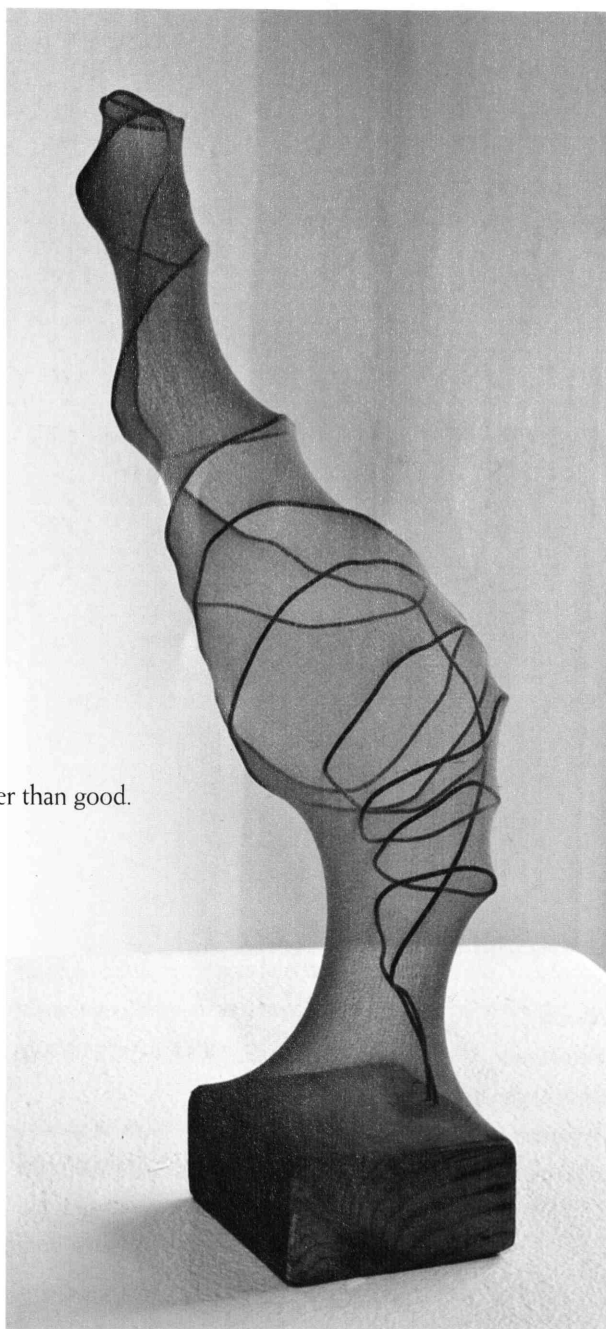
"Dino"

Dylan Ruiz

Sophomore, Graphic Design

Fabric and Wire

Pacific Union College



SOUTHWESTERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

Words

By Krista Turner | Senior, Art, English

Words.

Power unleashed.

When wielded wrongly:

Wounds.

welcome to your flight

by Geraldo Alonso II | Senior, Theology

flight pattern frenzy
suit-case pandemonium
calm coffee giving goddess
crying baby, messy diaper
747 wake up
produce g-force bliss
welcome to america
welcome to bangladesh
welcome to here
destination yesterday
in the world of tomorrow
business casual
in the world of poverty
first class amenities
with precooked food
and peanuts on the side
where are you going
why are you leaving
change the world
with your frequent flyer
credit card
leave me to day
gather around to morrow
the flight of the steel beast
and its internal organic
carbon forms
please take your seat
fasten your seat belts
correct your table
tray's downfall
excitement in the air
welcome to your flight



"Sidewalk"

Jeremy Caesar

Senior, English

Photograph

La Sierra University

"Bottles"
 Allison Berger
 Junior, Art
 Acrylic, Paint, and Newsprint Collage
 Walla Walla University

