

# EDITORIALS

# 2020:

## MORE BEAUTIFUL AND MORE TERRIBLE

BY BONNIE DWYER

Mani Perry's book, *More Beautiful and More Terrible*, proved to be the most consequential book that I read this year. Not that I wanted to read it. I had never heard of it, until it was recommended as a selection for the Friday Forum Book Group by Andy Lampkin. In the preface, Perry speaks to the importance of inspiration for scholarly projects and of her inspiration, firstly by James Baldwin, whose words are quoted in the book's title, and secondly from jazz, specifically the recording of "Tenor Madness" by Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane. Intrigued, I found the recording on YouTube and listened while I read Perry's account of racism in America, written in 2011. The music changed everything for me, altered the tone for the topic. It provided an upbeat and energetic melody in the midst of the terrible things that I was learning and watching play out in 2020 with regard to race. Looking for beauty in the midst of tragedy can seem to be inappropriate. It shouldn't be a way of ignoring or glossing over terrible things. But it can be a very helpful coping mechanism, as well as a way to move towards change. Back to that prompt that led me to read something different, something not of my own choosing; I consider it to be a major blessing of a book group, because it provides wonderful surprises and opens my mind to new ideas and stories.

This issue of *Spectrum* is filled with such surprises. If you think you know everything that you need to know about what happened at Glacier View forty years ago, Gil Valentine makes good use of new sources to retell the back story to this important event in Adventist history. Ronald Lawson also looks back over the past forty years to trace the relationship of the Seventh-day Adventist church with its LGBT members, and demonstrates the importance of perspective. Nancy Hoyt Lecourt gives us the story of

an Adventist college that may be new to you—California Preparatory College.

We're grateful to Alva James Johnson and her journalism students at Southern Adventist University for their excellent reporting on the government bailout funds that are being utilized by Adventist schools to get through this challenging time of COVID. And it is that terrible pandemic that has inspired several writers to ask about what comes next for Adventism? What church innovations will grow out of this strange and awful time.

What a year it has been! Our cover artist, photographer Tomáš Slovinský, found the beauty of this year in the night sky, in the appearance of the NEOWISE comet. More of his photographs can be seen in the new book that Adventist Forum is publishing by Hanz Gutierrez, *In the Time of Coronavirus: Chronicles of a Pandemic*, a collection of his writings that appeared on our website during 2020. The book will be available on Amazon.

As the year 2020 comes to a close, it seems that America is turning a corner in its politics. Will 2021 be more beautiful or more terrible or both? I think the answer to that question lies with each of us. We all have a role to play in bringing our divided country and church together, in creating change, in making things beautiful. May we each do our part, and be surprised by joy.



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