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Relativity

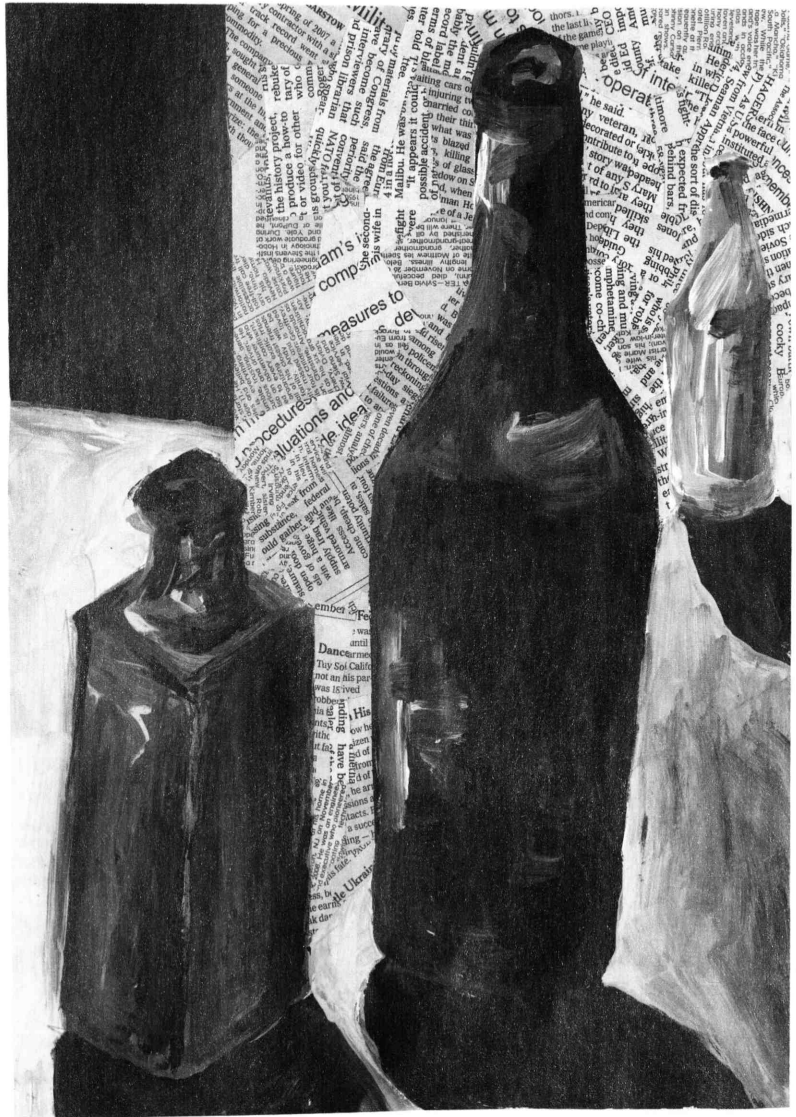
By Kathy Douglas | Senior, Journalism

Time slides
 Sometimes on gravel
 Sometimes on ice

Life flies
 Sometimes in flutters
 Sometimes in soars

Truth shines
 Sometimes on velvet
 Sometimes on chrome

Peace endures
 Sometimes in a moment
 Sometimes in a life



WALLA WALLA UNIVERSITY

bread and wine

By Rebecca Brothers | Junior, English

When I took Communion last
 week and the body was laid out on thirty silver
 plates carried by strong men in dark suits and a string
 quartet played Mozart,

i thought suddenly of the priests in cuba who
 upon finding one grape seed in their cell
 put it carefully into a cup of water and took it out to make
 their wine each week

**As My Father and I Cross
Alaska's Shore**

By Danielle Shull | Sophomore, English

from rock to rock
his cheeks scrunch
trying to get his glasses
closer to his eyes.
One hand
grips the air
for balance,
the other clutches
the hand
belonging
to the blonde child
who barely reaches
his hip. Dad's glasses
slip again as he swings
me with him
from rock to rock.
His bad back
bows like a breaking
bridge beneath
the backpack crammed
with Ramen noodles
and the leaky tent,
the Raggedy Ann doll
I couldn't leave
at the house,
and the crinkled
blue stone
I couldn't leave
on the beach.



"Owl, Pike Place Market"
Amy Hellie
Junior, Forensic Psychology
Photograph
Walla Walla

WASHINGTON ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

The Balance

By Melinda Hamerly | Senior,
Music, English

They stare.
I see them.
They think I don't,
but I do.

They ask,
What's it like?
They think I won't,
but I do.

I answer,
It's like this:
Burning oil.
All the time.

I answer,
It's in my bones.
Never ceases.
I get by.

I answer,
It's my life.
Not much of one,
but all I've got.
They stare.
I watch them.
Mouths sag open.
All words stolen.

The table turns.
The empathizee becomes
the empathizer.
For what is there to say.
Words have escaped
and what is left
is
awk-
ward
silence.

And I feel small.

I need some jolly, gentle giant
to scoop me up on his lap
surround me with warm security
lave me in love
pamper me with parity.
Then, understood and tenderly
protected, the world would be ok.

"Amish Group"
Jeremy Caesar
Senior, English
Photograph
La Sierra University



Loneliness

By Melinda Hamerly | Senior, Music, English

Loneliness is a place, right?
Its room is faded and worn with apathy
The wall paper colors coalesce slowly into shades of beige
Edges loose like the skin over a wound
The paint around the windows flaking
A snake who can't quite shed its skin
Window panes have collected grit and dust
And a stray ball or two
Making their purpose difficult to imagine
The carpet must have been a lovely grey
Once upon a more brilliant time
For a sliver of it peeks out
Like the silver slit of a summer moon
From under the broken bottom board
Of a warped dresser
Knobs tarnished from damp neglect
A room so still your breath sounds
As a thousand charging bulls.
An *Archeology Today* curls its pages with
A *Good Housekeeping*
Pages jaundiced with time.
No one goes here
The door sits at an awkward tilt
It hasn't settled at the same rate as the structure
A firm jolt might open it, but it also may rip it off.
No one dares to touch such a place

No.

For the one who inhabits it
Can move through a crowd
Like a magnet whose pole
Is wrong

Nothing touches.

Shadowy smiles
spring like a jack-in-a-box;
They don't light the eyes
For Nameless Face.

Loneliness is a place,
right? Or is it
just a
void

WASHINGTON ADVENTIST
UNIVERSITY



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Ceramics

Pacific Union College

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Some New EGW Compilations

By Caleb Rasmussen

Background

As an American-style themed crossword, this puzzle's longest entries are puns on the titles of Ellen White's books. The name of an actual Ellen White book name is changed slightly to form a new, unlikely, and (hopefully) humorous book title. For example:

Collected writings on business practices in monarchical Israel?

Profits and Kings

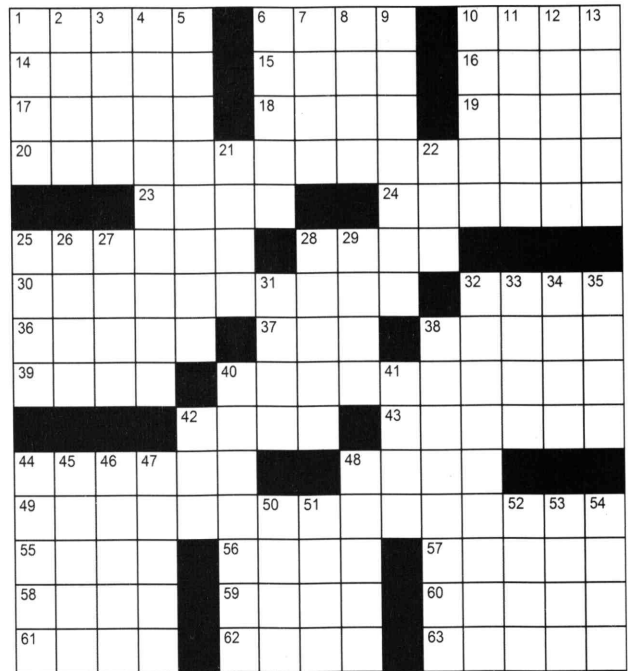
Selected counsels to proponents of archetypal psychology?

Messages to Jung People

Assembled commentary on lumberjacking in the early church?

Ax of the apostles

Solution on page 27



ACROSS

- 1 Instruments mentioned in Revelation
- 6 Swedish automaker
- 10 Affected manners
- 14 "Will ___ mortal rob God?": Malachi 3:8
- 15 Animal with the most names, according to Guinness
- 16 Native Manitoban
- 17 Lot location
- 18 Elvis's middle name
- 19 Former or latter, e.g.
- 20 Collected writings on business practices in monarchical Israel?
- 23 Low-fat cheese
- 24 First-aid kit item
- 25 Emerged
- 28 Advent ending?
- 30 With 40-Across, selected counsels for proponents of archetypal psychology?
- 32 "The Madonna of Port Ligat" painter
- 36 ___ Galilee
- 37 Adventist boarding school on California's central coast: Abbr.
- 38 Acid found in spinach
- 39 What the nose knows
- 40 See 30-Across
- 42 Low part
- 43 Encroachment
- 44 Reckless
- 48 Readouts at LLU Medical Center, e.g.
- 49 Assembled commentary on lumberjacking in the early church?
- 55 Small stream
- 56 End of some threats
- 57 Swiss heroine
- 58 Cradle Roll word
- 59 Disregard fundamental belief 22, perhaps
- 60 Increased
- 61 Strip
- 62 Sibilant sound
- 63 "The Lord our God, the Lord ___": Deut. 6:4

DOWN

- 1 Security device
- 2 Omnia vincit ___
- 3 Change
- 4 Figure at PUC or SAU
- 5 Hard of hearing
- 6 Cramp
- 7 Intangible quality
- 8 Idolatrous son of Manasseh
- 9 Baja bad guy
- 10 Biting
- 11 Modern Persian
- 12 David's lasted forty years
- 13 It's said to be common
- 21 Zest
- 22 They stop fights
- 25 Assertive reply
- 26 Woodwind part
- 27 Golfer Aoki
- 28 Library IDs
- 29 Without a partner
- 31 Birds with a thumping call
- 32 Colporteur stops
- 33 Greyhound fare?
- 34 Oscar winner Kedrova
- 35 Kind of tea
- 38 Chinese decorating philosophy
- 40 Ark passenger
- 41 Metric prefix for a trillionth
- 42 Vampire, e.g.
- 44 Old-timey schoolteachers
- 45 Not radial
- 46 Stuffed grape-leaf food
- 47 B, in other words
- 48 Fencing equipment
- 50 Word repeated by Jesus on the cross
- 51 Egyptian snakes
- 52 Tang dynasty poet
- 53 Fall scene
- 54 It's often between up and down

Caleb Rasmussen teaches seventh and eighth-grade English as well as fifth and sixth-grade everything at Chico Oaks Adventist School. Other crosswords he's written have appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.